



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

**April 15, 2020**

The Boston School Committee held a virtual meeting on April 15, 2020 at 5 p.m. on Zoom. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee), 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 Loconto; Vice Chairperson Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Michael O’Neill; Dr. Lorna Rivera; Jeri Robinson; Quoc Tran, and Student Representative Evelyn Reyes.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

**DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Agenda

Boston School Committee Meeting Minutes: March 25, 2020

Grant for Approval: \$23,080

Amount	FY	Grant Name	Status	Focus Area(s)	Sites
\$23,080	2020	Supporting Chemistry Teachers Assess and Foster Chemical Thinking	Increase	Curriculum and Instruction	Districtwide

Superintendent's Strategic Planning Update and District Operational Plan PowerPoint

Draft Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Student Privacy Policy Recommendation Power Point

Draft Student Privacy Policy

Draft Superintendent's Circular: Privacy of Student Information and Student Record Procedures

Student Privacy Policy Equity Impact Statement

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Loconto called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. All members were present with the exception of Dr. Rivera and Mr. Tran, both of whom joined the meeting within a few minutes.

Mr. Loconto said that tonight's meeting is being shared live on Zoom. It will be rebroadcast on Boston City TV and YouTube. It will also be posted on the School Committee's webpage. He announced that Spanish interpretation was available; the interpreter introduced himself in Spanish. Meeting documents were publicly posted at [bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee](http://bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee) prior to the start of the meeting.

Mr. Loconto noted that today is One Boston Day, an opportunity to honor those who were lost in the tragic events surrounding the 2013 Boston Marathon, and reflect on the resilience Bostonians showed in the aftermath. Mayor Walsh proclaimed April 15, 2020 as a Citywide Day of Reflection, Prayer, and Unity in Boston.

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, [One Boston Day 2020](#) will not include the large-scale events and volunteer projects that have happened in past years. Instead, residents are encouraged to do everything they can to help slow the spread of the coronavirus by staying at home if they are able to; wear a face covering when leaving their home; show appreciation for the first responders and healthcare workers who are working to stop the spread of COVID-19; and share a moment of kindness with family, friends, neighbors, and fellow Bostonians.

Mr. Loconto thanked Mayor Walsh for reaffirming his commitment of \$100 million to BPS over the next three year, despite difficult budget revisions elsewhere in the city budget that was presented to the Boston City Council last week.

## **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: MARCH 25, 2020**

***Approved*** – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the March 25, 2020 Boston School Committee FY21 budget hearing and meeting.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

*As prepared for delivery.*

Thank you all for joining us tonight. Before I get started I want to give another huge #BPS Proud ShoutOut to our entire team at BPS! These have been incredibly challenging times and I want to start off by thanking everyone in the community for coming together. Today is also One Boston Day, when we remember the lives lost during the Boston Marathon tragedy seven years ago. Today we also remember the strength and resiliency that the Boston community demonstrated that day, and in the following days. Right now, our city, our country, and the entire world is facing yet another emergency that is testing our resolve. But we are again rising to the challenge. I've witnessed so much kindness, generosity, and community spirit, from our students and staff, to our families, community partners, and of course our volunteers. We are all in this together and I am so proud to be a Bostonian. Boston Strong!

We have been providing free meals to our families at 16 BPS schools, spread across the city. Breakfast and lunch meals are available Monday to Friday, 8:30 to 11:30 am. Our meal sites will be open this coming Monday, Patriots' Day, and all of next week during April vacation. Information on locations, including the dozens of other emergency meal sites throughout the City of Boston, is available at [bostonpublicschools.org](http://bostonpublicschools.org). We are also providing meals to students with special needs who regularly receive door to door transportation.

We are averaging around 4,500 meal deliveries a day. Thank you to all our volunteers and for the excellent cross-departmental coordination by our Food and Nutrition Services and Transportation teams.

As of this afternoon, across our 16 BPS sites and including meal deliveries, we have served 195,494 total meals since schools closed on March 17. We are very confident tomorrow we will surpass 200,000 meals! As of today, we have distributed 28,484 Chromebooks to support students' home learning. Families still in need of a Chromebook can complete the form at [bostonpublicschools.org/laptop](http://bostonpublicschools.org/laptop). The form is available in all 10 district languages. We also have information on free or low-cost internet access available to families, how to get started with your Chromebook, home learning tips and more, at [bostonpublicschools.org/laptop](http://bostonpublicschools.org/laptop).

In addition to delivering Chromebooks to students' homes, we have delivered Chromebooks to our students who currently reside in homeless shelters. We're also working to provide students with hotspots, and unfortunately the distribution was delayed due to a shortage in the supply chain. We've received approximately 1,800 requests for Internet access and have so far issued 1,100 hotspots. We will issue the remaining 700 this week. We estimate that 87-90% of BPS students have logged in at least once since school closure. This is to email, Google Classroom, Clever Backpack, etc. BPS is working with teachers and schools to identify exactly which students we have not heard from. The district, as well as schools, are identifying these concerns and are trying all means to get in touch - calls, emails, and having friends reach out. Calls and emails to families are also done in the family's preferred language. When all options have been exhausted, school staff, with the operations and safety teams, will check in at the home to ensure students and families have the resources they need.

Families and students can access equity-focused content aligned to state standards, updated weekly and separated by grade level at [bostonpublicschools.org/learning](http://bostonpublicschools.org/learning). We also have resources for families of students in special education and English learners. Teachers and leaders also have access to a curated, high quality set of virtual teaching and learning materials to either directly use in their Google classrooms, or leverage their school leader's guidance for creating their own materials.

We have also developed a partnership with BNN, the Boston Neighborhood Network, called BPS TV. BNN has dedicated 10 am to 12 noon and 2 pm to 4 pm Monday through Friday to programming created by BPS educators for their students. There are pre-recorded classroom-like shows, as well as live remote programs where students can call in with questions for interactive learning with educators teaching from home. A popular program for our younger students is “Good Night, Scholars” a collection of bedtime stories read by familiar faces in the community. Recent guest readers include me, Mayor Walsh, Patriots player Julian Edelman, and Chair Loconto! You can find the videos online at [bnnmedia.org](http://bnnmedia.org) or tune into Comcast 9, RCN 15, or Verizon 1961.

BPS instituted equity roundtables at the district-level 4 weeks ago with dozens of district and community leaders and began that process at the school-level last week to identify and quickly address inequities in remote learning, instruction, and other school community needs. The school-level equity roundtables will gather school administrators, educators, partner organizations, parents, youth leaders, and neighborhood social service providers. Through this effort, the district will provide a structured framework of support and resources to schools to identify and address equity gaps.

We continue to provide mental health support to students with school psychologists, social workers, and counselors reaching out to families to develop plans for supporting individual students while school is closed. School psychologists and counselors are also available for students who do not already see a counselor, but may need to. I also meet with BSAC and Youth Cabinet members weekly. These have been very informative and instructive conversations.

BPS Welcome Centers are currently closed, but our Welcome Services team is still available to assist families with school registration and assignment support. Families can visit [bostonpublicschools.org/register](http://bostonpublicschools.org/register) to pre-register their students and schedule an appointment to complete the process over the phone. Or, families can call 617-635-9010 to register by phone with a registration specialist.

Finally, it's more important than ever before that we're able to meet the needs of our community. On Friday, April 3, the district launched a survey for all BPS families to assess their needs during this time, for example access to adequate technology and internet connectivity. The [survey](#) is available in 10 languages and has been sent to families by email, text message, and other online promotion as well as by direct phone calls. So far, we have received 21,000 responses, and we're hoping to hear from as many families as we can. Please check your email. The survey is also available at [bostonpublicschools.org/coronavirus](http://bostonpublicschools.org/coronavirus).

Dr. Rivera spoke about inconsistencies that some students are experiencing in their home learning with regards to attendance, grading and structure. The Superintendent said that the district's immediate focus was meeting basic student needs such as access to food and shelter. She said that the district is working with the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) to establish a set of shared expectations related to remote learning. She expects those to terms to be settled shortly after April break.

Ms. Robinson asked who is responsible for tracking down students who have not yet engaged in home learning. The Superintendent said that the school leader is ultimately responsible for tracking students. She said that school leaders are working with school superintendents to collect information and enter it into a data warehouse.

Mr. O'Neill asked about the Superintendent's plan for the next stage of remote learning. He also spoke about funding uncertainly at the state and federal levels. The Superintendent said improvements to remote learning will be seen after April break when the district is expected to reach an agreement with the BTU. She cautioned that significant progress could take months as inequities are addressed, sometimes on a case-by-case basis.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila spoke about the importance of creating a master schedule and clear expectations for students and families during this period of remote learning. She said that her organization Sociedad Latina has distributed \$30,000 in City funds to families in need due to the COVID-19 emergency. She applauded some schools for providing incentives for home learning attendance and encouraged others to get creative. She suggested that the district collaborate with partners in an effort to get families to complete the BPS COVID-19-related needs survey. She spoke about the importance of students having remote access to mental health services and encouraged the district to work with partners to keep students engaged.

Mr. O'Neill asked how the district is supporting special education students during the district-wide school closure. The Superintendent said that BPS staff has placed more than 5,000 telephone calls to the families of special education students to assess their needs. He clarified his that in his earlier comments about remote learning expectations for teachers, he was referring to the Los Angeles Unified School District, not BPS.

Ms. Reyes asked how district is spending any funding related to COVID-19. The Superintendent said that the City's Resiliency Funds are being prioritized based on needs. BPS purchased Chromebooks to support students with their remote learning. The Superintendent is asking schools to fundraise through the City's Resiliency Fund. Ms. Reyes shared student feedback that there is a large variation in the workload that teachers are assigning to students during this period of remote learning.

***Approved*** - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent's Report.

## GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people testified regarding the student privacy policy recommendation:

- Boston City Councilor At-Large Annissa Essaibi-George
- Karina Ham, field organizer, SIM
- Eli Harmon, student, John D. O’Bryant School of Math and Science
- Mike Heichman, member, Boston Education Justice Alliance
- Nora Paul-Schultz, teacher, John D. O’Bryant School of Math and Science
- Paulena Papagiannis, teacher, John D. O’Bryant School of Math and Science
- Go Sasaki, teacher, Umana Academy
- Matthew Ruggiero, teacher, Charlestown High School
- Amrita Dani, teacher, Boston Adult Technical Academy
- Caroline Smith, teacher, Charlestown High School
- Max Kennedy, teacher, Muniz Academy
- Jarib Rahman, community organizer, Muslim Justice League
- Laura Rotolo, community advocate, American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts
- Bonnie McBride, teacher, Fenway High School
- Adeline Ansell, teacher, Mary Lyon Pilot High School
- Oliver de Leon, BPS parent
- Emily Silas, teacher, Boston Community Leadership Academy
- Sara Waltuck, member, SIM
- Maria Christina Blanco, member, governing board, Boston Community Leadership Academy
- Valeria DoVale, community advocate

The following people testified regarding the Memorandum of Understanding between the Boston Public Schools and the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

- John Mudd, education advocate
- Ruby Reyes, director, Boston Education Justice Alliance

Joel Dawson, parent, Hernandez K-8 School, testified regarding COVID-19 crisis management

Matthew Godino, BPS teacher, testified in favor of canceling April break.

## ACTION ITEM

*Approved* – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a grant in the amount of \$23,080.

## REPORTS

***Strategic Planning Update and District Operational Plan*** – The Superintendent presented a final draft of the Superintendent’s 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, an overview of the district’s Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the district’s Student Opportunity Act Plan.

The five-year Strategic Plan aims to accelerate the district's efforts to improve outcomes for students and close achievement gaps through intensive, targeted investments that will support students and educators, starting with those with the highest need. The plan is rooted in the School Committee's 2015 Strategic Vision, building upon those aspirational goals with a fresh perspective and a new sense of urgency. The six commitments outlined in the plan include (1) Eliminate Opportunity and Achievement Gaps, (2) Accelerate Learning, (3) Amplify All Voices, (4) Expand Opportunity, (5) Cultivate Trust, and (6) Activate Learning Beyond School. Each commitment is tied to a set of priorities, and progress will be measured by clear and measurable goals. The plan was informed by the Superintendent's robust community engagement tour held in the fall of 2019. The Superintendent visited all 125 BPS schools and met with thousands of students, parents, educators, partners, and residents. The plan will be supported by \$100 million in new funding that Mayor Walsh has committed to BPS over the next three years.

The Superintendent said that the district's MOU with DESE is aligned with her strategic plan. DESE's recent review of BPS resulted in a series of recommendations in the areas of Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Human Capital Development, Assessment and Evaluation, Student Support, and Financial and Asset Management. A three-year MOU signed by DESE and BPS sets up a novel partnership involving commitments by both the district and state. In the MOU, BPS agrees to deliver measurable results on four priority initiatives drawn from the findings of the district review, and DESE agrees to support BPS on four complementary initiatives. Over the next three years, a major focus of the district will be on making measurable improvements in the 33 schools that face the most challenges in student achievement. Those schools will be defined as "transformation" schools. BPS will also address student success in high school, programming for students with disabilities and English learners and transportation challenges, as outlined in the Superintendent's strategic plan.

For the duration of the MOU, DESE will provide additional resources for the overall partnership, as well as technical support for four additional supporting initiatives in which DESE will partner closely with BPS. Those initiatives include entering an additional 15 BPS schools into a special Boston professional development cohort of the Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning, DESE's program to foster deeper learning. Two BPS schools were already admitted into Kaleidoscope in January. The Department will also help BPS diversify its educator workforce, upgrade essential facilities, and ensure schools have access to robust partnerships.

Each party will also adopt one longer-term initiative. BPS will create a plan to improve services to English learners, along with appropriate interpretation and translation services. The Department will develop an earned autonomy model for BPS schools that gives more freedom to higher performing schools. These plans will be developed by May 2021. The MOU will end on October 1, 2023. As that date approaches, DESE will look at the data associated with the partnership's goals and determine next steps. The Commissioner may also decide to conduct an updated district review of BPS during the third year of the MOU.

The Superintendent also presented the district's Student Opportunity Act Plan (SOA) for approval. Under the MA Student Opportunity Act, BPS is eligible to receive \$1.8 million provided that the district creates a plan that is focused on student subgroups, uses evidence-based

programs to close gaps, monitors success with outcome metrics and targets, and engages all families. The Superintendent recommends that SOAF funds be used to support educator diversity, inclusion, and high school advanced coursework.

Dr. Coleman expressed concerns with the structure of the DESE report, which he said does not acknowledge external factors that impact student achievement, such as the city's wealth gap. He said that the district will need to decide what measures to use to assess progress over the next five years. The Superintendent responded that her strategic plan has measures and that her operational plan will include both leading and lagging indicators.

Dr. Rivera expressed concern that English learners are not highlighted more in the MOU. The Superintendent said that support for English learners is a focus of her strategic plan, adding that outcomes will be measured in her operational plan.

Mr. O'Neill stated that he is comfortable with the DESE MOU. He suggested that the Superintendent add measures hiring diversity and customer service to the strategic plan.

Ms. Robinson asked for more information about the Kaleidoscope of Schools outlined in the DESE agreement. The Superintendent said that a cohort of BPS schools, mostly located in East Boston, will participate in the Kaleidoscope of Schools with a focus on professional development and project-based learning using a phased-in approach. Ms. Robinson spoke about the importance of having strong family engagement.

Mr. Tran asked how the School Committee plans to evaluate the Superintendent in her performance review with regards to the strategic plan. Mr. Loconto said that the Committee will discuss the Superintendent's performance evaluation later this spring. The Superintendent said that she will return to the Committee with more information after speaking with the Office of Data and Accountability.

Ms. Reyes expressed concern that the DESE MOU uses MCAS performance as a measure for success. The Superintendent said that the MCAS measurement was required by DESE.

Mr. O'Neill asked if the district will be doing virtual assessments during this period of state-wide school closures. The Superintendent said that she is exploring interim assessments to assess student learning loss and new knowledge gained since the closure. She is also looking at summer learning opportunities.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila encouraged the Superintendent to outline more specific strategies to support English learners in the strategic plan. She asked about the district's plans for bilingual education and requested more information about the Superintendent's plans to adopt MassCORE. The Superintendent said that her team will present the Committee with a full report on MassCORE later this spring. She said that Dr. Eileen de los Reyes, Interim Assistant Superintendent of the Office of English Language Learners, is working on plan for ELs that will include bilingual education.



The Committee is scheduled to vote on the Superintendent's final 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and the Student Opportunity Act Plan on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

***Student Privacy Policy Recommendation*** – Interim Chief of Staff Charlene Briner, Superintendent of Operations & Safety Sam DePina, and Director of Technology Mark Racine presented a new student privacy policy recommendation and updated circular (LGL-07) with an aim to (1) reiterate the district's obligations to protect the privacy of student records under FERPA and state law, and provide clear guidance on the legal exceptions and when they may be used; (2) affirm the district's commitment to protecting the safety of our students and school communities by sharing information with law enforcement, if such sharing complies with law; and (3) reduce overly broad information sharing with third parties, even where permitted by law, by: separating documentation of school discipline from documentation of incidents requiring law enforcement reporting; developing an internal review protocol before sharing with third parties; mandating annual training for all BPS employees.

The three exceptions to the policy are:

1. A court order or subpoena
2. The health or safety emergency provision permits such disclosures when the disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. This exception is limited to the period of the emergency and does not allow for a blanket release of PII from a student's education records. These disclosures must be related to an actual, impending, or imminent emergency.
3. "Directory information" is information contained in the education records of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Directory information includes the student's name, age, SASID, neighborhood of residence, grade, dates of enrollment, participation in officially recognized activities, membership on athletic teams, degrees, honors, and awards, and post-high school plans (not address, school name, date of birth).

Even though Boston School Police (BSP) serves as the district's law enforcement unit, because they are school officials, BSP officers cannot re-disclose information they obtain about students on SIS/ASPEN, even if that information is disclosed in the form of a 1-1 or SSR1 report. Boston School Police will not generate reports to document student conduct solely for a school's internal disciplinary purposes. If such a report is generated, or if such report is used in disciplinary proceedings, it becomes part of the student record. Disciplinary incidents must be documented in SIS/ASPEN by school administrators.

Ms. Briner said that the student privacy policy is not the final step. The district is also drafting a policy recommendation related to law enforcement access in schools. District leaders will

continue to work collaboratively with advocates.

Dr. Rivera expressed hesitation with the policy proposal, saying that she is not comfortable with the process to date and that it is lacking an MOU with the Boston Police Department (BPD).

Ms. Briner recapped the district's engagement process, which included meetings with Unafraid Educators and other advocates. She said that the policy recommendation has the support of the Boston Police Department. Mr. Loconto said that the existing 1996 MOU with the BPD from is in effect but needs to be updated. The Superintendent clarified that the student privacy policy is a BPS policy and that the Superintendent or her designee is ultimately responsible for determining what information is shared. Dr. Rivera asked if there was precedent for the Committee approving policies in phases. Mr. Loconto said that the student privacy policy recommendation as presented is intact; a forthcoming policy proposal about law enforcement access in schools is related but separate.

Dr. Coleman asked for a third party opinion on the student policy recommendation and suggested consulting with the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS). Ms. Briner said that BPS has consulted with outside experts and will reach out to the CGCS. Mr. Racine and Mr. DePina spoke about the district's unique hybrid model of school policing said the variation of school policy models among large school districts.

Mr. O'Neill, who serves as Chair-Elect for the Executive Committee of the Council of Great City Schools, said that many school districts are dealing with the issue of student privacy. He cited the BPS Code of Conduct as an example of a policy that was developed in partnership with advocates and subsequently updated over time. He agreed with Dr. Coleman's suggestion to solicit on outside perspective on the policy proposal.

Mr. Tran expressed concern with student privacy issues. He requested data on student incident reports by race, which the Superintendent agreed to provide. Mr. Racine clarified for Mr. Tran the exceptions to the student privacy policy.

Ms. Robinson suggested that the district present the police access policy recommendation together with the student privacy policy recommendation so that the Committee can receive a fuller picture.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila said she has concerns with the policy recommendation as presented, calling it too vague. She suggested that the MOU with the BPD should address the district's school police structure. She agreed with Ms. Robinson's suggestion for the Committee to consider both policies simultaneously.

Mr. Loconto suggested that the district take the time necessary to respond to concerns raised by Committee members. He said that the Committee will not schedule a vote on the proposal at this time.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the Superintendent's draft strategic plan.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**ADJOURN**

At approximately 9:37 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan  
Executive Secretary