



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

September 13, 2017

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on September 13, 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; Regina Robinson (arrived during Superintendent's Report); and Dr. Miren Uriarte.

School Committee Members Absent: Jeri Robinson; and student representative Keondré McClay.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Boston School Committee and the Boston Teachers Union: 2016-2018

School Committee Presentation: BSC-BTU Tentative Agreement Power Point

BPS/BTU Two-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement Equity Impact Statement

Excerpts from the Agreement between the School Committee of the City of Boston and the Boston Teachers Union, Local 66, AFT, AFL-CIO

Brief Summary of BPS/BTU Tentative Agreement Executed 8-24-17

At-Risk Low Performing Schools Power Point

At-Risk Low Performing Schools Equity Impact Statement

Analysis of BPS Level 3 and Level 4 Monitoring Site Visit Reports: School Year 2016-2017, Office of Turnaround and Transformation, Boston Public Schools

September 13, 2017

BPS Office of Equity: School Year 2016-17 Report Power Point

Office of Equity Annual Report – SY 2016-17 Equity Impact Statement

CALL TO ORDER

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

MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the September 6, 2017 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

Good evening, everyone. I am happy to see all of you tonight as we ride a wave of optimism and enthusiasm to begin the 2017-18 school year. It’s been an exhilarating past few days as we’ve welcomed our students back to school. I’ve had such an awesome time greeting students as they returned — or arrived to school for the very first time — smiling and excited for the new year. Hopefully you have been viewing and sharing our back-to-school photos on social media. We’ve been using the hashtag “BPS Back to School” (#BPSBackToSchool) on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

Many BPS and City leaders, including Mayor Walsh, Chairman O’Neill, BTU President Jessica Tang, and Chief of Education Rahn Dorsey, joined me as we visited numerous schools over the past few days. We handed out pencils and those beloved “I Love Boston Public Schools” stickers to as many students and parents as we possibly could! We actually have a quick video with some highlights that I’d like to show you now.

Some highlights included our trip on Thursday to the Blackstone Innovation School, where the CEO and co-founder of Revolution Foods, Kristin Groos Richmond, joined us as we ate their prepared meals for the first time. I had the spaghetti-and-meatball dish that was made specifically for Boston, and I have to say it was quite tasty! We got many good reviews from our toughest critics — our students — so we were beyond happy about that! There were even a few students who said it was the best meal they’ve ever had!

We also had a great morning on Monday as we welcomed students to the new Mattapan Early Elementary School, the former Mattahunt School, for the first day of pre-k and kindergarten (K0, K1, K2). There was such an overwhelming amount of positive energy as the students arrived to their brand new school. We saw a lot of smiling faces on our youngest students — and even some tears from parents as they watched their children go off to school for the first time.

September 13, 2017

Principal Walter Henderson and his tremendous staff did a great job of inviting the parents to eat breakfast with the students in the cafeteria before the morning bell — the gathering turned into what felt like a pep rally because everyone was so excited.

Mayor Walsh addressed the parents, and he proclaimed that the new Mattapan Early Elementary School will be one of the most successful schools in the city of Boston — and I wholeheartedly share his view. It was so exciting to see the new school shining inside and outside on the first day. We completed some fabulous facilities upgrades over the summer, which help promote a safe, welcoming, and sustaining environment. This included brand new furniture in every classroom, improved lighting, new ceilings, newly painted hallways and classrooms, a newly painted cafeteria, and a reconfigured main office to promote a customer-service feel.

It was an honor to be at the school on the first day of the K1 Haitian-Creole dual-language program with several community leaders and BPS staff who helped make this happen. We now have six educators at the school who speak Haitian Creole, along with several other multi-lingual teachers. There is now a waiting list of students who would like to be enrolled into the program next year (3 Haitian speakers, 13 English speakers). I'd like to thank Principal Henderson and BPS staff for helping to publicize the benefits of the program to the community. All in all, it was an amazing day, and I am really looking forward to helping this school make it a successful first year.

The last few days in the Boston Public Schools have been exhilarating. It reminds us why our work is so important — everything we do is to help these students become their best selves, close opportunity and achievement gaps, and to provide safe, welcoming, and sustaining environments for learning. Welcome back to the students and staff — and cheers to a successful 2017-18 school year!

Continuing with back-to-school news, I'd like to express how pleased I am to see every school implementing SMART goals to work on their instructional focus to increase culturally and linguistically sustaining practices. Our school leaders worked together to form these goals at the August Leadership Institute, and it's great to see them being put into practice. Our schools are nearly staffed with principals and administrators, and nearly all of our teaching positions are filled, or about 99%. (32 open positions on Day 1.) I'd also like to share that our overall student attendance rate for the first day of school was 78%, which was in-line with the past four years. (75% in 2014, 79% in 2015, and 80% in 2016.) As of yesterday, Day 4, the attendance rate increased to 88%, compared to 85% from Day 4 of last year. As you are aware, our attendance goal is 95% and schools with attendance rates above 95% on Day 1 were UP Academy Dorchester, Baldwin Early Learning Pilot Academy, Eliot K-8 Innovation School, East Boston Early Education Center, Quincy Elementary, Boston Day and Evening Academy, Boston Latin Academy, and Boston Latin School. I want to congratulate these schools and most importantly, the young people at these schools for being at school ready to learn on day 1.

I would also like to provide you an update on our school bus on-time performance rates. There has been a lot of attention on transportation this year due to the BPS Transportation Challenge, and the innovative solution to routing that was created by MIT. First and foremost, I would like

September 13, 2017

to stress that BPS is committed to ensuring that all students arrive to school safely and on time every single day. When it comes to transportation, there is a division of roles and responsibilities between the Boston Public Schools Transportation Department and Transdev, our third-party service provider. BPS is responsible for creating the routes and providing customer service; while Transdev, is responsible for operating the buses and managing the bus drivers. We all work together to make sure students get to and from school safely and on time, and we work together to solve problems that arise. I would like to particularly thank the hardworking staff in the BPS Transportation Department who, just as they do at this time every year, are answering calls from families who have transportation questions on the BPS Transportation Hotline (the number is 617-635-9520); and work around the clock to resolve issues that inevitably occur at the start of school.

With that being said, we did experience a decline in the on-time performance rate on the first day of school. The morning buses were on-time 44% of the time on Day 1, which is down from 51% last year. Thankfully, our on-time performance in the morning is now about 71%, but we have to do better. This year we have begun to do a deep dive into transportation performance data. One interesting point is that the percentage of buses leaving the bus yards on time has been consistently low. In the morning on Day 1, just under 30% of the buses left the yards on time, and as of yesterday we were at 50%. Another interesting data point shows that, for the buses that left the bus yards on time, they arrived to school on-time about 81% of the time over the past four school days. (That's an average of the four days.) This data point leads us to believe that low on-time performance rates are not attributed to the new routing system delivered by MIT. There appears to be a correlation between buses leaving the bus yards on time and buses arriving at schools on time.

This new routing system is helping us create \$3 million and \$5 million in reduced costs by eliminating 50 bus routes with low ridership. It also reduced our carbon footprint by 20,000 pounds of emissions per day; and 1 million miles of trips on city streets. We are also pleased that, by and large, students are not noticing any changes from last year as a result of this route reduction. 98% of students have the same bus stop as last year, unless they moved or are attending a different school. Additionally, the average length of time per trip remains the same at 23 minutes. I understand how frustrating it can be for families and school staff to deal with late buses, and we are committed to work with Transdev to make sure we continue to improve.

I would like to briefly provide you an update on teachers who are designated as Suitable Professional Capacity, meaning they are working in classrooms but without permanent teaching positions. As of today, 77 teachers in total are designated as SPC.

- 39 of them are in their first year of SPC.
- 19 are second-year.
- 16 are third-year.
- 3 are fourth year.

These numbers are expected to continue to decline as the school year moves forward and positions open up.

September 13, 2017

It is truly heartbreaking to watch the images coming out of the Caribbean and Florida as they begin to recover from Hurricane Irma. The timing could not have been worse, as Texas continues to dry out after Hurricane Harvey. When Hurricane Harvey struck two weeks ago, I issued a call for action to our school leaders to provide whatever they could to help schools in the Houston Independent School District (ISD). I am happy to report that we now have 70 schools paired up with schools in Houston through an adopt-a-school initiative that provides supplies, fundraising, pen pals, and the social-emotional support that those students and staff so desperately need.

In addition, on Sunday, I sent a message to BPS families offering support to any students and staff here in Boston who are affected by Harvey or Irma. We have 4,325 students who were born in Caribbean countries and territories like the U.S. Virgin Islands, Barbuda, Cuba, Turks and Caicos, Haiti, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic that were literally decimated by Irma. We also have another 569 students who came here from Florida. On Sunday, we sent out a letter to all our students and staff providing them resources to talk to children about coping with the effects of a natural disaster as well as links to many charitable organizations that are seeking donations for hurricane relief funds to help those areas devastated by Irma. Before we move on, I'd like to share with you a video that was made that we at BPS are sending to Houston ISD to let them know they have our support.

I also want to share an update about Dorchester Academy. As we informed the Committee in August, BPS and ABCD mutually agreed to conclude our partnership related to Dorchester Academy. The school had been designated level 4 by the state in 2014 and ABCD took on an active role during the 2015-16 school year with the leadership and programming at the school. Since then, Dorchester Academy has been as a turnaround school with an alternative education program.

Unfortunately, the statutory expectations for turnaround schools (specifically, the requirements for reporting data from testing cohorts of ample size) are not compatible with the format of a small alternative program. With all of this in mind, BPS and ABCD have mutually decided to return the school to full BPS operation. We thank ABCD for two years of dedicated service and their commitment to implementing innovative alternative models for some of our most marginalized students and we are happy to be continuing to work with them on other endeavors.

I am also glad to say that we have had a positive start to the school year at Dorchester Academy. Teachers are teaching. Students are learning. Our teams from the Re-Engagement Center and the Alternative Education Department, supported by the High School Office, have been working hard to engage each student individually. Individual meetings with each returning student are being used to review program placement and develop a plan for their individual path to graduation.

As we have conducted these meetings, we have worked with several students to propose reassignment to other programs that we believe will better meet their educational needs. As we anticipated, this is lowering the enrollment of the school, which is why we offered teachers who had been there last year the opportunity to apply to other positions in BPS. Several did make transitions to other schools. At the same time, the teachers who remain were part of the school

September 13, 2017

last year, have relationships with the students attending and are committed to the mission of the school to continue the academic and support work for these deserving young people. I am glad to say that we and Dorchester Academy will continue invest in the success of the students who remain with the school as well as those who moved to other programs. As the fall semester progresses, we will provide you with additional updates about the school. Let me conclude by thanking, again, the students, parents, and staff of BPS for a strong beginning to the school year. I look forward to another amazing year of learning.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila and Dr. Uriarte requested disaggregated transportation data. The Superintendent said that the district is conducting an analysis and will present the Committee with a comprehensive back-to-school report on October 4.

Ms. Regina Robinson thanked BPS staff, particularly the transportation team and school secretaries who are working hard to support students.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila said that she was saddened to hear about recent changes at Dorchester Academy, adding that she appreciates ABCD. She encouraged the district to examine new approaches to support over-age and under accredited students.

Mr. O'Neill requested a full report on alternative education.

Dr. Uriarte expressed concern that the state uses traditional metrics like MCAS to assess student performance at alternative schools. The Superintendent said that the district is in negotiations with the state about the future of Dorchester Academy.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Rosemary Connors, BPS school nurse, testified regarding health services for students and nursing levels.

Julia Stoller, former Dorchester Academy teacher, testified regarding changes to enrollment and programming at the school.

Deontae McLeodannon, former student, Dorchester Academy, testified regarding changes to enrollment and programming at the school.

Vicky Phan, BPS parent, testified in support of more full inclusion options.

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the coverage of opportunity and achievement gaps in the BPS program budget book.

Tiffany Payne, BPS parent, testified regarding her disappointing experience at the BPS Welcome Center.

September 13, 2017

ACTION ITEMS

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the payment of membership dues to the National School Boards Association for school year 2017-18 in the amount of \$12,975.

Mr. O’Neill announced that the Boston Teacher Union ratified the collective bargaining agreement with the Boston School Committee earlier this evening. Managing Director of Long Term Planning Erika Giampietro and Chief Financial Officer Eleanor Laurans discussed the financial implications of the agreement, which totals approximately \$42.7 million over 2 years. The cost will be added to next year’s maintenance budget. Ms. Laurans said that while the agreement does add some financial pressure, she does not have deep concerns about its impact on the FY19 budget.

Dr. Coleman said that a well-compensated teaching force is critical to supporting student achievement. Mr. O’Neill reiterated that this agreement does not diminish the district’s commitment to its key priorities.

Approved – The Committee unanimously approved, by roll call, the collective bargaining agreement between the Boston School Committee and the Boston Teachers Union, 2016-2018.

Approved – The Committee unanimously approved, by roll call, a supplemental appropriation request to the Boston City Council in the amount of \$31,122,743 to cover the cost of the collective bargaining agreement between the Boston School Committee and the Boston Teachers Union, 2016-2018.

REPORTS

At-Risk Low Performing Schools – Dan Anderson, executive director of strategy, and Shira DeCovnick, program manager with the Turnaround & Transformation Office provided an overview of how the district supports its lowest performing schools. BPS currently has 9 Level 4 schools; 11 Level 3 schools that are in the bottom 1-5 percent statewide; and 15 Level 3 schools that are in the bottom 6-10% statewide. Site monitoring visit reports at 19 low performing schools found that the most significant needs are in core instruction and intervention and that struggling schools tend to struggle with the same challenges. BPS provides low performing schools with an array of supports, including technical assistance teams, academic response teams and acceleration academies, among others.

Ms. Regina Robinson encouraged the district to employ creative strategies to engage families. She also asked about closing opportunity and achievement gaps. The Superintendent explained that the district is taking different approaches to professional development and pedagogy, citing Brighton and Excel high schools as examples.

September 13, 2017

Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked about differentiating instruction and how school and district leaders are being held accountable. Mr. O’Neill said that it’s critical for students and families be informed partners.

Mr. Loconto questions about how the district differentiates its support strategies to low performing schools. Deputy Superintendent of Strategy Donna Muncey provided context to some of the challenges the district faces related to turnaround.

Dr. Uriarte suggested that the district think differently about providing resources to low performing schools because state funding does not appear to be sufficient to bring about sustained turnaround. She also recommended that BPS strengthen its partnerships with the Boston Public Health Commission and community health centers.

Dr. Coleman asked about income distribution at low performing schools and said he looks forward to receiving an equity analysis from the district regarding the home base student assignment system. The Superintendent said that the district is working to create an opportunity index and will present the Committee with a menu of ways in which the district could direct resources.

Mr. O’Neill encouraged the Superintendent to attend the readouts by the district’s technical assistance teams, citing Miami-Dade County Public Schools’ approach as an example. The Superintendent said that the district is focused on increasing rigor and offering students more cognitively demanding tasks.

Office of Equity Report: School Year 2016-17 – Assistant Superintendent of Equity Becky Shuster provided the district’s annual presentation of the work the Office of Equity has done over the past year. The Office of Equity has successfully expanding its language capacity, streamlined its reporting systems, which includes better tracking of trends; improved protocols to both investigate claims of bias-based incidents, and conduct more pro-active work training BPS staff, students, and families on cultural proficiency and issues pertaining to equity. Goals for this school year include increasing efficiencies, conducting equity protocols training for all school administrators, and continuing the roll out of the racial equity tool.

Committee members applauded Ms. Shuster and her team for their impressive work and for taking a district-wide approach.

Ms. Regina Robinson requested an update on the compliance agreement between the US Department of Justice and Boston Latin School. Senior Equity Manager Steve Chen presented a brief overview of a year-one school climate audit which showed that more teachers are responding to bias-based behavior and a need to continue bias and racism training and student outreach.

Mr. Loconto asked about the certification process for the Human Rights Campaign’s Welcoming Schools, a professional development program dedicated to creating respectful and supportive

September 13, 2017

elementary schools by embracing family diversity, creating LGBTQ- and gender-inclusive schools, preventing bias-based bullying, and supporting transgender and non-binary students.

Dr. Uriarte requested additional data on bias-based reports without a finding. Ms. Shuster explained that those cases are usually the result of communication breakdowns.

Mr. O'Neill invited Ms. Shuster to discuss what makes her proud and what brings frustration. She said she is proud of her team and of the meaningful nature of the work, and but would like to be able to provide more resources for students.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Dolores Wood, teacher, West Roxbury Academy, testified regarding the At-Risk Low Performing Schools report.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. O'Neill announced that a student who testified earlier has been enrolled in high school and will start tomorrow.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila requested that all Dorchester Academy students receive a phone call from Welcome Center staff offering to help them enroll in another school if necessary. She also requested that Committee members receive a copy of the letter that the district sent to Dorchester Academy students in August. The Superintendent agreed to follow up.

ADJOURN

At approximately 10:10 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary