



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

**September 7, 2016**

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on September 7, 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; Michael Loconto; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; and Dr. Miren Uriarte.

School Committee Members Absent: Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman and Alexandra Oliver-Dávila.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Grants for Approval Totaling \$38,835,214

- ECET2 – Elevating and Celebrating Effective Teachers and Teaching - \$9,000.
- Mass. Expanded Learning Time – Boston Arts Academy - \$10,520.
- Supporting Chemistry Teachers to Assess and Foster Chemical Thinking - \$241,561.
- Reading Recovery: Massachusetts Early Literacy Intervention Program Grant - \$63,889.
- Title I - \$38,082,660.

Update on BPS Water Access Policy Implementation

BPS Library Services Strategic Plan 2017-2021

UP Academy Boston Memorandum of Understanding and Charter Amendments for UP Academy Dorchester and UP Academy Boston

### **CALL TO ORDER**

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

*September 7, 2016*

## MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the July 20, 2016 School Committee meeting.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Tomorrow marks the first day of school for the 2016-2017 school year for Boston Public Schools (BPS). The Superintendent will join Mayor Walsh at the Hyde Park Educational Complex at the beginning of the day to greet students and teachers at New Mission High School and Boston Community Leadership Academy. He will also visit the Curley K-8 School, Boston Latin Academy, and the Ellis Elementary School. BPS employees will hand out pencils and "I ♥ BPS" stickers to students, and the Superintendent will observe classroom lessons and activities.

Monday, September 12<sup>th</sup> marks the start of kindergarten and the Superintendent is looking forward to visiting the Kilmer K-8 School, Conley Elementary School, Kenny Elementary School, and the Hale Elementary School.

The Superintendent presented a final copy of his Strategic Implementation Plan for Boston Public Schools, "Stronger Schools, Stronger Boston: A Plan to Foster Equity, Coherence, and Innovation." This plan will guide the district's work over the next three-five years.

The Superintendent will align and integrate the plan with the work of the School Committee's English Language Learners Task Force, Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force, and Inclusion Task Force. This plan will be a living document and with detailed, annual milestones. The entire strategic implementation plan, along with milestones, can be found at [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org) and updates will be posted regarding the district's progress on its commitments. Additionally, the Superintendent will present two updates to the School Committee per year.

The Superintendent thanked the many teachers and staff members and students who participated in summer learning programs through BPS. More than 10,000 students were collectively served at BPS programs and other programs offered throughout the city. This includes more than 200 high school seniors who received their diplomas at the BPS Summer Commencement on August 24<sup>th</sup>. The Superintendent also thanked the many community and philanthropic partners who make summer learning possible. In addition to academics with programs like Smarter Summers and Extended School Year, students had access to a range of enrichment and extracurricular activities like arts, media, and even rowing. All of these activities keep kids focused on learning during the summer months; mitigates "summer slide"; and closes opportunity and achievement gaps.

The BPS August Leadership Institute was held in mid-August. School Committee Chair Michael O'Neill and Mayor Martin J. Walsh spoke to teachers and school leaders about their important roles and the value of public education in Boston. Other speakers included the Boston Teachers

**September 7, 2016**

Union President Richard Stutman, Chief of Education Rahn Dorsey, and BPS students Allan Denton, Sofia Francisco, and Oliver Culliton.

Participants engaged in powerful and transformative learning sessions throughout the three days on topics including:

- Addressing issues of race, politics and education in the classroom;
- Developing a better definition of social emotional learning and wellness;
- Creating safe, healthy, and welcoming school environments;
- Examining approaches to school safety;
- Understanding opportunity and achievement gaps;
- Cultivating culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.

On Tuesday, August 30<sup>th</sup>, BPS hosted the 17th Annual Countdown to Kindergarten Celebration at the Boston Children's Museum. This event was made possible by event sponsors, which included: Cradles to Crayons, Boston Children's Hospital, Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA), Whole Foods Markets, and WGBH/the Krueger Foundation. Other partnering organizations include the Boston Public Health Commission, the Boston Public Library, the Boston University School of Dental Medicine, New England Eye On-Sight Mobile Vision Clinic, and many more. Each kindergartner left with a backpack full of school supplies. Participants were able to enjoy free access to the Museum's exhibits; meet with BPS personnel; take advantage of free dental and vision screenings; and families participated in mini-readiness workshops led by BPS teachers.

The BPS Experience Lab and the BPS Transportation Department recently participated in a Hackathon event at Bentley University that garnered many creative and truly innovative ideas to improve the experiences of students on school buses, from placing tablet devices behind every seat, to creating seating zones for reading and other activities. The winning team from the Hackathon will meet with district leaders later this fall to discuss which ideas might be feasible.

As part of an initiative called, "In Transit: Voices and Vision," through a partnership with artists from the Urban Scholars program at UMass Boston, 21 high school students created 14 posters that chronicle political and social issues. The students worked directly with artists, who taught them how to incorporate their stories into their work.

Another summer success was the Exam School Initiative, the preparation course for students in grade 6 who are considering taking the entrance exam to BPS's three exam schools on November 5th. After some tremendous recruitment efforts by the Office of Opportunity and Achievement Gaps, and with support from Mayor Walsh and the Boston Latin School Association, BPS greatly increased attendance and diversity in the program this year, raising the total number from about 425 to 646. The percentage of Black and Latino students increased from 24% to 50%. The Superintendent pledged to continue stepping up efforts to increase participation from students all BPS schools. The deadline to register for the ISEE exam is September 23rd. For more information, visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org/exam](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/exam).

Boston Partners in Education is celebrating its 50th year of being a partner with Boston Public Schools. Boston Partners in Education places volunteers in our schools and provides outstanding

**September 7, 2016**

mentorship to students. On September 26th at 8:30 a.m. in the Bolling Municipal Building in Roxbury, we BPS and Boston Partners in Education will hold a panel discussion to talk about this important milestone and the power of mentors. The event is open to school staff and central office staff.

The Superintendent congratulated two BPS students who were recognized in Washington, D.C., last month as part of the “Do the Write Thing” challenge, an initiative of the National Campaign to Stop Violence. Amari Sullivan, an 8th grader at the Timilty Middle School in Roxbury; and Megan Cassidy, a 6th grader at the Murphy K-8 School in Dorchester, were among the Massachusetts student representatives in a ceremony that celebrated the work of students nationwide. In their work, the students advocated for an increase in therapeutic resources for children who have experienced violence; and emphasized the importance of afterschool programs.

Five percent of today’s net sales at Whole Foods stores in Boston and Brookline will directly support the BPS Countdown to Kindergarten school readiness programming. For the past 10 years, Whole Foods has supported BPS kindergarteners by providing healthy snacks during the annual Countdown to Kindergarten celebration that took place last week.

Ms. Regina Robinson said she enjoyed attending the Countdown to Kindergarten celebration with her son, who is entering K-1 at the Roosevelt K-8 School. She also praised the incorporation of student voice at the August Leadership Institute, as well as the expansion and diversification of the exam school initiative.

Mr. Loconto lauded the district for providing students with transportation to the exam school initiative and the ISEE exam, citing the importance of removing barriers to educational opportunities.

Ms. Jeri Robinson thanked the Office of English Language Learners for hosting a series of gatherings for BPS families from diverse ethnic communities at the Boston Children’s Museum during the summer.

Dr. Uriarte asked for more information about the BPS Teaching Fellowship program, which is seeking state approval to provide participants with initial teaching licensure. The Superintendent said that the district is working with the state to address their concerns, adding that he will follow up with a report to the Committee about the diversity of the first cohort.

Mr. O’Neill applauded the expansion of exam school initiative and related recruitment efforts, saying it sends the message that the district is serious about expanding equity and closing gaps. He added that the district is examining whether there is parity in how BPS calculates grade point averages compared with charter, private and parochial schools. He noted that this topic will be an agenda item at a future Committee meeting.

Liberty Mutual recently held a reception for local organizations it has funded through its “100 Ways” educational initiative. The effort provides funding for 66 local organizations, primarily

**September 7, 2016**

working in, or with, BPS. Mr. O'Neill thanked Liberty Mutual for its generous support of Boston's youth.

Keondre McClay, a junior at the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers, will serve as student representative to the School Committee. Mr. McClay is absent this evening attending to family matters, but will join the Committee at its September 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. Edward Tapia, a junior at Excel High School, will serve as the alternate student representative.

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

## GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Kristin Johnson, BPS parent, testified regarding student discipline and Ballot Question 2, which asks voters if they support lifting the cap on charter schools.

Peggy Wiesenberg, advocate, testified regarding Question 2.

## ACTION ITEMS

Mr. O'Neill noted that Dr. Uriarte is working with Chief Financial Officer Eleanor Laurans to explore ways to accurately reflect the number of BPS students living in poverty.

**Approved** – The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants totaling \$38,835,214.

## REPORTS

**Update on BPS Water Access Policy Implementation** – Chief Operating Officer John Hanlon and Sustainability Manager Phoebe Beierle presented an update on the district's implementation of the BPS Water Access Policy, which was approved by the Committee on June 8<sup>th</sup>. During the summer, BPS partnered with EnviroTrac, an environmental engineering firm, to test all active water fixtures used for drinking, medical purposes and food preparation. Seven schools in six buildings had a least one fountain with lead levels above 15 parts per billion (ppb): Winship Elementary, Quincy Elementary, Lyndon K-8, Boston Latin School, Lee Academy, and the Burke High School/Dearborn School. All fountains in these schools were turned off and families were notified. Other action steps include a daily flush at each active fountain in accordance with Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) standards and national best practices. Signs have also been hung above sinks indicating that water is for hand washing only. The district is conducting a trial implementation of filter replacement kits and new filtered fountains at Boston Green Academy and the Lee School, and implementing a rigorous water testing schedule throughout the district. BPS is also seeking DEP approval to install point of use lead filters in locations where lead levels are still high. Mr. Hanlon noted that BPS is considered a national leader on the issue of water quality.

Committee members asked a number of clarifying questions about filters and communications, all of which were answered by the presenters.

**September 7, 2016**

Dr. Uriarte expressed concern that elementary students could potentially drink or fill bottles from sinks. The presenters said that the district is working to develop more engaging signage, and is conducting a cost analysis on the instillation of filters. They also noted that national experts have expressed confidence in BPS's strategy. The Superintendent said his team will explore how to improve communication with young people.

***BPS Library Services Strategic Plan 2017-21*** – Dr. Deborah Lang Froggatt, director of Library Services, and Dr. Donna Muncey, deputy superintendent of strategy, presented for consideration a strategic plan for BPS library services from 2017-21. In an effort to provide equitable access to school libraries and resources, and cultivate life-long learners, the district has drafted a strategic plan to guide its work over the next five years. With only 54 of the district's 126 schools having school libraries, and with a reduction in BPS library staff in recent years, BPS must work creatively to provide students with equitable access to library resources. Key focus areas of the plan include building a sustainable financial system, implementing inclusive, rigorous, and culturally/linguistically sustaining programs, developing highly effective library teachers, and engaging students and families.

Committee members expressed dissatisfaction with the current state of school libraries, calling it a reflection of years of difficult budget decisions. Mr. O'Neill and Ms. Regina Robinson encouraged the district to strengthen its partnership with the Boston Public Library to expand access for students and Ms. Robinson requested an update to the Committee next spring. Ms. Jeri Robinson cited Nashville as an example of a school district successfully connecting school its libraries with neighborhood library branches. Dr. Uriarte requested data on the 72 schools that lack a library, including an equity analysis. She also suggested that BPS partner with local universities to expand opportunities for students.

The Superintendent agreed to return with an equity analysis and bring forth creative solutions. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the library services strategic plan on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

***UP Academy Boston Memorandum of Understanding and Charter Amendments for UP Academy Dorchester and UP Academy Boston*** – Tim Nicolette, president of UP Education Network, presented three proposals for consideration: (1) UP Academy Boston: updated Type A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); (2) UP Academy Boston: Daily Schedule Change Charter Amendment; (3) UP Academy Dorchester: Maximum Enrollment Charter Amendment. Mr. Nicolette explained that increasing the maximum enrollment would allow current students to continue through grade 8.

Committee members asked a number of questions about community engagement efforts, student discipline, and governance, all of which were answered by the presenter. Dr. Uriarte requested a list of UP Academy's board of trustees, as well as information on UP's use of SEI multi-lingual programs. Mr. Nicolette agreed to follow up.

Mr. O'Neill asked officials from the Office of English Language Learners and Office of Special Education and Student Support Services to review the MOU prior to the Committee's vote. He also encouraged UP to consider adopting the BPS Code of Conduct.

**September 7, 2016**

The Committee is scheduled to vote on the proposals on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

The Superintendent took a moment to introduce the newly appointed Managing Partner of Innovation Sujata Bhatt and Executive Director of Food Services Laura Benavidez.

***Superintendent's Evaluation Update*** – Ms. Regina Robinson provided a brief oral update on the Superintendent's evaluation process, which is nearing completion. Ms. Robinson said that Committee members are thoroughly reviewing artifacts presented by Dr. Chang as evidence of his work during the 2015-16 school year. A composite evaluation, as well as individual members' evaluations, will be presented at the September 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, and the Committee will vote on a final rating on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the Superintendent's commitment to align his strategic implementation with the work of the English Languages Learners Task Force and the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force. Mr. Mudd also commented on the UP Academy charter amendment and MOU proposals.

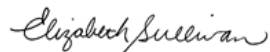
#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. O'Neill announced that the Committee will discuss Ballot Question 2 at its September 21<sup>st</sup> meeting and vote on a resolution on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### **ADJOURN**

At approximately 9:10 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan  
Executive Secretary