



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

April 29, 2020

The Boston School Committee held a remote meeting on April 29, 2020 at 5 p.m. on Zoom. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee, 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 (joined while meeting was in progress); 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: April 15, 2020

Grants for Approval: \$175,363

Amount	FY	Grant Name	Status	Fund Manager	Focus Area(s)	Sites
\$15,000	2020	Assessment Audit Grant	New	Mary Dillman	Educator Effectiveness	Districtwide
\$50,000	2020	BPS Moves Together	New	Ali Ettis	Health and Wellness	Districtwide
\$62,411	2020	Digital Literacy Now Grant	New	Solimar Cruzado / Anita Lavakumar	Career and Technical Education	TBD
\$20,000	2021	High School Voter Registration and Pre-Registration	New	Natacha Scott	Curriculum and Instruction	Districtwide

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\$2,000	2020	Influence 100 Grant	New	Ceronne B. Daly	Cultivation and Diversity	Districtwide
\$15,540	2020	OpenSciEd Field Test	Increase	Marianne Dunne	Curriculum and Instruction	12 Sites
\$10,412	2020	Supporting Chemistry Teachers to Assess and Foster Chemical Thinking	Increase	Marianne Dunne	Curriculum and Instruction	Districtwide

Memo from Superintendent Brenda Cassellius to Boston School Committee Re: Interim Salary and Non-Personnel Payments on External Funds, April 29, 2020

Memorandum of Understanding between the Boston Public Schools and the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) re: COVID-19

BTU MOU PowerPoint

BTU MOU Equity Impact Statement

Executed Reformation Interim BTU Expectations MOU

Resolution in Support of Increased Federal Support and Stimulus Funding for Public K-12 Education - DRAFT

Superintendent's Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Student Opportunity Act Plan

Private School Application Request: Croft School Power Point

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. Coleman, who joined the meeting within a few minutes.

Mr. Loconto said that tonight's meeting was being shared live on Zoom. It will be rebroadcast on Boston City TV and YouTube. It will also be posted at www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee. He announced that Spanish interpretation was

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available; the interpreter introduced himself in Spanish. Meeting documents were publicly posted at www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee prior to the start of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: APRIL 15, 2020

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the April 15, 2020 School Committee 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 for their tireless work day in and day out, supporting our students and families. Earlier this week we surpassed 300,000 meals served since schools closed on March 17. As of today, we’ve provided 334,467 meals across our 17 BPS sites and our meal deliveries. As of tomorrow, we’re on track to surpass 100,000 meals delivered to families of students with special needs. We are serving up to 15,000 meals a day, including around 4,500-5,000 meal deliveries a day. Breakfast and lunch meals are available Monday to Friday, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Information on locations, including the dozens of other emergency meal sites throughout the City of Boston, is available at bostonpublicschools.org. Thank you again to our Food and Nutrition Services staff, our bus drivers and bus monitors, and the volunteers who have all worked so well collaboratively to get our families what they need. I want to thank Mr. O’Neill for visiting our food sites and bringing them the joy.

Yesterday, we reached a huge milestone. We’ve now distributed more than 30,000 Chromebooks to our students since schools closed on March 17. Access to adequate technology is essential for our students to continue learning at home. Families still in need of a Chromebook can complete the form at bostonpublicschools.org/laptop. The form is available in all 10 district languages. We’re also working to provide students with hotspots. So far we’ve issued 2,400 hotspots.

Late last week, DESE issued guidance on this school year’s requirements, indicating that districts that held their April vacation as scheduled, like BPS, are expected to go to their previously scheduled 185th day. (Districts that did not hold April vacation are expected to go to their previously scheduled 181st day). This guidance noted that school boards or committees may file an appeal to Commissioner Riley on behalf of school districts, if we are able to show that remote learning was in place. BPS implemented its first phase of remote learning during that week by issuing paper based learning materials, secured 20,000 new Chromebooks and began the process of getting every student the essentials they needed for their own health and well-being, and getting them connected to Wi-Fi. I intend to send you, Chair, a formal request outlining the appeal tomorrow.

Finally, last week Governor Baker announced that all private and public schools in the Commonwealth will remain closed through the end of the school year. We had certainly been preparing for this scenario, but we know for our students, families and community, it was still

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difficult to receive that confirmation last week. Later this week we will communicate to families the details of the remote learning plan that will be implemented beginning next Monday, May 4. The remote learning plan will lead us through the end of the school year and will provide school leaders and teachers their expectations for our shared work as a community moving forward, with equity at the forefront of that work. We will share the full plan at our next School Committee meeting as we are finalizing a few of the components such as grading, attendance, and personalized student success plans.

As you know, we received the DESE guidance last Friday, and we have been working to align with their expectations. School leaders are already using the resources we've compiled and created to work with their teachers and staff to ensure we're well positioned to support every one of our students. We will remain focused on meeting the needs of our most vulnerable students and will continue working alongside our City and community partners to ensure they are provided with the support they need. Later this evening, we will present our memorandum of understanding with the Boston Teachers Union, detailing the remote work expectations for BTU members, which are supported by this agreement.

Ms. Robinson asked if BPS will continue to provide students and families with meals while schools are physically closed due to the COVID emergency. The Superintendent confirmed that BPS will continue to provide meals, adding that district leaders are exploring methods to provide families with multiple meals at once to reduce travel. Ms. Robinson asked about the district's family engagement efforts during the COVID emergency. The Superintendent said that additional family support will be coming in next phase of remote learning, including Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions and more personalized support for families.

Mr. O'Neill thanked Catie's Closet for providing BPS students with toiletries and other essentials during the COVID emergency. He asked about the Superintendent's plans for the second phase of remote learning. The Superintendent explained that phase two will include clear expectations related to grading, attendance, and master schedules. She said that in conversations with high school communities, many students have expressed a preference to hold in-person graduation ceremonies when permissible. District leaders will explore the feasibility of holding graduation ceremonies in the late summer or fall.

Mr. Loconto said that the School Committee has cancelled the Annual BPS Valedictorians Luncheon as planned for later this spring at Fenway Park. He said that the Committee and event sponsors remain committed to honoring the district's top graduates and will find another way to honor the Class of 2020 valedictorians.

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

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

As prepared for delivery.

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Good evening. Earlier this month, Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) members met with High School Superintendents Dr. Elia Bruggeman and Dr. Lindsa McIntyre, as well as the headmasters from the three exam schools (Boston Latin Academy Headmaster Chimdi Uchendu, Boston Latin School Headmaster Rachel Skerritt, and John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics & Science Headmaster Tanya Freeman-Wisdom) to discuss the differing workloads faced by high school students across the district.

During school vacation week, BSAC students participated in a virtual town hall with various other organizations across the city. The Mayor, the Superintendent, and Representative Pressley all spoke at the forum. In that time, students had a chance to reflect on all the changes that this time has brought upon us and share personal testimonies related to the situation.

BSAC members also participated in a training on phone banking and remote lobbying.

We, both members from BSAC and the Student Cabinet, also had the opportunity to meet with MA Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Jeff Riley last week. We appreciate him taking the time to speak with us. In that meeting, we asked for clarification around the Memorandum of Understanding between the Boston Public Schools and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, as well as information about the impact of this crisis on MCAS, and what grading might look like for terms 3 and 4.

I'm looking forward to continuing to meet weekly with the Superintendent and I am sure she can attest to the fact that we grill her for information every time.

I will be attending Columbia University in the fall.

Thank you.

Committee members thanked Ms. Reyes for her outstanding advocacy on behalf of BPS students and congratulated her on her acceptance to Columbia University.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Mike Heichman, member, Boston Education Justice Alliance, testified regarding the student privacy policy proposal and the district's MOU with DESE
- Leah Wu, BPS parent, testified regarding summer school
- Emiliano Falcon, community advocate, ACLU of Massachusetts, testified regarding the student privacy policy proposal
- Cara Ruiz, BPS student and member, Student Immigration Movement, testified regarding the student privacy policy proposal

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- Elizabeth Badger, community advocate, PAIR Project, testified regarding the student privacy policy proposal
- John Mudd, education advocate, testified regarding the Superintendent's Strategic Plan
- Ruby Reyes, executive director, Boston Education Justice Alliance, testified regarding the district's MOU with DESE
- Geralde Gabeau, community advocate, IFSI-USA, testified regarding remote learning for Haitian students

The Superintendent requested that teachers contact her directly regarding personnel matters.

REPORTS

Interim Salary and Non-Personnel Payments on External Funds – Anu Medappa Jayanth, director of grants and external funding in the Office of Finance, presented the Superintendent's request for School Committee approval for the interim salary payment order for personnel paid with external funds. This funding would come from grants projected to be awarded for FY21 for approval at future School Committee meetings.

Mr. Loconto asked Ms. Jayanth about the outlook for federal grants. Ms. Jayanth said that BPS expects flat funding. A vote is scheduled for later this evening.

Memorandum of Understanding between the Boston Public Schools and the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) re: COVID 19 – The Superintendent provided brief opening remarks expressing support for the tentative collective bargaining agreement between BPS and the BTU related to changes in working conditions during the COVID-19 emergency. The Superintendent said that the agreement is focused on students and provides a strong foundation for remote learning.

Jeremiah Hasson, acting director of the Office of Labor Relations, reviewed the timeline of events leading up to the agreement, and presented highlights. On March 13, 2020, Mayor Walsh announced the closure of Boston Public Schools from March 17th until April 27, 2020. On March 25 and April 23, 2020, Governor Baker extended school closures first to May 4th, and then through the end of the school year. Today, the Committee will vote to approve changes to provisions of the collective bargaining agreement between the Committee and the BTU.

The agreement formalizes the following remote work expectations:

- School leaders may reasonably expect educators to work their regular contractual hours.
- Teachers, Subs, ABAs, Related Service Providers will work at least 20 hours per week, including:
 - 15 hours synchronous time directed by the principal for responsibilities regarding student instruction;

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- 5 hours asynchronous time directed by teacher, with principal input, of additional time spent preparing lessons, joint planning, professional development, etc.
- In addition to daily instruction, teachers must have direct, substantive communication with each student at least every three days and complete other responsibilities to include assessing, documenting and monitoring student learning, and parent communications.
- All BTU members are required to participate in up to 5 hours of PD on best practices in remote learning instruction.
- BTU members will be paid for their remote service, but employees unable to work remotely on a given day will be required to use sick or personal time.
- BTU member shall be held accountable for their performance and conduct during the closure through the employee discipline policy.

All work will be performed remotely and schedules will be flexible to account for the unique challenges associated with working from home. Each school will create a master schedule for age-appropriate remote learning including at least 3 hours daily, preferably between 9:00 – 12:00 and/or 1:00 – 4:00. Formal evaluation process shall be on hold during the closure. Evaluators should continue to observe and provide feedback. Evaluators will upload a summary memo of each BTU member's performance during the closure. The agreement does not include any additional costs for BPS. The MOU aims to mitigate negative impacts on students of color, students with special needs, English learners, and other students from historically marginalized populations by ensuring that educators instruct and support all students on a regular basis until schools reopen.

Dr. Coleman commended the Superintendent and BTU for engaging in difficult conversations about creating shared expectations for teachers and families during this challenging time.

Mr. O'Neill asked about the time period covered by the MOU, as well as financial implications. Mr. Hasson said that the MOU would expire on last day of the current school year. He explained that the MOU calls for compensating teachers with standard salaries and does not involve additional costs. Mr. O'Neill expressed support for the agreement, saying it provides consistency and clarity around minimum levels of teaching.

Dr. Rivera asked about teacher accountability. The Superintendent said that school leaders will collect data to ensure accountability.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila expressed support for the agreement and thanked the Superintendent and her team for their work on it. She spoke about the importance of communicating with BPS families in a manner that is both clear and sensitive.

Mr. Tran asked about support for special education students during this period of remote learning. The Superintendent said that IEP meetings are still taking place remotely, adding that compensatory services will have to be made for any in-person support that is missed because of social distancing limitations.

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Mr. O'Neill asked the Superintendent how the district will know if students are learning. She responded that district leaders will assess for learning by aligning standards, providing interventions, giving regular assessments, and monitoring educational plans for student with Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports. She said that the district's MOU with the BTU is strong and provides the flexibility to meet student needs.

Ms. Robinson asked if there are opportunities for parent/teacher conferences. The Superintendent encouraged parents to connect with teachers. She said that more information on family engagement will be included in her forthcoming remote learning plan.

Ms. Reyes asked how teachers will log their work hours. Mr. Hasson said that teachers will log their time and there will be a digital footprint. Ms. Reyes asked about the variations of workloads among students. The Superintendent said that school leaders will monitor assignments, adding that students should not have excessive screen time. A vote is scheduled for later this evening.

Resolution in Support of Increased Federal Support and Stimulus Funding for Public K-12 Education - Mr. O'Neill, who serves as chair-elect of the executive committee of the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS), presented for the Committee's consideration a draft resolution urging federal lawmakers to provide additional support and stimulus funding for public K-12 education during the current COVID-19 public health emergency. Mr. O'Neill discussed the current uncertainty surrounding federal, state, and city funding. Nationwide, revenue shortfalls are likely to result in budget cuts and personnel reductions in urban school systems. He explained that CGCS, the nation's primary coalition of large urban public-school districts, is encouraging school boards to pass such resolutions. Mr. Loconto announced that the Committee will take a vote on the resolution later in the evening.

ACTION ITEMS

Ms. Robinson asked if work funded by grants will be carried on remotely. Ms. Jayanth said that in most cases the work will take place remotely. If that is not possible, however, the district will request an extension on the grant period.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved grants for approval in the amount of \$175,363.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent's request for Interim Salary and Non-Personnel Payments on External Funds for FY21.

Mr. Loconto opened the floor for final comments regarding the Superintendent's Strategic Plan. Dr. Coleman praised the Superintendent's Strategic Plan, thanking her and her team for their tremendous work. He suggested adding more clarity about how progress will be measured. He said that district leaders must be able to measure and assess what competent teaching looks like and share the data in the aggregate. The Superintendent said the district will use both leading and lagging indicators to measure progress and will have deeper plans at the department level based in equity. Central Office leaders are holding equity roundtables and equity roundtables will soon held at the school level. Dr. Coleman said that the Committee and Superintendent need to have

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an explicit conversation about school autonomy. The Superintendent said that she is exploring the concept of earned autonomy.

Dr. Rivera praised the Strategic Plan and its design. She said that the ELL Task Force, which she co-chairs, would like to see more initiatives rolled out with flexibility under the LOOK Act. She discussed the high percentage of English Learners (ELs) in BPS and encouraged the district to expand dual language opportunities. The Superintendent affirmed her commitment to ELs, and said that Chief Academic Officer Andrea Zayas and Interim Assistant Superintendent of the Office of English Language Learners Dr. Eileen de los Reyes are currently drafting a plan to strengthen support for ELs.

Mr. O'Neill expressed support for the Strategic Plan and advised the Superintendent and her team to be precise and thoughtful when it comes to measures.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila expressed support for the Strategic Plan. She thanked the Superintendent and her team for their extraordinary work creating the Strategic Plan while simultaneously addressing the urgent challenges facing the district related to the COVID emergency. Ms. Oliver-Dávila said that she looks forward to future presentation to the School Committee on MassCore and high school redesign, both of which she said will require supportive budgets. She also looks forward to learning more about the Superintendent's plans for alternative education.

Approved — On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent's Strategic Plan, 2020-2025.

Mr. Loconto invited the Committee to offer final comments related to the Superintendent's Student Opportunity Act Plan. Dr. Coleman encouraged the Superintendent to reinvigorate the district's focus on technical and vocational education. He also suggested adding more focus on professional development and more explicit information on partnerships.

At 7:46 p.m., Chairperson Loconto noted that Vice Chair Oliver-Davila would briefly preside over the meeting while he stepped away from his computer; at 7:52 p.m., Mr. Loconto noted that he had returned.

Dr. Rivera discussed the importance of multilingual diversity and encouraged the district to increase its efforts to recruit Latinx teachers. The Superintendent affirmed that the district's teacher diversity recruitment efforts include strategies and goals to recruit, hire, and retain Latinx teachers. She said that specific goals can be found in the district's MOU with DESE and in the Strategic Plan.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila expressed concern about the Superintendent's plans to adopt MassCore and cautioned district leaders to consider what may be unintended consequences for 7-12 schools. She said that she looks forward learning more details when the Committee receives a deeper presentation.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent's Student Opportunity Act Plan.

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Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the Boston Public Schools and the Boston Teachers Union regarding changes in working conditions related to COVID-19.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a Resolution in Support of Increased Federal Support and Stimulus Funding for Public K-12 Education.

REPORT

Private School Request: Croft K-6 School – Chief of Accountability Corey Harris and Croft School Founder Scott Given presented an application to open the Croft School, independent school serving students in grades K1-6. MA State Law requires that the Boston School Committee review and license private schools wishing to open within city limits. In 2011, the Committee approved a policy revising and improving the process for private school applications. Located in Roslindale, the Croft School is expected to draw students from Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, Hyde Park, Roxbury, Dorchester and West Roxbury. Mr. Given said he envisions a racially and economically diverse student body starting with 40 students in SY20-21, eventually reaching a total enrollment of 160 students. The Superintendent, following a positive report from her review team, recommends the Croft School’s application.

Dr. Rivera expressed concerns about the potential impact the Croft School could have on BPS enrollment in the Roslindale community. Mr. Given discussed his vision of building a diverse student body from all over the city and providing financial aid for families who qualify.

Ms. Robinson asked Mr. Given about his sources of funding and his reasons for wanting to open a new school now. Mr. Given said that he has two young children that he hopes can attend the school. He said that the school’s funding comes from donations from a network of supporters. He said that more than 50 percent the school’s teachers will be teachers of color.

Dr. Coleman requested the Committee receive the complete application materials for the Croft School. Mr. Harris agreed to provide the materials. Dr. Coleman encouraged district leaders to track the impact on enrollment.

Mr. O’Neill requested a copy of the MA State Law requiring School Committee approval for private school applications. The district will provide that language.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked about the cost of the school’s tuition, which Mr. Given said is expected to be about \$18,700. She expressed concerns about a potential increase in traffic in the area of the school. Mr. Given said that the school plans to stagger the start and close of its school day in order to minimize its impact on traffic. She also asked if BPS would be required to provide transportation for Croft School students under current state law. Mr. Loconto asked BPS Legal Advisor Cathy Lizotte to research the district’s obligations and present her findings to the Committee. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the Croft School’s application at its May 13th meeting.

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PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

At approximately 8:40 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary