



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

June 24, 2020

The Boston School Committee held a remote meeting on June 24, 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; Michael O’Neill; Dr. Lorna Rivera; Jeri Robinson; and Quoc Tran.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Boston School Committee Meeting Minutes: June 10, 2020

Transdev One-Year Contract Extension PowerPoint

Transdev Contract Extension Equity Impact Statement

Ambassador Raymond L. Flynn Sensory Room Dedication Recommendation, Tynan Elementary School

Grants for Approval Totaling \$76,254,062:

Amount	FY	Grant Name	Status	Fund Manager	Representative Relationship to Grant	Focus Area(s)	Sites
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**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom
June 24, 2020**

\$646,549	2021	Adult Education	New	Kristen D'Avolio	Director of Instruction	Adult Education	Madison Park Adult Ed Center
\$32,345,848	2020	CARES: Elementary and Secondary Education Emergency Relief	New	Nathan Kuder	Chief Financial Officer	COVID-19 Relief	Districtwide
\$40,000	2021	ESOL Culinary Training	Continuing	Kristen D'Avolio	Director of Instruction	Adult Education	Madison Park Adult Ed Center
\$165,000	2021	Family Literacy	New	Kristen D'Avolio	Director of Instruction	Adult Education	Madison Park Adult Ed Center
\$6,665	2021	GED/HiSET Testing Program	New	Maria Harris	Director of Department of Adult Education	Adult Education	Districtwide
\$40,000,000	2021	National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program	New	Laura Benavidez	Executive Director of Food and Nutrition Services	Food and Nutrition	Districtwide
\$50,000	2021	No Kid Hungry	New	Eric Stevens	Director of Finance and Business Development	Food and Nutrition	16 Sites
\$3,000,000	2021	Summer Food Services Program	New	Laura Benavidez	Executive Director of Food and Nutrition Services	Food and Nutrition	Districtwide

UP Academy Boston and UP Academy Dorchester Update PowerPoint

UP Academy Boston Charter Renewal Application

Memoranda of Understanding for UP Academy Boston and UP Academy Dorchester

Enrollment Policies for UP Academy Boston and UP Academy Dorchester

Management Contract between UP Academy and UP Education Network

Expulsion Policy for UP Academy Boston and UP Academy Dorchester

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. Mr. Loconto said that tonight's meeting was being streamed 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 interpretation services were available Spanish, Portugese, and Cape Verdean Creole; the interpreters introduced themselves. Meeting documents were publicly posted at www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee prior to the start of the meeting.

Mr. Loconto thanked Ambassador Ray Flynn for joining the meeting. Ambassador Flynn praised the Boston City Council for approving the FY21 budget earlier today.

Mr. Loconto announced that Carolyn Kain, who is stepping down as chair of the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPac) after 11 years of service, would not be joining the meeting due to an unanticipated conflict. He thanked Ms. Kain for her leadership and said that the Committee would mail her citation.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: JUNE 10, 2020

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the June 10, 2020 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

As prepared for delivery.

Thank you everyone for joining us virtually yet again. Before I begin my report, I want to thank my colleagues on the School Committee for the incredibly thoughtful, powerful discussion we had at the start of our last meeting. That is what feels different about this current movement. These incredibly moving discussions that I have participated in, that we've all had with our friends, family and colleagues. We need to sustain this momentum and continue to keep equity and our anti-racist lens at the forefront of every conversation and every decision. I am so grateful to be serving our community alongside the members of this Committee. I appreciate learning from your perspectives as we work towards our shared goal of supporting our students and families.

In that vein, I want to thank our educators for having such thoughtful discussions last Friday as BPS celebrated Juneteenth. I'm so thankful to Karen White from our Excellence for All program in the Office of Academics for developing a website of resources for teachers, families, and the

whole community to educate one another, reflect, and share the story of Juneteenth. We also celebrated virtually with our colleagues. I want to thank Dr. Charles Grandson who shared an arrangement of the Black national anthem “Lift Every Voice” during our check-in with school leaders on Friday. I mentioned in my check-in to staff on Friday morning that Juneteenth felt different this year, more recognized and more celebrated, especially by those who were previously unfamiliar with its meaning and deep importance. I continued to feel that way throughout the day and the weekend. We certainly have a long way to go, but I remain hopeful, especially with the leadership I am seeing from our young people.

Monday was our last day of the school year, my first as Superintendent. We had a successful close and are now closing out all our procedures and schools as we get ready for summer learning and fall reopening.

On Tuesday, June 9, 2020, the leaders of our high schools met as a group to discuss the potential retirement of the title "Headmaster," which the district has used continuously for over 350 years to refer to the leader of a school. After many years of discussion as a group, and responding to my recent request for a renewed discussion, the former Boston Headmaster's Association, representing the 32 school leaders of secondary schools in BPS, met and agreed unanimously to retire the title "Headmaster" effective immediately. The leaders of our high schools will now be referred to as "Heads of School." The organization has also been renamed the Boston High School Heads Association or BSHSA. I want to thank Dr. Caren Walker-Gregory (head of school, Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers) and Matthew Holzer (head of school, Boston Green Academy), Co-Heads of the BSHSA, for their continued guidance and support and invite them to speak to the change. *[Dr. Walker-Gregory and Mr. Holzer made brief remarks supporting the title change.]*

Earlier today, the Boston City Council passed the BPS FY21 budget in an 11-2 vote and passed the City's FY21 budget in an 8-5 vote. We are very fortunate that Mayor Walsh and the City of Boston have demonstrated a continued commitment to invest in the Boston Public Schools. While BPS is receiving a 7% increase in our budget to the tune of \$80 million, the Council of Great City Schools is estimating that other large national districts are in line to receive 15-20% cuts to operating budgets. Instead of making cuts, BPS is ensuring we have highly paid teaching staff and will invest \$36 million directly into schools, including investments in school psychologists, family liaisons, social workers, and one-to-one technology for students, which we know our students need now more than ever. I am very grateful to Mayor Walsh for his three year 100 million historic investment in Boston Public Schools. Today's vote by the City Council is an affirmation to the many community voices that contributed to our new 5-yr strategic plan focused squarely on providing an equitable and excellent education for our children. I want to thank every member for their supportive vote and for their continued involvement as we work together to ensure our kids get what they need so that we can implement our full strategic plan and deliver on our promise - and we can all be proud of our Boston Public Schools.

In other recent news, on Monday, the last day of the school year, we reached another milestone in our meal distribution since schools closed, surpassing 950,000 meals served. We are on track to reach \$1 million meals served this week. Currently our total stands at 980,187 meals distributed. Of that figure, close to 400,000 meals have been delivered to students' homes. Our

meal distribution models have continued uninterrupted since the school year ended on Monday, and we will continue to deliver meals to students who regularly receive door-to-door transportation. In addition, all of our BPS meal sites will remain open through the summer, serving free breakfast and lunch across every weekday from 8:30 to 11:30 am. In the next couple weeks we will be opening additional BPS meal sites. Please continue to visit bostonpublicschools.org/freemeals for information on locations. Again, I want to thank our Food and Nutrition Services staff, our bus drivers and bus monitors, and the volunteers for this tremendous effort. All of our staff worked so well collaboratively to get our families what they need during this incredibly difficult school closure and remote learning period. I am deeply appreciative of the entire BPS Team for their truly amazing work.

Boston has long been a model of enriching, hands-on summer programming and we are committed to providing learning opportunities for youth this summer. Summer learning will run from July 6-August 7, with a few programs extending a bit longer based on our students needs. At the district level, we will be offering project-based, hands-on learning activities for students in elementary grades, Extended School Year programming for students with disabilities, English Learner Summer programming across grade levels, credit recovery for middle and high-school students, early college opportunities, youth jobs programs, the Exam School Initiative for students entering grades six and eight, Summer Early Focus for our youngest learners, and more. Thirty-seven schools are also offering their own school-based remote learning programs during the summer. Families are encouraged to apply for all our summer learning programming at bostonpublicschools.org/summer. All of this information is there, plus details on summer reading lists, area camps and community programs. Again, that's bostonpublicschools.org/summer.

We are working with our facilities department and our City partners to create summer jobs for BPS students. We have created 469 summer employment opportunities for our young people. At Madison Park, we will have youth crews working on facilities projects such as painting, carpentry and landscaping. Students will work on projects such as building planters, benches and radiator covers to be installed in some of our schools and lobbies. We are looking to replicate these crews at other high schools to place more students in employment opportunities at our schools. We are also working with BSAC to coordinate other summer jobs - some even remote. We're also very excited that this year we will have BPS students serving as paid teaching assistants in our Exam School Initiative for rising sixth and eighth graders and a new Social Justice summer opportunity for our youth through our Excellence for All team. Earlier this month, the Mayor announced the expansion of the City's summer jobs program for youth. An additional \$4.1 million in funding will support 8,000 youth ages 14-21 in obtaining summer jobs and engagement opportunities. To apply, visit boston.gov/summerjobs.

As I've mentioned before, the district has established the BPS Parent Hotline at (617) 635-8873, to ensure that families are regularly able to contact the district regarding their needs. Staff supporting the hotline reflect the languages and cultures of our families. We will continue the helpline throughout the summer. Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm. Again, that's (617) 635-8873.

We will soon be announcing opportunities for the BPS community to participate in our planning process for the reopening of schools in the fall. We will be holding virtual forums in July and will provide opportunities for members of the community to provide feedback. We previously distributed a survey to assess family needs in April during the first few weeks of the remote

learning period. In addition, we have recently released teacher and student surveys, and are planning to release a new staff survey in the coming days, as well as a new family survey. We will use all this feedback, in addition to the notes we've gathered from our nine recent community stakeholder meetings, and future meetings, to inform our reopening plans. As we continue our discussions around reopening, we are developing multiple contingency plans following current social distancing guidelines.

It has come to our attention that, due to the tradition of our school buildings being used as City of Boston polling sites, we may not be able to hold classes in-person on Election Day, this coming November 3. We will soon determine whether that day becomes one of remote instruction or is made up in some other way. We will of course keep students, and staff and families updated on this and other developments as we continue planning for the fall.

Later this evening, we will hear from Principal Leslie Gant of the Tynan Elementary in South Boston. Principal Gant and her community are proposing that their new sensory room be named after Ambassador Ray Flynn, former Mayor of the City of Boston. The sensory room is used as therapy for children with limited communication skills and is designed to help develop their senses. The sensory room features special lighting, a bubble machine, play tunnel, yoga space, and much more. This proposal was supposed to be an agenda item during our March 18 meeting before COVID-19 changed those plans. Ambassador Flynn, a Southie native and dedicated public servant for the City of Boston, has long been an advocate for BPS students across the city, particularly students with special needs. At the event in February celebrating the completion of the project, Ambassador Flynn remarked that there are other locations in the City named after him, but this one will mean the most. I want to thank Ambassador Flynn for joining us this evening for this proposal, which I fully support. I can't wait to visit the sensory room myself!

Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked the Superintendent for her leadership during this challenging school year. She praised the Boston High School Heads Association's decision to change the title of headmaster to head of school. She expressed concern about connecting students with summer enrichment opportunities and requested district support to make those connections.

Ms. Robinson echoed Ms. Oliver-Dávila's support for the Superintendent. She requested an update on the Superintendent's working group on student safety and privacy. The Superintendent responded that the working group is meeting weekly and she hopes to present a policy recommendation to the Committee in August. She said that the district will honor retiring Chief of Safety Services Eric Weston at the next School Committee meeting. She thanked Mr. O'Neill for presenting Chief Weston with a citation at his drive-by retirement celebration last week.

Mr. O'Neill asked about the district's plans to prepare fresh meals for students when in-person school resumes. The Superintendent said it's unlikely that school cafeterias will reopen when students return to school buildings, adding that district leaders are still exploring how to offer students high quality food in a new environment. Mr. O'Neill encouraged the district to continue to offer students fresh food options.

Mr. Loconto praised the decision to change the headmaster title to head of school. He said that the Committee will discuss potential school reopening plans at its July 22 meeting.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Boston City Councilor At-Large Annissa Essaibi-George testified in favor of UP Academy Boston's charter renewal proposal, as well as the passage of the FY21 budget
- Jessica Tang, president, Boston Teachers Union (BTU), testified regarding inclusion
- Arianna Rodriguez, student, Sociedad Latina, testified regarding police presence in schools
- Amerie Alder, student, UP Academy Boston, testified in favor of UP Academy Boston's charter renewal proposal
- Jairalis Mercardo, parent, Orchard Gardens K-8 School, read testimony from parent Tarina Harrison regarding the safe reopening of schools
- Iris Diaz, parent, Blackstone Elementary School, testified regarding the safe reopening of schools
- Amanda Lara, parent, Blackstone Elementary School, testified regarding the safe reopening of schools
- Glenda Rodriguez, parent, Hurley K-8 School, offered suggestions to improve schools
- Ana Shapiro, teacher, Charlestown High School, testified regarding inclusion
- Carol Willis-Webb, parent, UP Academy Boston, testified in favor of UP Academy Boston's charter renewal proposal
- Bilal Lafta, alumnus, UP Academy Boston, testified in favor of UP Academy Boston's charter renewal proposal
- Jurrell White Gunter, alumnus, UP Academy Boston, testified in favor of UP Academy Boston's charter renewal proposal
- Daphne Lopes, parent, UP Academy Boston, testified in favor of UP Academy Boston's charter renewal proposal
- Emma Fialka-Feldman, teacher, Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School, testified regarding inclusion
- Krissaun Hill, sister of BPS student, testified regarding inclusion
- Amar Kumar, board member, UP Academy Boston, testified in favor of UP Academy Boston's charter renewal proposal
- Danissa Lopez, teacher, Umana Academy, and member, Educators for Excellence, testified regarding police presence in schools
- Monica Johnson, Curley K-8 School, testified regarding police presence in schools
- Mike Heichman, member, Boston Education Justice Alliance, testified regarding police presence in schools, the safe reopening of schools, and the district's MOU with the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

- Rosane Lobato, parent, Jeremiah E. Burke High School, testified regarding personnel matters.
- Natacha Scott, content director, BPS History/Social Studies Department, testified regarding the reorganization of the Office of Academics
- Frank Hart, member, Boston Parent Organizing Network, testified regarding remote learning and the reopening of schools
- Michael Kincade, parent, Jeremiah E. Burke High School, testified regarding special education concerns
- Maria Moura, parent, Blackstone Elementary School, testified regarding after school programs for special education students
- Josue Sakata, parent and school administrator, testified regarding the reorganization of the Office of Academics
- Peggy Borgard, parent, Young Achievers School of Math & Science, testified regarding inclusion
- Monica Singletary, member, Boston Parent Organizing Network, testified regarding remote learning
- Ruby Reyes, executive director, Boston Education Justice Alliance, testified regarding the budget
- Cecil Carey, teacher, Charlestown High School, and member, BTU, testified regarding ethnic studies
- Sheena Kovalovsky, BPS teacher, and member, BTU, testified regarding ethnic studies
- Katie Li, BPS teacher, and member, BTU, testified regarding ethnic studies
- Layla Cable, BPS teacher, and member, BTU, testified regarding ethnic studies
- Mark Knapp, teacher, Quincy Upper School, testified regarding inclusion
- Michael Berger, teacher, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, testified regarding police presence in schools
- John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding access to native language instruction

REPORT

Ambassador Raymond L. Flynn Sensory Room Dedication Recommendation, Tynan Elementary School - Tynan Elementary School Principal Leslie Gant presented a proposal to name the sensory room at the Tynan Elementary School in South Boston in honor of former Boston Mayor and Ambassador to the Vatican Raymond L. Flynn. The Tynan School Site Council approved the recommendation in accordance with the Committee's school naming policy.

Mr. Tran thanked Ambassador Flynn for his civil rights work as Mayor, including diversifying the Boston Police Department.

Ms. Robinson thanked Ambassador Flynn for his service to Boston and praised Principal Gant for her leadership.

Mr. O'Neill lauded Ambassador Flynn and expressed excitement about the impact that the sensory room will have on students.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila expressed her support for the proposal and thanked Ambassador Flynn for his work on economic development, jobs, housing, and youth athletics.

ACTION ITEMS

Ms. Oliver-Dávila requested more information about the CARES: Elementary and Secondary Education Emergency Relief grant. The Superintendent explained that the grant provides Boston with approximately \$32 million, of which \$7 million must be set aside for private school funding based on total enrollment in accordance with guidance from the U.S. Department of Education. She said that the state has an opportunity to follow different guidance with the HEROES Act. Mr. Loconto suggested that BPS stakeholders advocate for this issue with the Boston Delegation.

Ms. Robinson asked what percentage of private schools students are low income. Anu Jayanth, director of Grants and External Funding, agreed to follow up with the information.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved grants for approval totaling \$76,254,062.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent's recommendation to name the sensory room at the Tynan Elementary School "The Ambassador Raymond L. Flynn Sensory Room."

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent's recommendation to grant a one-year contract extension to Boston Public Schools transportation provider Transdev, covering the period from July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

REPORT

UP Academy Boston Charter Renewal and Amendment Requests - UP Education Network Chief Executive Officer Veronica Conforme and UP Academy Boston Principal Rashida Lawson presented a charter renewal request for UP Academy Boston, as well as four charter amendments for UP Academy Boston and UP Academy Dorchester: Memoranda of Understanding for UP Academy Boston and UP Academy Dorchester; enrollment policies for UP Academy Boston and UP Academy Dorchester; a management contract between UP Academy and UP Education Network; and an expulsion policy for UP Academy Boston and UP Academy Dorchester.

UP Academy Boston, located in South Boston, serves students in grades 6-8; UP Academy Dorchester serves students in grades K1-8. Both schools are Horace Mann In-District Charter Schools. Ms. Conforme and Ms. Lawson discussed UP Academy Boston's strengths and areas for improvement.

Mr. O'Neill recalled the Committee's concerns about UP Academy Boston's Code of Conduct five years earlier. He asked how UP Academy Boston's performance compares with other BPS schools. Ms. Conforme said that UP Academy Boston's student achievement data is similar to the district's transformation schools. She said that the school's suspension and attendance data is concerning and therefore a priority. The Superintendent said that she is recommending the charter renewal request for approval with metrics for improvement. Mr. O'Neill asked Ms. Conforme her thoughts on the district's grade configuration strategy, which calls for most schools to offer a K-6/7-12 or K-8/9-12 grade configuration. Ms. Conforme said that the UP community is open to aligning its schools with BPS's grade reconfiguration, adding that much family engagement would be needed.

Dr. Rivera expressed concerns about UP Academy Boston's outcomes for English Learners (ELs), suspension rate, and declining enrollment. Ms. Conforme said that some students leave the school in 7th grade to attend the exam schools. She said that UP is actively working to raise achievement for ELs and reduce its suspension rate. She confirmed that UP teachers belong to the Boston Teachers Union. She said that UP Academy Boston is approaching 50% student-facing staff of color.

Ms. Robinson asked if UP Academy Boston offers foreign language course, which it does not.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila complimented the school's rigor and asked why its suspension rate is high. Ms. Conforme spoke about implementing restorative justice practices and training staff. She said that UAB has shifted its focus to student voice.

Mr. Loconto thanked UP for aligning its Code of Conduct with the district's COC and for closing gaps on absenteeism.

The Superintendent explained that she is recommending UP Academy Boston's charter renewal with conditions; if approved by the School Committee, the Commissioner of the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education would set the conditions. Mr. Loconto thanked UP's leadership for being proactive.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. O'Neill congratulated O'Bryant student Willie Kincaid and his family on his recent graduation. He thanked Willie's parents for their many years of special education advocacy. Mr. Loconto requested that the Burke High School's graduation video be shared with the Committee.

Mr. Loconto said that the Committee plans to add one or more additional meetings during the summer.

ADJOURN

At approximately 9:09 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Sullivan". The signature is contained within a thin black rectangular border.

Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary