



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

June 21, 2017

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on June 21, 2017 at 6 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington Street, School Committee chamber, Roxbury, Massachusetts. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org, email feedback@bostonpublicschools.org or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael D. O'Neill; Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman; Michael Loconto; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Jeri Robinson; and Dr. Miren Uriarte.

School Committee Members Absent: Regina Robinson; and student representative Keondre McClay.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Grants for approval totaling \$7,058,687

2017 Revised District Wellness Policy (Draft)

Memo from Amalio Nieves, assistant superintendent of Social Emotional Learning and Wellness, to Boston School Committee Members Re: Request for Approval of Recommended Wellness Policy Updates, dated June 1, 2017

Memo from Amalio Nieves, assistant superintendent of Social Emotional Learning and Wellness, to Boston School Committee Members Re: Responses to Inquiries Regarding Revisions to the District Wellness Policy, dated June 15, 2017

English Language Learners Task Force Update (Power Point)

A Plan for Turnaround at Brighton and Excel High Schools

Brighton and Excel High Schools Turnaround Equity Impact Statement

Edward M. Kennedy (EMK) Academy for Health Careers Charter Renewal (Power Point)
EMK Academy for Health Careers Charter Renewal Application

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Memo from Dr. Caren Walker Gregory, EMK Headmaster, to Boston School Committee, re: Kennedy Academy Charter Renewal Request, dated June 16, 2017

Kennedy Academy Charter Renewal Application Equity Impact Statement

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O'Neill led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order.

CITATIONS

The Committee and Superintendent presented citations to the following schools that earned accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children in school year 2016-17: Ellis Elementary; Harvard/Kent Elementary; King K-8; and McKay K-8.

Citations were also presented to the following BPS students who penned award-winning essays as part of the Don Rodman essay contest: Luis Galarza; Patricia Pina Lopes; Javon Matthew-Sanders; Armani Candelaria; Elizah Hall; Kaliyah Robinson; Uyen Chu; Kimberlyn Jones; Lynn Nguyen; Anh Nguyen; Aleisha Prentice; Agnes Ugoji; Steeven Cajuste; and Jean Pierre-Louis.

MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the June 7, 2017 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

Good evening everyone and happy Summer Solstice. Summer solstice is when the Earth's rotational axis is most inclined toward the sun. This results in the longest day of the year (at least in the northern hemisphere), and marks the official start of summer.

It is a time when we get ready to close out the traditional school year. We have sent our seniors off, wishing them every success in their future endeavors and we wish the rest of our students a safe and productive summer of summer learning, summer jobs, summer camps, and summer fun.

I would like to thank all our hardworking teachers, paras, school leaders, secretaries, nurses, custodians, counselors, coaches, Central Office administrators, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, bus monitors and everyone else who impacts our student's lives. You all have contributed greatly in making this school year such a success, and giving our youth the opportunity to learn and flourish each and every day. I am humbled by your dedication, and grateful for your contributions.

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In particular, I want to thank Barbara Connolly, the special assistant to the superintendent for not just myself, but for John McDonough, Carol Johnson, Michael Contompasis and Tom Payzant. Barbara will be retiring next Friday after a distinguished 40-year career with BPS. She has been an invaluable member of my team, as well as my predecessors', who has kept the trains running on time in the Superintendent's Office, and all of us in line.

I also want to take a few moments tonight to reflect back on this past year. While we accomplished many great things during the 2016-17 school year, I'd like to highlight a few key achievements.

We started the school year by launching our Strategic Implementation Plan. This document provided the district a critical roadmap to drive our work in closing opportunity and achievement gaps. At its core, it defined the three main pillars that would support and guide us in everything we do: equity, coherence and innovation. I truly believe those values form the bedrock of transforming the way we educate our students.

We created more equity at 13 schools where all 4th graders had more access to rigor and enrichment. I'm proud of the innovation and dedication our principals and teachers demonstrated as they supported student learning. We look forward to more success next year as we add the 5th grade strand to these 13 Excellence for All schools.

In an effort to seek more innovative approaches to transporting our students, this year we launched the Transportation Challenge. Over the two month-long challenge, we saw the active participation of dozens of universities, tech companies, and engaged citizens. In early July, we will announce the awardees for each of our two phases; one on improving routing efficiencies and the second on balancing school start times. We look forward to learning from all of our solutions as we continue to improve our transportation services.

Based on a year of collaboration among an Advisory Committee of key stakeholders from around the city and deep analysis of the BPS budget by internal and external experts, BPS published "Investing in Student Success," the first report in a long term financial planning process. The report explores a critical question: what financial choices must be made in Boston Public Schools to enable the rich academic offerings that Boston students deserve? The report presents 10 ideas for possible long term strategies to unlock dollars and began a city-wide conversation about these choices.

We launched BuildBPS, our 10-year educational and facilities master plan that will transform the way we redesign and rebuild our school buildings to be better suited for 21st Century learning — all thanks to a \$1 billion investment by Mayor Walsh. With the help of the City and other partners, we also created a digital dashboard so that the public can better understand the physical condition of each of our 125 schools. And we engaged our families, community members and school staff by hosting open houses here at the Bolling Building, and a dozen workshops throughout the city to explain how BuildBPS will re-imagine and renew Boston's public school infrastructure. We also collected valuable feedback from our stakeholders. We are pleased at the

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outcomes of these workshops, which generated over 300 ideas to build, expand, repair or renovate school buildings.

We reevaluated how we support the at-risk youth, our most resilient students, in our district, viewing them as a true asset. To that end, we increased our homelessness funding for next year to \$1.1 million, adopting a targeted, school-based approach to providing services and supports to the 3,000 students experiencing homelessness. We believe these individualized resources will help in closing opportunity and achievement gaps. We also became a leader as a district in affirming our support for our immigrant students and their families, and our commitment to providing safe and welcoming schools. This included creating the website: “BPS: We Dream Together” that offered immigrants valuable resources and tools, and an explanation of their constitutional rights to a free public school education. We also launched efforts to dismantle the school to prison pipeline and to reduce chronic absenteeism.

We reshaped our vision in how we deliver food in our schools by putting our customers — that is our students — first. In particular, we gave them a voice in developing and selecting healthier and more appetizing food choices. Our Department of Food and Nutrition Services did this by staging our first annual Cooking Up Change challenge, where student chefs prepared meals using our nutrition guidelines and current per-meal budget of \$1.43. The winning recipe (a Chicken Fajita Tostada Bowl with Grilled Veggies and Banana Bites) will appear on our menu next year. The winning team also had the chance to represent BPS this month at the national competition in Washington D.C.

FNS also conducted over 25 mini “food shows” across the district, collecting feedback from 5,000 students on over 20 menu items. This input is critical since we now require a 75% student approval rating before placing a dish on a future menu. We also had 1,700 students participate in taste-tests of meals prepared by the companies who submitted bids to become the next pre-plated food vendor. We launched Hub and Spoke, a pilot program in East Boston that aims to give more students access to freshly prepared food by having a school with a full-service kitchen centrally make meals that are distributed to surrounding schools with satellite kitchens that only have ovens to reheat food. We also balanced our Food and Nutrition Budget for the first time in more than a decade, erasing a long-running, multi-million dollar deficit.

On Monday, June 12th, we teamed up with Nickelodeon and our partner, Playworks, to host a “World Wide Day of Play” for students at the Mattahunt Elementary School. It might have been a hot, muggy day, but you would have never known it by the smiles on the children’s faces. They got to go through a really fun obstacle course before lining up for the grand finale, the “Slime Tank.” While the kids all donned plastic ponchos before getting doused with green goo, Principal Walter Henderson bravely scrapped the protective gear and went all in. Needless to say, his students were thrilled to see their fearless school leader covered in slime. I managed to avoid the Slime Tank.

Last Thursday, Mayor Walsh, Chairman O’Neill and School Committee Member Alexandra Oliver-Dávila joined us at the Harvard Kent for the launch of our “5th Quarter of Learning,” a new initiative that re-envisioned traditional “Summer School.” We are taking 2,200 high-need

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students out of the classroom and engaging them in really exciting enrichment programs to inspire real-world learning. This innovative approach blends rigorous academic learning with hands-on activities like sailing, archery, salsa dancing, and tennis. Students learn critical thinking, perseverance, and teamwork skills. This new initiative builds on the successes of our network of 110 summer learning programs, which now enroll more than 10,000 students each summer — bringing the total to 12,000 students overall in summer learning. Research shows us that year-long learning has tremendous benefits in stopping the summer slide. That is why we have allocated \$2 million to this effort. As the Mayor said, “We realize that a student’s education shouldn’t stop at the end of the school year — when the ‘4th quarter’ of learning closes. To make sure our students don’t fall behind, they must learn year-round.” I want to thank our partners, particularly Boston After School & Beyond, in helping to support the programming at 31 school and community sites. I also want to thank Meta Movements for leading us in some Salsa dancing.

On Monday, the 13 schools that are part of the “Excellence for All” initiative participated in a Capstone Project Showcase. Over 150 students shared their work with parents, teachers, school leaders, and central office staff, including me. Students demonstrated their learning by applying problem solving skills to real-world challenges, such as designing a classroom that best supports inclusion. They also shared and celebrated their cultural identities through an interdisciplinary project entitled “I am Descended from Greatness”; and showed off their creativity with an interpretive dance version of Paul Revere’s ride. Other students shared what they learned about voting rights using large annotated drawings of current elected officials. The showcase celebrated the end of the first year of the Excellence for All initiative, and was a proof point demonstrating what all BPS 4th graders are capable of doing when given the opportunity to demonstrate their learning in authentic ways.

Yesterday, we held a groundbreaking ceremony to launch the \$20 million renovation of the John Eliot K-8 Innovation Upper School building. When completed in fall of 2019, the school will feature state-of-the-art spaces designed to promote collaborative learning, as well as an art studio and robotics-engineering lab overlooking the Charles River. One of the really cool features will be windows that project outward from the new exterior, forming learning nooks where students can problem solve together. The two-year construction project is the final phase of an overall \$43 million project that will create a three-campus Eliot School. Come fall, the Eliot’s grade 3-8th grade students will move into the newly renovated former North Bennet Street School. The City has invested \$23 million in a comprehensive renovation of the North Bennet Street building that created new classrooms, computer labs, a multi-purpose room and media center all designed for 21st century learning. In addition, the project included construction of a new cafeteria, kitchen, mechanical systems, elevator, fire protection and accessibility upgrades. The Eliot School represents the \$1 billion we’re investing in BPS buildings over ten years throughout Boston. I’m proud that as a City, we’re making investments that will allow students to achieve their full potential. A highlight of the event was the class of fifth-graders singing a beautiful song they composed this year, called “Hope.”

Also yesterday, we partnered with Liberty Mutual Insurance to hold our first-ever Youth Homelessness Prevention Forum. The event drew attention to the district’s deep work in

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preventing youth homelessness, and the supports we offer to the approximately 3,000 students experiencing homelessness. Liberty Mutual and the BPS Office of External Affairs developed this forum in partnership with community organizations (such as Youth Harbors, Bridge Over Troubled Waters and Y2Y) to connect schools directly with local organizations and young people who have experienced housing instability to understand what services they need most. In order for our students to perform well in school, their social-emotional needs must be met. BPS is committed to fostering our students' skills and talents to ensure they are ready for college, career, and life.

This morning, we unveiled our new partnership with Becoming a Man, or BAM, for short. We are very excited to team up with this nationally-recognized program, which has a proven track record of successfully serving at-risk youth by providing school-based counseling and mentorship services. Founded in Chicago in 2001 by Youth Guidance, BAM teaches valuable life skills to young men of color in at-risk communities. Researchers have found that its programming has increased on-time high school graduation rates and decreased arrest rates for the students it serves. BPS is the first district outside Chicago in which BAM has chosen to expand. We are very pleased to share that this fall Boston BAM will serve 150 young men at four BPS high schools: Jeremiah E. Burke High School; Dearborn STEM Academy; The English High School; The John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science. I would like to thank Dr. Makeeba McCreary, Shawn Brown, Thaddeus Miles, Conan Harris, and Rahn Dorsey for helping launch this organization here in Boston.

Earlier today, Boston Green Academy celebrated with not one but two ribbon-cutting ceremonies! The first was the ceremonial launch of BGA's newly renovated library. The library design was the product of a participatory community design process. We thank Gensler Architects and Turner Construction for this library make-over. The second ribbon cutting marked the redesign of a room at BGA to support some of the school's students with special needs. This newly created space features kitchen and laundry facilities where students can learn important life skills. That concludes my report for tonight.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila commented that found it extremely moving attending high school graduation ceremonies earlier this month, and that she is proud to be part of a district that serves all students. She also praised BPS's high school-to-teacher program.

Ms. Jeri Robinson said she was impressed with the 4th graders who presented their work at the Excellence for All event earlier this week.

Mr. O'Neill noted that four officers in the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) are retiring this month: BTU President Richard Stutman; Vice-President Patrick Connolly, Secretary-Treasurer Charles Johnson, and Substitute Field Representative Josefina Lascano. The Committee will formally recognize the retired officers at a fall meeting. He also congratulated BTU president-elect Jessica Tang.

The School Committee approved the Superintendent's Report by unanimous consent.

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GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Jennifer Boyd Herlihy, BPS parent, testified regarding the home base student assignment model and changes to the waitlist.

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the value and impact of the BPS Global Education presentation to the Committee on June 7, 2017.

Victor Alvarado, student, John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science, and member, Sociedad Latina, testified regarding student discipline at middle schools and Advanced Work Class.

ACTION ITEMS

Mr. Loconto asked for more information about the reimbursable grants, which Anu Medappa Jayanth, director of Federal and State Grants, provided.

Dean Coleman requested that the district provide more measurable and specific SMART goals for all grants for approval moving forward.

Ms. Jeri Robinson asked for more information about the external partners for the adult education grants, which Maria Harris, director of Adult Education, provided.

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants totaling \$7,058,687.

Approved – The Committee unanimously approved, by roll call, revisions to the District Wellness Policy.

REPORTS

English Language Learners Task Force Update – Dr. Miren Uriarte and Suzanne Lee, co-chairs of the School Committee's English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force, presented their annual update to the Committee. The co-chairs were joined by ELL Task Force coordinator Michael Berardino.

The School Committee created the ELL Task Force in 2009 to provide guidance to the district on the vision and development of a plan of action that responds to the new demographics of the BPS for students whose home language is not English and to identify mechanisms to address the needs of ELL students. Since the Committee approved the ELL Task Force's recommendations in 2011, the group has served as a monitoring body and thought partner for the district.

Currently 31 percent of BPS students are ELLs who together speak 64 different languages. Twenty-one percent of ELLs are students with disabilities.

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The co-chairs highlighted several areas of progress, including: improved data systems and the use of technology; progress with the analysis of the home base student assignment system; enhanced support for ELL students with disabilities; improvements to program quality and quantity; and stronger family and community engagement. Continuing challenges include: data and information gaps; student assignment and program integrity; taking language into account consistently; gaps in appropriate staffing; and bringing ELL parent engagement to the schools. The Task Force would also like to see the district create a pathway for Cape Verdean students.

The co-chairs requested the reauthorization of the ELL Task Force, as well as the approval of the following new members: Dr. Patricia Crain de Galarce Dr. Andres Alonso; and Farah Assiraj. The Committee is scheduled to vote on both matters on July 19th.

Mr. Loconto asked best practices around parent engagement for ELL families and encouraged the district to scale up shining examples. He also cited a [Federal Reserve Bank of Boston April 2017 brief](#) on parent engagement. Ms. Lee said that school leaders play a critical role in family engagement.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked about professional development opportunities and accountability for school leaders around family engagement. She encouraged the district to rethink engagement strategies so that parents don't need to come to school to feel engaged, and to broaden relationships with parents beyond academic discussions.

Ms. Jeri Robinson asked about district's capacity to serve ELLs and offer parents meaningful school choices. The Superintendent said that parents want clear pathways for students from K-12.

Dr. Uriarte said that the district must find a balance of ELL programs and family choice.

Mr. O'Neill described the work of the ELL Task Force as critical and said that BPS cannot succeed as a district unless its ELL students succeed.

A Plan for Turnaround at Brighton and Excel High Schools – Director of Turnaround and Transformation Liza Veto and Instructional Superintendent Jonathan Landman provided an update on the Superintendent's plans to turnaround Brighton and Excel high schools, which were designated Level 4 schools by the state last September. Incoming Excel headmaster Renee McCall and incoming Brighton headmaster Rob Rametti co-presented.

Both Brighton and Excel will implement Linked Learning, which organizes education around industry-sector themes and provides personalized supports, providing students with a more relevant, engaging experience. BPS will receive a \$2.77 million grant from the state to fund turnaround strategies at both schools over the next three years. These funds will be an important support for the schools' improvement.

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The Superintendent issued the initial release of both schools' turnaround plans on June 7th. By July 7th, the School Committee, the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and each school's Local Stakeholder Group can propose modifications to the plans. The Superintendent will meet with the Brighton Local Stakeholder Group on June 22 and the Excel Local Stakeholder Group on June 26th to hear their feedback directly. After proposals are submitted, the Superintendent has 30 days to consider the proposals and issue final versions of the turnaround plans.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked engagement strategies to build support around the new school models. Both headmaster are conducting listening tours during the summer.

Ms. Jeri Robinson asked the implementation of Linked Learning, which will be phased in over time starting in 9th grade.

Mr. Loconto asked about the ability of students to change pathways. The Superintendent explained that the Linked Learning model teaches students project-based learning and other critical skills that will prove valuable no matter what career path they choose.

Mr. O'Neill said that BPS offers a portfolio of schools with various themes that allow for student agency, adding that the district must prepare students to work Boston's thriving industries. He recently joined district leaders on a visit to Los Angeles high schools offering Linked Learning and was impressed with the students he met.

Dr. Uriarte requested data on outcomes for Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) multi-lingual students. She also expressed concerns about the ability of ELL students to participate in internships and dual enrollment programs. The Superintendent said he will return to the Committee with an update addressing those concerns.

Dean Coleman encouraged the headmasters to think carefully about their metrics of success and choosing appropriate leading and lagging indicators for their data dashboard.

Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers Charter Renewal – Edward M. Kennedy (EMK) Academy for Health Careers Headmaster Dr. Caren Walker Gregory presented an application to renew the school's five-year charter. The application has already been approved by the school's board of trustees and the Boston Teacher's Union, and requires support from the School Committee before it can be presented to DESE for final approval.

EML is a successful college preparatory high school that focuses on putting students on a solid pathway to careers in the health professions. The Superintendent noted that the EMK school community has expressed their desire to move to a 7-12 grade configuration, but said he will use the BuildBPS master-planning process to inform his decision.

Ms. Jeri Robinson praised the school's impressive graduation rates, which Dr. Walker Gregory contributed to the schools focus on college readiness and expectations, as well as parent engagement and teacher diversity.

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Members also asked questions about the school's ELL population and Code of Conduct, all of which were answered by Dr. Walker Gregory. Mr. O'Neill said he is impressed with school's strong partnerships with local institutions.

The Committee is scheduled to vote on EMK's charter renewal application on July 19th.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

John Mudd, advocate, urged the Committee to approve the reauthorization of the ELL Task Force and urged the district to revise the performance evaluation tool for principals so that it accounts for teacher diversity.


NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

At approximately 9:24 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary