



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

February 26, 2020

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on February 26, 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; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. Lorna Rivera; Jeri Robinson; Quoc Tran, and Student Representative Evelyn Reyes

School Committee Members Absent: Vice Chairperson Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; and Michael O’Neill

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Boston School Committee Meeting Minutes: February 26, 2020

Grants for Approval Totaling \$466,964:

Amount	FY	Grant Name	Status	Fund Manager	Focus Area(s)	Sites
\$416,964	2020	Volkswagen Settlement	New	Edward Pesce	Transportation	Districtwide
\$50,000	2020	Summer Food Service Program: (SFSP EATS)	New	Eric Stevens	Food & Nutrition Services	Districtwide

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
School Committee Chamber
Roxbury, MA 02119

February 26, 2020

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

February 26, 2020

Strategic Planning Update PowerPoint, February 26, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Loconto called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. He announced that interpretation services were available in Spanish.

CITATIONS: NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS

Superintendent Cassellius and Paul Tritter, director of Professional Learning for the Boston Teachers Union, joined the School Committee in presenting citations to the following BPS educators who recently earned or renewed their certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards:

Caroline Ballou, East Boston High School
English as a New Language/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

Yuyu Chen, Josiah Quincy Upper School
Mathematics/Early Adolescence

Molly Coyne Gillespie, Josiah Quincy Elementary School
Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood

Haven Daniels, Michael J. Perkins Elementary School
Generalist/Middle Childhood

Kelly Garofalo, Edison K-8 School
Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood

Christine Hall, Boston Green Academy
Mathematics/Adolescence and Young Adulthood

Christopher Madson, Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers
English Language Arts/Adolescence and Young Adulthood

Carla McCormack, Warren Prescott K-8 School
Mathematics/Early Adolescence

Katherine Petta, Jeremiah E. Burke High School
English Language Arts/Adolescence and Young Adulthood

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
School Committee Chamber
Roxbury, MA 02119

February 26, 2020

Aaron Weitz, McKay K-8 School
English Language Arts/Early Adolescence

Kathryn Wilcox, Lee Academy Pilot School
Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood

The following teachers were unable to attend the meeting and will receive their citation by mail:

Cara Hamilton, Boston Latin Academy
Social Studies-History/Adolescence and Young Adulthood

Benadette Manning, Boston Day and Evening Academy
Mathematics/Adolescence and Young Adulthood

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: FEBRUARY 5, 2020

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the January 29, 2020 School Committee meeting

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

Thank you all for joining us tonight. I hope everyone was able to rest up and relax a little bit over the February break! We have some very important work ahead but I’d like to first give some brief updates and a few highlights from around the district

We are very excited to announce that we are entering into a lease agreement for the Saint Angela’s church property in Mattapan. Given the density of the student population, Mattapan is one of the areas of the City in which elementary-aged students outnumber available seats. Part of our BuildBPS plan is actively seeking properties to acquire, either through lease or sale. We are entering into an agreement with the Archdiocese of Boston for this property, St. Angela’s Church on Blue Hill Avenue, very close to Ellison Parks Early Education School. Mattapan is one of the highest priority neighborhoods for building a new elementary school, so we are eager to begin exploring our options with this parcel. In the spring, I will bring forth an update on the next phase of the BuildBPS plan. There will, of course, be a full engagement process around the planned use of this facility in Mattapan, and we will provide more updates as soon as we have identified a strategy.

As we all know, news of the novel coronavirus continues to evolve. The threat to Boston remains low, but we are also preparing for any developments, and health professionals across the City, including our own, are working together to keep us all up to speed. While combating spread of the flu is currently the chief concern of BPS Health Services, the Superintendent’s Office and Health Services are in continuous communication with our City partners at the Boston Public

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
School Committee Chamber
Roxbury, MA 02119

February 26, 2020

Health Commission, and we will continue to monitor the coronavirus situation closely. We sent out two versions of a winter illness letter districtwide in 10 languages to BPS families and staff with tips on staying healthy and protecting yourself and others from all winter illnesses. Over the February break, BPS custodial staff performed a thorough, deep cleaning of all school buildings, as they do during all vacation periods and throughout the flu season. For the most up-to-date information on the novel coronavirus, please visit the Boston Public Health Commission's website at bphc.org.

We continue to review and strengthen our policies and procedures to ensure the safety of our students. We are working to finalize updates to our policies in the coming weeks, and it is our goal to bring something forward to the School Committee as soon as possible.

On Monday, my team gave a presentation to the Boston City Council, with updates on transportation costs for this school year. Our community members want to see more reliable and accessible transportation for students, and we are deep into investigating areas for improvement. I look forward to sharing with the Committee in the next few weeks the full recommendations from our transportation expert who has been digging under the hood and getting at the root of the complexities of our transportation system.

Last week we issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new exam school entrance test. We are looking to identify a test that is aligned to Massachusetts curriculum standards, is bias-free, and measures student knowledge and readiness for a rigorous high school curriculum. Securing a new entrance assessment is the district's next step forward in furthering equitable access to the exam schools. We've communicated details of the RFP process to families of students in grades 5, 7 and 8, and are working on additional communication to families and test prep vendors. For parents who are wondering how to prepare students for the exam, the best preparation is daily attendance in school and learning grade-level reading and math. More information on the BPS exam schools, including instructions to request a copy of the Request for Proposals, can be found at bostonpublicschools.org/exam. We aim to award the new contract to a vendor in June.

This Saturday, February 29, is the 74th Annual BPS Citywide Science Fair, held at the Curry Student Center at Northeastern University. Over 250 students from across the district representing over 15 schools will participate in the fair. The students will be judged by 120 STEM professionals from higher education and industry partners in the greater Boston area. Public viewing will take place from 1-2 p.m. in the Curry Student Center. Concurrent with the science fair, students and their families can enjoy a variety of STEM activities from 25 different organizations during the STEM Expo from 11:00am - 1:00pm. Winners will move directly to the state and international competition from our regional fair. We will also have an awards ceremony next Monday, March 2nd from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. in this room, where students will find out exactly what place or prize they have won.

I hope BPS community members come out and support our students. And good luck to everyone participating this weekend!

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
School Committee Chamber
Roxbury, MA 02119

February 26, 2020

A reminder that we are still accepting nominations for BPS Educator of the Year 2020, a collaboration between BPS, the Boston Teachers Union and the City of Boston. The Educator of the Year awards annually recognize the exemplary educators who go above and beyond to impact the lives of Boston Public Schools students. We invite all members of the BPS community (teachers, administrators, students, families and community members and partners) to nominate exceptional educators to honor their work and dedication to their school communities. Educators can be teachers, paraprofessionals, nurses, librarians, or guidance counselors. We already have close to 200 submissions, and the nomination period ends Friday, March 6th. Please be sure to show some appreciation for your favorite educators. To nominate an educator, and for all the details about Educator of the Year, please bostonpublicschools.org/eoy.

Earlier today at the Tynan Elementary in South Boston, we celebrated the school's brand new sensory room! The sensory room is designed to help develop the senses for students with autism. This is done through special lighting, music, and objects. The Tynan has 9 separate ABA classrooms. These classrooms each had a sensory space, but now students have an entire room dedicated to supporting their growth. The sensory room is used as therapy for children with limited communication skills and features a bubble machine, play tunnel, yoga space, and much more. Ambassador Ray Flynn, former Mayor of the City of Boston, attended today's ceremony, where it was proposed that the room be named after him. Ambassador Flynn, a Southie native, has long been an advocate for BPS students, particularly students with special needs. During this morning's event, Ambassador Flynn remarked that there are other locations in the City named after him, but this one will mean the most. The naming of the sensory room will be included on the agenda for our next meeting.

Ms. Robinson suggested that sensory rooms be open to all children. The Superintendent said that she is working to expand opportunities for joyful learning for all students. Ms. Robinson asked when the School Committee will receive DESE's review of BPS. The Superintendent said that the district is fact-checking the report and she anticipates that DESE will release the report prior to spring.

D. Coleman requested that the Office of Human Capital provide responses to questions raised by the Committee following OHC's Annual Hiring Update on January 29, 2020. Mr. Loconto said that the district had already complied and that the information would be shared with the Committee in the weekly correspondence.

Dr. Rivera thanked the Superintendent for her update on student information sharing. She requested an update on the Columbia Point parcel of land situated next to the McCormack Middle School. She suggested that BPS send a representative to a March 2nd meeting on the future of the site sponsored by the Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester and the Martin Richard Foundation. Senior Advisor to the Superintendent Rob Consalvo provided a brief update to the Committee on the status of the parcel, saying that there were no new developments since the RFP was issued.

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
School Committee Chamber
Roxbury, MA 02119

February 26, 2020

Dr. Rivera suggested that the Committee consider holding a hearing on the matter. She also asked if the Superintendent is reexamining admissions to exam schools in addition to changing the entrance exam. The Superintendent said that at this time, the district is only looking to identify a new entrance exam that is bias-free.

Ms. Robinson requested that the district provide more hard numbers, not just percentages, when sharing graduation data. The Superintendent said that she will tie-in graduation data to the district's upcoming presentation on MassCore.

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

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

Student Representative Evelyn Reyes addressed the following topics in her oral report:

- Boston College video: "Leadership for Social Justice" promoting educational equity for students and families from diverse communities.
- Youth Justice Rally organized by I Have A Future
- Discussion with Office of Equity about Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC)'s dress code policy proposal
- New student representative identified to serve on the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force: Phebean Ogunsanwo, Brighton High School
- Climate Strike Planning
- U.S. 2020 Census
- Student Town Hall on the BPS Budget with BPS Chief Financial Officer Nathan Kuder and members of the Superintendent's Student Cabinet: Wednesday, March 11th from 4-6 p.m. in the 6th floor community room, Bolling Building.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Arianna Rodriguez, student, Muniz Academy, and member, Sociedad Latina, testified in favor of the expansion of college and career readiness opportunities.

Jeremy Arias and Agnessa Lysenko, BPS students and members, Sociedad Latina, testified in favor of the expansion of ethnic studies.

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
School Committee Chamber
Roxbury, MA 02119

February 26, 2020

Allie Bledsoe, paraprofessional, Higginson Elementary School, testified regarding inclusion.

Antonietta Brownell, teacher, Conley Elementary School, testified regarding inclusion.

Ann Malone, BPS parent, testified regarding the expansion of comprehensive health education.

ACTION ITEM

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$466,964.

REPORT

Superintendent's Revised Strategic Plan – Chief Equity and Strategy Officer Dr. Charles Grandson presented the Superintendent's revised Strategic Plan, which reflects much of the feedback received by the School Committee and BPS community since it was last presented to the Committee on January 15th. Dr. Grandson said that the district received 282 unique comments on the plan during the public comment period from January 16th-February 14th.

Dr. Grandson briefly reviewed the additions and revisions to the plan, which were highlighted in yellow. The latest draft of the plan is available at bostonpublicschools.org/strategicplan.

Mr. Loconto thanked Mr. O'Neill for advocating for an increased focus on customer service in the strategic plan. He thanked Ms. Oliver-Dávila for advocating for the addition of a 6th commitment related to partnerships.

Dr. Rivera praised the Superintendent's focus on culturally and linguistically sustaining practices. She asked about the development of a joyful school environment inventory. The Superintendent explained that district staff is starting to develop a rubric to measure joyful school environments. Dr. Rivera thanked the Superintendent for incorporating feedback from the English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force into the revised strategic plan. She praised the Superintendent's appointment of Dr. Eileen de los Reyes as Interim Assistant Superintendent of the Office of English Language Learners.

Ms. Robinson asked about participation of teachers and school personnel in the drafting of the strategic plan. The Superintendent said that she held teacher-specific meetings and that teachers participated in the town hall community engagement sessions. She thanked the ELL Task Force and the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force for providing feedback, which she incorporated into the revised strategic plan.

Dr. Coleman said that he was glad to see a focus on professional development in the strategic plan. He said that placing teacher diversity and accelerated learning as priorities are critical, and suggested adding measures in those areas. He asked about the choice of wording whether to

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
School Committee Chamber
Roxbury, MA 02119

February 26, 2020

advance or implement the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps policy. The Superintendent said that she and her team will review. Dr. Coleman suggested adding language about developing the whole child. The Superintendent agreed that we must not lose focus on the development of the whole child and joyful learning.

Mr. Loconto thanked the Superintendent and her team for their work and said he looks forward to receiving a concise one-pager of the plan that everyone in the district can commit to memory.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the revised strategic plan.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

Mr. Loconto announced that the School Committee will hold its next budget hearing on March 10th at 6 p.m. at the King K-8 School in Dorchester. On Wednesday, March 18th, the Committee will hold a budget hearing at 5 p.m. at the Bolling Building, followed by a regular School Committee meeting at 6 p.m. Feedback can be emailed to budget@bostonpublicschools.org

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

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary