



## **OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**September 21, 2016**

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on September 21, 2016 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](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org), email [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto: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; Regina Robinson; Dr. Miren Uriarte; and student representative Keondre McClay.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

School Redesign Grant – Cohort V - \$20,563

BPS Library Services Strategic Plan 2017-2021

UP Academy Boston Type A Memorandum of Understanding

UP Academy Boston Minor Charter Amendment: Daily Schedule Change

UP Academy Dorchester Major Charter Amendment: Maximum Enrollment

Financial Impact of Charter Cap Lift

Memo from Chair and Vice Chair to Committee and Superintendent Re: Commonwealth Charter Cap Lift and Draft Resolution

Memo from Regina Robinson to Committee and Superintendent Re: Superintendent's Composite Summative Performance Evaluation – School Year 2015-2016

Performance Evaluation Standards and Indicators

**School Committee Meeting**  
Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building  
School Committee Chamber

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Dr. Chang's Self-Evaluation

Dr. Chang's Reflections on Each Standard and a Summary of Artifacts

Dr. Chang's SMART Goals

School Committee's Composite Summative Evaluation

Individual Members' End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluations

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. O'Neill led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order. He welcomed student representative Keondre McClay, a junior at the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers.

## **MEETING MINUTES**

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the September 7, 2016 School Committee meeting.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

State accountability results will be released on Monday, September 26, 2016.

Attendance is an important early risk indicator to student engagement and critical to student academic success. The state's goal is 95 percent. The Superintendent applauded the following schools that have achieved 95 percent or higher attendance rates since the beginning of the school year (first five days of school):

Dudley Street Neighborhood School, Roxbury  
Hurley K-8 School, South End  
Mendell Elementary, Jamaica Plain  
UP Academy Dorchester, Dorchester  
Bates Elementary, Roslindale  
Grew Elementary, Hyde Park  
Haley Pilot School, Roslindale  
Henderson K-12 Inclusion School, Dorchester  
Kenny Elementary, Dorchester  
Lee Academy, Dorchester

BPS and the Office of Social and Emotional Learning have launched an Attendance campaign titled, "I'm in! Attend today, achieve tomorrow!" The "I'm in!" attendance campaign reminds students of the five top reasons why they should go to school every day: 1) school is fun, 2) you are getting prepared for life, 3) you show your school spirit, 4) you make friends, 5) you can win

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perfect attendance awards, and more. The Superintendent will monitor the district's progress to achieving its goal of a 95 percent attendance rate.

The district is about to embark on an exciting phase in BuildBPS, the Boston Public Schools' 10-year educational and facilities master planning process. Over the next several months, the Superintendent will present to the community a series of important reports and data sets that capture the district's preliminary findings from this year-long process.

Tonight, the Superintendent submitted to the Committee a schedule for public release of the initial drafts of several reports, beginning at the School Committee meeting on October 5<sup>th</sup>, at which time the Superintendent will share a schedule of engagement opportunities through the end of the calendar year.

BPS will create various opportunities – both live and on-line – for families, staff, and the community to offer their perspectives on these reports. Most notably: the BuildBPS Open House will be held at the Bolling Building on Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, October 30<sup>th</sup>. The district looks forward to engaging the entire BPS community as we build and support a portfolio of schools to prepare students for success in college and career using the guiding values of equity, coherence and innovation.

On Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, the Superintendent joined 265 City Year AmeriCorps members, volunteers, school families, City Year alumni, and corporate partners to refresh two schools in Jamaica Plain. Students entering the Curley K-8 and John F. Kennedy STEM Innovation schools this year will see newly renovated classrooms and hallways. The volunteers rolled up their sleeves to paint hallways and outdoor areas, create murals, clean up school-grounds, pack resource kits, and complete many more projects at the two schools as part of City Year Boston's annual "Red Jacket Weekend."

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, the Superintendent joined Mayor Walsh, Chairman O'Neill, and other officials and BPS leadership at the topping-off ceremony for the construction of the future Dearborn STEM Academy. The ceremony represents the completion of the building's structural steel. It was a major milestone for a school that will provide tomorrow's students a learning environment that will meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, and prepare them for jobs in our competitive global economy. The new building will not only be an innovative space where teachers will intertwine the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in real-world applications, but it will also be an inviting school environment that inspires collaboration and team learning. The new Dearborn school will be a showcase for the rest of the country to see what the classrooms of the future will look like.

This month, Boston Arts Academy became one of only 20 schools across the country to receive recognition as a "School of Opportunity" from the National Education Policy Center. The initiative identifies excellent public high schools that actively strive to close opportunity gaps by engaging in practices that build on students' strengths and create supported learning opportunities for all students. The Superintendent thanked the National Education Policy Center for recognizing all of the hard and successful work happening at Boston Arts Academy.

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On September 9<sup>th</sup>, the Superintendent helped unveil Catie's Closet at the Mather Elementary School. Catie's Closet is a space in the school where students living below the poverty line can pick up clothing, toiletries, hygienic supplies, in particular for students who may be homeless. Removing barriers is a top priority as BPS works to close opportunity and achievement gaps. When students are happy and healthy, they learn better. The Superintendent thanked the Catie's Closet organization, as well as partners Fidelity and Boston Cares, for making the transformative space possible.

The Superintendent applauded the New England Patriots and Southern New Hampshire University for donating \$25,000 toward a new technology lab at the Mather Elementary School. The beautiful new tech lab includes a renovation with new furniture, a 50-inch flat screen television; a new printer; 4 new desktop computers; 50 Kindle tablets and 2 portable charging carts for the tablets.

The Superintendent also thanked Whole Foods for donating more than \$31,000 yesterday to the BPS Countdown to Kindergarten program. On September 7<sup>th</sup>, eight Whole Foods stores in Boston and Brookline contributed 5 percent of their net sales to BPS. Whole Foods has supported BPS kindergartners over the past 10 years by providing healthy snacks and funding for the annual citywide Countdown to Kindergarten Celebration, which took place during the last week of August. Countdown to Kindergarten does a tremendous job of getting students and families ready for kindergarten and this funding is a huge contribution in assisting with that work.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila encouraged the district to be extremely proactive with its attendance initiative, noting that Sociedad Latina and the Boston Private Industry Council went door-to-door as part of a similar effort. Deputy Superintendent Karla Estrada responded that the district is using a multi-pronged strategy that includes direct outreach to families, monitoring data and exploring ways to avoid chronic absenteeism.

Ms. Jeri Robinson suggested providing laundry services at schools as a means to promote attendance.

Mr. O'Neill congratulated Team BPS for participating in the Dimock Center's Road to Wellness 5K Walk/Run on September 10<sup>th</sup>.

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

## **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following people testified regarding the ballot question on raising the cap on Commonwealth charter schools:

- Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George (Councilor Essaibi-George also spoke regarding transportation for homeless students, examining high school start times, residency requirements, and filling vacant K-1 seats.)

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- Karen Kast-McBride, BPS parent and member, Citizens for Public Schools
- Peggy Wiesenber, advocate
- Former State Representative Marty Walz, Great Schools Massachusetts
- Carlos Rojas-Alvarez, advocate, Save Our Schools, and BPS alumnus
- Pertreena Cherrie, parent, KIPP Academy
- John Mudd, advocate (Mr. Mudd also testified regarding in-district charter schools reporting on the progress of English Language Learners)
- Mary Battenfeld, parent, Boston Arts Academy and Boston Latin Academy
- Heshan Berents-Weeramuni, parent, Boston Latin Academy

Sheila Brooks, BPS parent, testified regarding transportation and safety concerns.

Gabriella Pereira, student, Excel High School, testified regarding budget concerns

Tonya Todesco, parent, Boston Arts Academy, testified regarding M-7 bus passes

Hilka Lora, parent, UP Academy, said she is pleased with her child's school experience

Stephanie Bode Ward, former BPS parent, testified regarding an equity analysis of the home-based assignment plan.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

**Approved** – The Committee approved by unanimous consent a grant in the amount of \$20,563.

The Committee discussed the BPS Library Strategic Plan, which must be submitted to the state by October 1<sup>st</sup> in order for BPS to be eligible for grant funding. Director of Library Services Dr. Deborah Lang Froggatt highlighted edits to the plan which were made at the Committee's request. Committee members called for an equity audit and urged the district to connect with external resources and explore digital opportunities to expand student access to library resources.

Dr. Uriarte requested that the equity analysis be presented to the Committee in January, prior to the start of the budget season.

Dr. Coleman requested more information about outcomes to demonstrate how library services support learning, adding the information should be part of school improvement plans.

**Approved** – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the BPS Library Services Strategic Plan for 2017-2021.

Mr. O'Neill thanked UP Network Director Tim Nicolette for providing answers to questions raised following his presentation at the last Committee meeting. Mr. Nicolette briefing reviewed data on students with disabilities and ELLs for UP Academy Boston and UP Academy Dorchester. He explained that he had reviewed the BPS Code of Conduct, found it to be

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thoughtful and thorough, and will present it to the schools' respective Boards of Trustees for consideration.

Committee members strongly encouraged the UP Network leaders to adopt the BPS Code of Conduct.

Dr. Uriarte requested more information about the English Language Development (ELD) levels of UP Academy students.

**Approved** – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a charter amendment for UP Academy School of Boston: Daily Schedule Change.

**Approved** – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a Type A Memorandum of Understanding for UP Academy School of Boston.

**Approved** – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a charter amendment for UP Academy School of Dorchester: Maximum Enrollment.

## REPORTS

**Financial Impact of Charter Cap Lift** - City of Boston Budget Director Katie Hammer and BPS Chief Financial Officer Eleanor Laurans presented a report on the potential financial impact in the event that the current Commonwealth charter school cap is lifted should ballot Question 2 be approved by voters in November. The presenters explained that the ballot initiative will accelerate the growth in Boston's Charter School Assessment. Boston has lost \$48 million over three years due to the underfunding of the Charter School Reimbursement. Boston's assessment is higher because the reimbursement is underfunded. As currently structured, state law disadvantages BPS' finances relative to charter schools. If Boston added three charter schools a year over 10 years, for example, Boston could see an additional 20,000 charter school students. If Boston's Above Foundation Spending Rate continues to grow at a rate consistent with the last five year average, Boston could be paying \$26,000 per pupil or an \$800 million assessment by Fiscal Year 2028.

The Committee engaged in a robust discussion about charter school financing and the potential impact of the initiative. Mr. O'Neill characterizes the potential financial impact as Draconian. Ms. Oliver-Dávila said district needs to ask itself why families are choosing charter schools. Dr. Coleman suggested that state officials explore adding a weighted student formula at the state level similar, citing California as an example. Dr. Uriarte encouraged the Committee to take action on the issue. Ms. Jeri Robinson encouraged BPS to make improvements that could attract more students, such as reducing transitions.

Mr. O'Neill and Dr. Coleman presented for members' consideration a draft resolution against the lifting the cap on Commonwealth Charter schools. Members expressed support for the draft. Mr. Loconto said the problem with Question 2 is that it has no funding mechanism built into it, explaining that the current financial imbalance will be exacerbated. He suggested adding the

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following language to the resolution: “Whereas, unrestricted growth of Commonwealth charter schools will dramatically reduce general (district) public school financing without a corresponding increase in funding for public education.”

The Superintendent commented that the charter cap issue is polarizing, adding that the complicated funding system needs reform.

The Committee is scheduled vote on the resolution on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

***Superintendent’s Evaluation Results*** – Ms. Regina Robinson, who has been leading the Superintendent’s performance evaluation process on behalf of the Committee, presented a composite summative evaluation for Superintendent Tommy Chang for school year 2015-2016. The composite summarizes the collective feedback provided by Committee members in their individual evaluations, and provides Dr. Chang with an overall rating of proficient in his first year as superintendent.

The Committee conducted the evaluation using a rubric consisting of 10 indicators and 18 elements. The Committee followed the steps prescribed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and consulted with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC).

Several Committee members commented that the state-mandated evaluation instrument is limiting and does not allow evaluators to fully capture the performance of the person being evaluated. Members thanked the Superintendent for his hard work and commitment to BPS, saying he leads with empathy and is strongly commitment to rigor and excellence.

The Superintendent commented that he is proud to lead the district, appreciates the evaluation process, and remains deeply committed to BPS.

The Committee will take a vote to adopt the Superintendent’s final evaluation rating at its October 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

Heshan Berents-Weeramuni, BPS parent, testified regarding the financial impact of lifting the charter cap.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**School Committee Meeting**  
Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building  
School Committee Chamber

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**ADJOURN**

At approximately 10:12 p.m., the Committee unanimously voted, by roll call, to adjourn to executive session to discuss collective bargaining with the Boston Teachers Union. The Committee did not return to public session.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan  
Executive Secretary