



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

January 15, 2020

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on January 15, 2020 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 Loconto; Vice Chairperson Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Michael O’Neill; Jeri Robinson; and Quoc Tran.

School Committee Members Absent: Dr. Lorna Rivera; and Student Representative Evelyn Reyes.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Boston School Committee Meeting Minutes: December 11, 2019; January 6, 2020

Strategic Planning Update PowerPoint

Strategic Planning Draft 2020-2025 for Presentation to the Boston School Committee, January 15, 2020

Strategic Vision Draft Presentation Equity Impact Statement

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Grants for Approval Totaling \$1,304,074:

Amount	FY	Grant Name	Status	Sites
\$29,885	2020	Adult Education Family Literacy	Increase	Madison Park Adult Education High School
\$2,000	2020	Career and Technical Education Partnership Planning Grant	New	Madison Park
\$1,500	2020	Charlestown Community Impact Fund	New	Charlestown High School
\$60,000	2020	Early College Support Grant	New	Charlestown High School
\$109,814	2020	Inclusive Preschool Learning Environments	New	Haynes EEC
\$2,250	2020	Reading Recovery: Massachusetts Early Literacy Intervention Program	Increase	~25 sites districtwide
\$108,625	2020	Teacher Diversification Pilot Program	New	Districtwide
\$530,000	2020	Targeted Assistance Grant – Federal	New	~15 sites districtwide
\$460,000	2020	Targeted Assistance Grant – State	New	~16 sites districtwide

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Loconto called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. He noted that the School Committee held its annual organizational meeting on January 6, 2020. He announced that interpretation services were available in Spanish.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: DECEMBER 11, 2019; JANUARY 6, 2020

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the December 11, 2019 School Committee meeting and January 6, 2020 annual organizational meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

Thank you all for joining us this evening, our first regular meeting of the New Year. I want to wish all Committee members, BPS students, staff, and families, a happy and healthy new year!

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I want to take a quick moment to congratulate my colleagues, Dr. Lorna Rivera and Vice Chairperson Alexandra Oliver-Dávila on their recent re-appointments to the Committee. While you're both BPS parents, you have demonstrated from your work on this committee and in your other roles at the Gaston Institute and Sociedad Latina, respectively, that you are tireless advocates for all of Boston's youth. I'm so excited to have the opportunity to continue working with you both. We have some very important work ahead!

I'd like to share a few brief updates before covering some recent highlights from around the district. Last week we welcomed a new Senior Advisor to the leadership team, Tammy Pust. Tammy comes to us from Minnesota where she most recently served as the Chief Judge at the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings, the state trial court for administrative challenges to government action and workers' compensation claims. Tammy's role at BPS will initially be focused on our efforts to better meet the needs of our students receiving special education services. She will be working closely with Andrea Zayas, Cindie Neilson and their teams as she helps us evaluate how we can best meet the multiple compliance expectations BPS is subject to, and with the help of our Special Education Department, the BTU and other partners, will help us determine how to realize our shared goals around inclusionary classrooms for our students. Tammy will also work closely with Dr. Charles Grandson and the entire executive team as we work to implement our strategic plan once it is finalized later this spring. Welcome to the team, Tammy!

I'd also like to take a moment to address recent media reports alleging the sharing of student information. I understand the concerns families and community members may have. In my 31-year career in education, my top priority has always been to create welcoming and safe learning environments for our students. It is my expectation that we will always keep our student information private. However, we will always fully cooperate with the Boston Police Department and law enforcement officials in any criminal investigation. Since I became superintendent, I have asked for a deep dive into our policies, practices and procedures as it pertains to the sharing of student information. Since the start of the school year, we've conducted a training with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement with all of our school leaders, and we have also trained all of our School Police officers on information sharing. We are working with advocates to review our memos and procedures, and we will continue to review and strengthen our policies to ensure the safety of our students

Speaking of the New Year and 2020, last week we kicked off a pilot program called "Vision for Boston" at 13 BPS schools. The program is a partnership between BPS Health Services, mobile vision clinic start-up 2020 On-site, eyewear company Warby Parker, and others. The program brings the eye doctor to students in their schools. 2020 On-site licensed optometrists and specialists provide comprehensive eye exams and free eyeglasses to students requiring them. All students in participating schools are eligible to receive free eye exams, and any form of health insurance is accepted. Students without health insurance are not asked to pay. Any student found to need eyeglasses can choose a pair at no cost. I've spoken quite a bit about my "all hands on deck" philosophy for providing our students and their families with as much support and as

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many resources as we can. So many students lack access to regular eye exams, so I'm so thankful to these community organizations for their partnership, providing this essential service to our students, for free, inside their own schools.

Tomorrow, January 16th, we're hosting the 38th Annual MLK Celebration at the Strand Theatre in Dorchester. The celebration features music and dance ensembles from 12 BPS schools, plus the Citywide Marching Band, student-produced videos, and spoken-word performances by winners of the annual history essay contest. The performances will intertwine to celebrate and reflect on Dr. King's words and legacy as we live it today by connecting with a passage from one of the civil rights leader's speeches or his overarching themes of non-violence, justice, hope, community, and equality.

The event is sponsored by Boston 25 News, with reporter Crystal Haynes serving as MC. Admission is free! I encourage all BPS community members to join us for this wonderful, annual display of our students' talent! The festivities kick off at 6 p.m.!

This past weekend, I attended a couple of events in my Roxbury community that were incredibly empowering. On Friday, I had the pleasure of joining Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley and City leaders to welcome the Congressional Black Caucus to Boston for their first ever visit to the city. Congresswoman Pressley is a member, and the group aims to visit each member's district to get a sense of the problems facing black communities across the country. It was wonderful to be surrounded by so many influential national and City leaders. On Sunday, I attended the Historic Twelfth Baptist Church Convocation, with a moving sermon by English High School alum Reverend Arthur Thomas Gerald, Jr.

This coming Monday, January 20th, as we celebrate MLK Day, I will deliver the keynote address at A Day of Celebration in Honor of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I think it's wonderful the number of celebrations we have, throughout the City and in our schools, celebrating the legacy of one of the greatest men this country - and this world - has ever seen.

It's so important that we continue to uphold his values and carry out his legacy, particularly for our young people, and especially during these turbulent times. This event is also free and open to the public. I invite all our community members to join us!

Yesterday evening I had the pleasure of joining the young women on the Boston Latin Varsity Hockey Team at their practice in South Boston. I am a huge hockey fan and a player myself, and this is the first time I've had an opportunity to play with some of our students. I was a little nervous that I wouldn't be able to keep up with these talented young student athletes, but I think I did ok! I was so impressed by the players and it was such a great opportunity to both relieve some stress, get a good work out, and interact with some of our students! I'm very much looking forward to attending some games this season, and I hope to have the chance to practice with the young women from BLA, our other ladies hockey team, soon!

Last Tuesday, Mayor Walsh delivered his annual State of the City address at Symphony Hall.

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Our very own Angel Castillo, a senior at East Boston High School and member of the BPS High School to Teacher Program, introduced Mayor Walsh ahead of his speech. Angel talked about immigrating to the US from Guatemala four years ago, and the strong support he’s received from his school community. Angel plans to return to BPS after college as an ESL teacher. In addition to Angel, the TechBoston Academy Boys Basketball Team was honored for the second year in a row during Mayor Walsh’s speech, for repeating as Division 2 State Champions.

During his address, Mayor Walsh announced historic new funding for the district - \$100 million in funding to directly support students, to be phased in over the next three years. This historic funding directly supports our strategic vision, which I will provide an update on later this evening. This investment will improve student experiences and outcomes, close opportunity gaps and increase instructional quality and rigor. Budget Director for the City of Boston, Justin Sterritt, is here this evening, and I would like to invite him up to elaborate a bit more on this unprecedented investment in Boston’s youth.

City of Boston Budget Director Justin Sterritt provided additional details on Mayor Martin J. Walsh’s historic announcement of \$100 million in new funding to BPS over the next three years. The funding will go directly to students and services supporting students on top of standard costs increases, such as inflation and employee costs. The investment marks the first time the City is committing funding over a multi-year period. It comes years before the state will fund the Student Opportunity Act. Mr. Sterritt said that the investment reflects the Mayor’s confidence in the leadership of the School Committee and the Superintendent.

Mr. O’Neill praised the additional funding and asked how the money will be allocated. Mr. Sterritt explained that approximately a third of the funding will be allocated each year, and clarified that these are operating dollars, separate from the Mayor’s \$1 billion capital investment in BuildBPS. Dr. Coleman thanked the Mayor for his efforts for to improve quality of life issues, including housing, education, and transportation. Mr. Loconto said that the funding will provide stability by supporting the strategic plan with multi-year funding. He thanked the BPS finance team for taking a multi-year approach to budgeting.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila praised the Vision for Boston program. She thanked the Superintendent for addressing the issue of student information sharing, saying she looks forward to hearing more about how district policies and protocols can be strengthened and offered her support.

Mr. Loconto noted that the Superintendent and her team are working with the Boston Police Department and Boston Teacher’s Union Unafraid Educators to address concerns about student information. He said the Committee looks forward to receiving the Superintendent’s policy recommendations soon. He congratulated Ms. Oliver-Dávila and Dr. Rivera on their recent reappointments to the School Committee and welcomed back Ms. Oliver-Davila as vice chair.

Approved - The Committee approved the Superintendent’s Report by unanimous consent.

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GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Nivea Williams, student, John D. O’Bryant School of Math and Science, and member, Hyde Square Task Force, testified in favor of the expansion of arts education.

Daisy Oogbesoyen, student, Boston Latin Academy, and member, St. Stephen’s Youth Programs, testified regarding the safety and privacy of immigrant students.

Jalayah Bacchus, student, John D. O’Bryant School of Math and Science, and member, St. Stephen’s Youth Programs, testified regarding the safety and privacy of immigrant students.

Mike Heichman, former BPS parent and education advocate, testified regarding the safety and privacy of immigrant students.

Ruby Reyes, director, Boston Education Justice Alliance, testified regarding the BPS budgeting process.

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the Mayor’s additional \$100 million investment in Boston Public Schools and the legacy of former Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner.

Ann Malone, BPS parent, testified regarding comprehensive health education.

Brandon Lopez, advocate, testified regarding funding concerns for the Higginson-Lewis K-8 School.

ACTION ITEM

Dr. Coleman praised the SMART goals for the Charlestown High School grants, citing them as examples of how grant SMART goals should be written. He emphasize the importance of setting SMART goals that measure student outcomes. The Superintendent said that the district is working to bring more alignment to its grants process, adding that she will provide more details in her February 5th presentation to the Committee. Ms. Oliver-Dávila praised Charlestown High School’s use of external partners.

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$1,304,074.

REPORT

Superintendent’s Draft Strategic Plan – Mr. Loconto explained that the Superintendent and her team have been hard a work for months updating the School Committee’s 2015 strategic plan. The draft strategic plan was developed and informed by the Superintendent’s robust community

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engagement tour, which took place last fall. The Superintendent visited all 125 BPS schools, and participated in 98 community meetings.

The Superintendent thanked Chief Equity and Strategy Officer Charles Grandson, Chief of Student, Family, and Community Engagement Monica Roberts, and her entire senior team for their tireless work on the plan.

Dr. Grandson provided an overview of the Superintendent's draft five-year strategic plan, which outlines concrete commitments to build upon the district's progress to improve student experiences and outcomes, close opportunity gaps and increase instructional quality and rigor.

1. Eliminate Opportunity and Achievement Gaps
2. Accelerate Learning
3. Amplify All Voices
4. Expand Opportunity
5. Cultivate Trust

Each commitment is tied to a set of priorities and progress will be measured by clear and measurable goals. The plan aspires to lift up and support schools, starting with those most in need, increase academic rigor in all grades across all schools, improve funding equity in the way resources are distributed, and provide deeper engagement with students and families. The plan provides a roadmap for a dramatic shift in the way BPS serves students and schools. The Superintendent said that the FY21 budget recommendation that she will present to the Committee on February 5th will be closely aligned with the strategic plan and will highlight specific strategies to implement the goals outlined in the plan.

The next phase of the strategic planning process includes continued community engagement through a 30-day public comment period from January 16th through February 14th. Community members can review and comment on the strategic plan at bostonpublicschools.org/strategicplan or attend an in-person review of the plan during the following public meetings:

- January 21 at Mattapan Public Library, 1350 Blue Hill Ave, Mattapan, 6:00 - 7:30 PM
- January 30 at East Boston Library, 365 S Bremen St, East Boston, 6:00 - 7:30 PM
- February 6 at Condon Community Center, 200 D St, South Boston, 6:00 - 7:30 PM
- February 11 at Thelma D. Burns Building, 575 Warren St, Dorchester, 6:00 - 7:30 PM

The final strategic plan will be presented to the Committee on February 26th, with a final vote to follow in March.

The Committee offered constructive feedback on the draft plan. Ms. Robinson suggested shifting some of the language to better communicate that the proposed actions will result in closing the

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opportunity and achievement gaps. She spoke about the importance of diversifying the district's workforce. She said that BPS needs to take full responsibility for areas that have been lacking. The Superintendent said that she will discuss the operational details of her plan when she presents her FY21 budget recommendation on February 5th.

Dr. Coleman praised the draft plan, saying that the Superintendent is on the right track. He cautioned about the possible misuse or overuse of the word equity and called for more precision. He spoke about the importance of increasing equitable access. He suggested that the district move away from closing gaps as central goal and move towards a goal of improving academic performance for the district as a whole. He advocated for separating the idea of opportunity gaps from achievement gaps. He said that she district should identify its expected level of performance. Dr. Coleman emphasized the importance of the quality of the classroom teacher, and the responsibility of BPS to recruit, hire, retain and support high quality teachers. The Superintendent said that many of these details will be included in her forthcoming operational plan.

Mr. O'Neill praised the Superintendent for leading the plan with a commitment to close opportunity and achievement gaps. He express concern about the total number of measurements, suggesting that it may be too many. He made the following suggestions:

Commitment 1: Add language about efforts to address poverty (e.g. developing cross-departmental initiatives with other city entities)

Commitment 2: Add language about working with schools to formalize partnerships that can provide every student with a mentor.

Commitment 3: Add language about all partners; add measurements

Commitment 5: Add language explicitly addressing customer service; add corresponding accountability measure; consider adding a family survey.

Mr. Tran echoed Dr. Coleman's concern about the potential misuse of the word equity. He commended the draft strategic plan and said that he's looking forward to reviewing the Superintendent's operational plan that will include specific benchmarks.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila suggested crafting a theory of action for young people in the city. The suggested adjusting the language in Commitment 3 to emphasize the role of external partners. The Superintendent said that she will present her draft plan to the Boston Student Advisory Council and her youth cabinet for feedback. Ms. Oliver-Dávila spoke about the importance of internships and dual enrollment opportunities in preparing students to be college, career and life ready.

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Mr. Robinson talked about the importance of supporting the whole child. Dr. Coleman cautioned about overextending commitments beyond what BPS can control. Ms. Oliver-Dávila discussed the importance of aligning resources and being transparent.

Mr. Loconto thanked the Committee for engaging in a fruitful conversation which he attributed to the experience and expertise that Committee members bring to the table. He encouraged members of the public to review the plan and offer feedback. The Superintendent emphasized that the plan is a living, dynamic plan whose measures will be revisited annually, and will be formally adjusted after five years. Mr. Loconto said that the 30-day comment period will inform the Superintendent's final proposal, and the Committee will take action likely in late March.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

At approximately 8:40 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary