



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

July 22, 2020

The Boston School Committee held a remote meeting on July 22, 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 24, 2020

Grants for Approval Totaling \$436,029:

Amount	FY	Grant Name	Status	Fund Manager	Representative Title	Focus Area(s)	Sites
\$182,279	2021	Supporting Chemistry Teachers to Assess and Foster Chemical Thinking	Increase	Marianne Dunne	Senior Project Coordinator	Curriculum and Instruction	Districtwide

Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom
July 22, 2020

\$225,000	2021	Boston Athletic Association Donation	New	Ali Ettis	Assistant Director of Operations	Health & Wellness	Districtwide
\$25,000	2021	Support for Emergency Food Distribution Programs	New	Laura Benavidez	Executive Director of Food and Nutrition Services	Food and Nutrition	16 Sites
\$3,750	2021	Eos Foundation's Nourishing Kids Initiative	Increase	Eric Stevens	Director of Finance, FNS	Food and Nutrition	10 Sites

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 The Board of Trustees of the UP Academy Charter School of Dorchester and UP Academy Charter School of Boston and UP Education Network, Inc.

UP Academy Boston Expulsion Policy *(revised since June 24, 2020)*

UP Academy Dorchester Expulsion Policy *(revised since June 24, 2020)*

BPS Reopening Working Draft Plan (Superintendent's Report), July 22, 2020

Update on Columbia Point Parcel Request for Proposals (RFP) PowerPoint

Placemaking for Boston Youth PowerPoint

Columbia Point RFP Update Equity Impact Statement

Update on Exam Schools Admissions Test RFP PowerPoint

Exam Schools Admissions Test RFP Equity Impact Statement

Memo from Chief Monica Roberts to Boston School Committee re: Exam School Admissions Test RFP, July 17, 2020

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; the interpreter introduced himself. Meeting documents were publicly posted at www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee prior to the start of the meeting. Mr. Loconto announced that the Committee has scheduled remote meetings on August 5, 2020 and August 19, 2020 starting at 5 p.m. on Zoom.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: JUNE 24, 2020

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the June 24, 2020 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

As prepared for delivery.

Thank you everyone for joining us for our first School Committee meeting of the summer. I hope everyone has had some time to rest, relax and reflect on this truly challenging last few months. Over the weekend we learned of the passing of civil rights pioneer John Lewis. I noted in my check-in to staff this week that Congressman Lewis stood up for justice, equity, and dignity and believed in humanity. While the current racial justice movement was born out of unspeakable tragedy, Mr. Lewis was able to see the reckoning begin. I am heartened by the renewed focus we have taken this year to root out injustice and inequity in our own work, as we examine our policies and practices, and take action to increase opportunity and access to our most underserved students and their families. It is difficult to lose such a strong leader.

I know that everyone has been asking about the district's plans for the fall. We are deep into our planning for the fall and, as outlined in state guidance, we are preparing plans for three reopening scenarios. We are also receiving feedback from various stakeholders, including our students, staff and families. We conducted remote learning surveys in the spring and on June 29 we launched our most recent remote learning survey for families, with specific questions about reopening in the fall.

To date, we have received 15,151 responses from families (approximately 30% based on student count. We asked that families complete one survey per household, so we have likely reached a larger percentage of families. We have also received 5,228 responses from staff (approximately 55%). I strongly encourage any parent or guardian who has not completed the survey to visit bostonpublicschools.org/survey and take a few minutes to share your thoughts. The survey is available in 10 languages. In addition to our survey, we have convened dozens of meetings with

stakeholder groups and the larger community. Our first meeting open to the general public is this Saturday, July 25 at 10:00 am. Sign up to attend at bostonpublicschools.org/reopening. Like other school districts across Massachusetts, Boston has until July 31 to submit preliminary reopening plans for three models of instruction -- entirely in-person, entirely remote and a hybrid of the two. We have looked into the survey data we've received and many parents want their kids back in school in some capacity. We must make sure that when that happens, we are taking every step to ensure the safety of our students, staff and families.

I'd now like to introduce two of my colleagues to provide some updates as to where we stand in our plans. Joining us now to discuss the City's pandemic response, phased reopening and how it pertains to our fall planning is Chief of Health and Human Services for the City of Boston, Marty Martinez. He will be followed by Senior Advisor Tammy Pust, who has been leading our coronavirus response and fall reopening work.

Chief of Health and Human Services Marty Martinez spoke about current COVID-19 statistics in Boston; Special Advisor Tammy Pust presented an overview of the district's working draft plan to reopen schools this fall.

The plan will adhere to public health requirements, which call for

- Social distancing (all 6 feet apart)
- Masks on all students and staff
- One student per row per bus
- No food in cafeterias
- Health protocols followed for bus & building sanitation and school nurse response to suspected exposure
- No group gatherings if community infection rates are outside of acceptable range

BPS must present three different plans to the state by August 10th: fully remote; hybrid/blended; all in person. According to a recent BPS family survey, 40 percent of families support a hybrid learning model, 28 percent support all in person; 23 percent support all remote; and nine percent are unsure. Parents can choose to have students continue learning remotely if desired.

The hybrid model ("hopscotch model") would consist of:

- 2 Days of In-Person Learning + 3 Days of Remote Learning
- Group A in-person + Group B online - then switch
- Teachers teach remotely and in-person simultaneously.
- 6 feet of social distancing maintained

- Exceptions:
 - Special education rooms if all students can fit within social distancing requirements?
 - Maybe weeks (v days) in high schools?

- Supports as Needed:
 - Training on teaching both online and in-person
 - Tech tools (cameras; speakers; online programs)
 - Substitute pool
 - Paraprofessional assistance/training
 - Collaborative planning time

Moving forward, the district will continue discussing reopening plans with union partners learning from the BPS community; continue its equity analysis ongoing; and drafting its reopening plan (with guardrails) for sharing with school leaders.

Thank you, to both Chief Martinez and Tammy for their incredible work. We will continue to keep you all updated as our plans continue to develop.

We have one other special guest during tonight’s Superintendent Report. Late last month, Chief Weston retired after many years of service to our Boston children. We were going to recognize him last meeting but he was unable to attend. We will definitely do so in the near future. We are so happy to welcome a new member of the BPS team, our new Chief of Safety Services, Neva Coakley-Grice. Chief Coakley comes to us after 27 years with the Boston Police Department. She is a self-professed “hometown girl” from Roxbury, who has spent her entire career working in Boston. Neva started out as a police officer in South Boston and cherished her time spent working with students at the Tynan and the former Gavin Middle School. Chief Coakley has really hit the ground running since taking on this incredibly important position. She is committed to working to cultivate trust, build relationships with students and families, and bridge connections with the broader City community. This is a transformative role during a time of real change locally and across the country. I am so happy to have Neva on the team and I’d like to invite her to say a few words.

We are in our third week of virtual summer programming! The majority of our summer programs run from July 6 - August 7, with a few programs extending a bit longer. Across all BPS summer programming, including our programs run by our Boston After School and Beyond partners, we have 13,671 students enrolled. Over the last week we’ve worked to provide students enrolled in summer learning programs with summer care packages, including notebooks, writing utensils and art supplies. This initiative included help from staff and volunteers who assembled the summer learning kits at UP Academy Dorchester last week. The kits were then given to students in a variety of methods: deliveries, a courier service, socially distant pick-up operations

in school parking lots. Thank you to Boston Cares for coordinating the volunteer efforts, and thank you to the Red Sox for donating reusable bags! It's so nice to be able to surprise our students and families with these learning materials! Additional summer info, like summer reading lists and community programs is available at bostonpublicschools.org/summer.

BPS continues to work with the City of Boston to help respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. This week, BPS agreed to partner with the City of Boston Office of Health and Human Services and the East Boston Neighborhood Community Health Center (EBNHC) to open a walk-up testing site outside the Jackson/Mann building. Testing began yesterday, and the site will be open through August 1. Hours of operations will be Tuesday through Friday, 2pm-7pm, and Saturday 10am-3pm (No testing on Sundays and Mondays). I appreciate everyone's cooperation and understanding of the critical role the school building will play in our City's response to this unprecedented public health emergency.

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.

I want to provide you with an update on the district's Memorandum of Understanding with the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), following the District Review. BPS acknowledges the district's current focus on safely reopening school, and that BPS's work on its priority initiatives will go forward this year to the extent feasible. These priority initiatives include: specific improvements in the transformation schools; adoption of MassCore and reducing chronic absenteeism; improving outcomes for students with disabilities; improving transportation. The second amendment delays implementation of the measures of success on the BPS priority initiatives under school year 2021-2022. The amendment also delays the beginning of the planning period for DESE and BPS to determine specific annual targets and other matters until March 15, 2021.

Since the beginning of the school year, I have asked for a deep dive into our policies, practices and procedures as it pertains to the sharing of student information. It is our mission to provide safe and welcoming schools for all BPS students, particularly our immigrant students. To better inform and build upon the district's work this year strengthening policies in these areas, we have convened a school safety working group. The working group has met to synthesize additional research and best practices, as well as solicit feedback from stakeholders and experts to make recommendations about the district's school safety operations and practices, including the proposed Privacy of Student Information policy. The group held its sixth meeting yesterday, July 21. BPS presented a draft policy to the group and received some initial feedback. The group will

meet one more time to discuss the draft policy. BPS anticipates bringing forward a policy to the School Committee at the beginning of August.

I want to take a moment to address some of the recent stories you may have read about this past week. We've discussed here many times before that the transformative work we need to do together will require all hands on deck. That's more true now as we work to confront the new challenges and heightened inequities that the global pandemic has thrust upon us. Constantly evaluating ourselves and our work is part of the continuous improvement practice I've worked to cultivate for my entire career, and that means paying attention when there's a need to course correct. I've always welcomed and been incredibly grateful for feedback from my colleagues, even when that feedback is difficult. And I'm equally grateful that my conversations with school leaders continue, because I have no doubt that their commitment to our children is equal to my own, and equal to that of the incredible central office team that is working to support them. I also recognize that change is hard and leading with empathy, especially in times of uncertainty and crisis, is so important to making people feel heard and valued. In our rush to close schools, feed children and deliver Chromebooks for remote learning, I think we all had to work harder to reach every student, sustain momentum and relationships. I didn't come to Boston because I thought it would be easy. I don't shy away from tough conversations because I believe in the work and I believe in healthy conflict. That is what makes us stronger and more determined to reach our shared goals together. I have no doubt that the talented leaders in this district will continue to challenge me and that I'll challenge them, that we'll continue to grow and learn from each other, as we aspire to be our best for the students we serve and our kids deserve no less.

I have spent the past week reflecting on this first year. It has been a year like no other. There have been times I have been so proud of this district community and city. So many remarkable accomplishments to speak to and so many adversities we overcame. It hasn't been easy on any of us...and the rapid shift we needed to make due to COVID made it even more challenging and difficult. We went from visiting schools and 102 community meetings and town halls to more centralized directives because time was of the essence to execute closing schools, feeding Boston's children and delivering 32,000 Chromebooks for remote learning. But it is a core value of mine to listen to the community and to get their feedback and recommendations, even if we don't always agree. I respect and value BPS staff, leaders and community voice. As your superintendent, I have to make hard decisions. Sometimes people will agree and we will have broad consensus and on others we may have to work harder at consensus. Healthy conflict is good for hard and difficult work to occur. You have to face the brutal facts in order to move forward. I often call this leaning in. I am willing and eager to listen, learn, and grow as I know all of you are too. And I recommit to working to improve internal and external communication and collaboration. As some of you know, I have made it a priority to cultivate trust and promote authentic collaboration to build a healthy organizational culture and strong relationships with our broader community. Trust is earned and it takes time. I am committed to this worthy work. Both

are exemplified by our motto of JUICE and captured within our [5-yr strategic plan](#). This past winter we started the training and hard work to improve workplace culture. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and closure, we had to pause that work. It is time to get back to this work this fall, and in the spirit of Congressman Lewis, to come together to build a “beloved community” within BPS. I hope all of you received your hard copy of our 5-yr strategic plan. It is a reminder of how proud we should all be of what we’ve accomplished this year and the opportunity we have the next five years with the Mayor’s 100M dollar 3-yr commitment to improve outcomes for children and their families so they thrive. We don’t have to settle for just mitigating learning loss, we have an opportunity to create more opportunity and access and like our new strategic mission directs to ensure every child gets what they need! That concludes my Superintendent’s Report for the evening.

Dr. Rivera asked if BPS is communicating with other school districts about reopening. Ms. Pust said that BPS is in communication with other districts, all of whom are grappling with similar safety issues. Dr. Rivera also asked about plans for recess. Ms. Pust said that the district is encouraging the use of outdoor space on school grounds and that students will be provided with mask breaks during recess if they are able to maintain a distance of six feet from others.

Ms. Robinson asked about how social distancing will be enforced among students taking the MBTA to and from school. Ms. Pust said that BPS is working with the MBTA to enforce mask wearing. Ms. Robinson asked about plans for teachers to provide simultaneous instruction using in person and remote learning. Ms. Pust acknowledged that simultaneous instruction will be a hard lift and said that it can be done with the help of technology. She said that district leaders are talking with community partners about providing supervision for students on remote learning days.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila spoke about the importance of working collaboratively with community partners. She asked if the district will be able to provide students with fresh food under the hybrid plan. Ms. Pust said that the district will likely provide students with a “grab and go” option or deliver meals from the cafeteria to the classroom. She said that the district will continue to provide free meals to all students regardless of what model is used. She said that BPS is doing an audit of every classroom to assess airflow and windows.

Mr. Loconto said that the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will soon be issuing additional guidelines about school facilities that will help guide the district’s reopening plans.

Dr. Coleman asked how the district is planning to expand its mastery of virtual learning. The Superintendent said her academic team is meeting regularly to strengthen remote learning, looking at critical areas including instruction, grading, and social-emotional supports.

Mr. O’Neill compared reopening schools to a balancing act that must be done safely. He said that he is communicating with other large urban school districts through the Council of Great City Schools. Ms. Pust said that the district will prioritize having students in families in the same

cohort. Mr. O’Neill suggested enlisting local college students to provide BPS students with academic support. He expressed concern about classroom windows that may be in need of repair. Mr. Pust said that the district is committed to working through those issues.

Dr. Coleman expressed his support for Superintendent Cassellius. He encouraged the district to extend the timeline on plans for high school redesign and to address the issues raised in the 2018 Parthenon Report, *Excellence and equity for all — Unlocking opportunities for off-track youth in Boston Public Schools*.

Mr. O’Neill thanked the Superintendent for her reflective comments and praised her spirit of collaboration.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila said that the Committee asked the Superintendent to focus her early work on rebuilding trust and strengthening community engagement, which she did. She said the next phase of her work should be focused collaborating with school leaders and central office administrators.

Ms. Robinson thanked the Supt for her leadership and her focus on reopening schools safely.

Mr. Loconto thanked the Superintendent for her reflections and commitment. He spoke about the desire of district leaders to move forward together to serve all children.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Boston City Councilor At-Large Annissa Essaibi-George testified regarding school reopening plans.
- Edith Bazile, president, Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts, testified regarding curriculum and school supports.
- Audrey Martinez-Gudapakkam, Amanda Lukens, and Arusha Hollister, BPS parents, testified regarding BPS academics.
- Mike Heichman, member, Boston Education Justice Alliance, testified regarding school reopening, student privacy, and the district’s memorandum of understanding with the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- Robert Jenkins, community advocate, testified regarding the reopening of schools.
- Rosane Lobado, parent Burke High School, testified regarding personnel concerns.
- Sharon Hinton, BPS teachers, testified regarding exam school admissions.
- Andrew Dorsainvil Jones, BPS parent, testified regarding the reopening of schools.
- Benjamin Rockoff, principal Ellison Parks Early Education School, read a letter from K-8 school leaders in support of Superintendent Cassellius.
- Laura Carroll, legal counsel to Harbor Point Community Task Force, testified regarding the Columbia Point Parcel RFP update.
- Lisa Green, member, Boston Coalition for Education Equity, testified regarding exam

school admissions.

- Nancy Lessin, retired occupational health specialist, testified regarding school reopening.
- Jessica Tahiraj, parent, Kilmer K-8 School, testified regarding school reopening.
- Eden Davies, Charlestown resident, testified regarding the lack of early education seats in Charlestown.
- Matthew Ruggiero, teacher, Charlestown High School, testified regarding exam school admissions.
- Ruby Reyes, executive director, Boston Education Justice Alliance, testified regarding school reopening.
- Jake Resetarits, member, Educators for Excellence, testified regarding school reopening.
- Ayele Shakur, co-chair, Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force, testified regarding exam school admissions.
- Stephanie Rodriguez-Ruiz, member, Education Law Task Force, testified regarding UP Academy Boston's Charter Renewal.
- Jose Lopez, chair, Education Committee, NAACP Boston Branch, testified regarding exam school admissions.
- Roxi Harvey, chair, Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council, testified regarding special education services and school reopening.
- Linda Freeman, parent, Boston Green Academy, testified regarding school reopening.
- Peter Sullivan, teacher, Boston Latin School, testified regarding exam school admissions.
- Shakeeda Bartee, teacher, Mission Hill K-8 School, testified regarding racial justice professional development.

ACTION ITEMS

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved grants for approval totaling \$436,029.

Mr. O'Neill asked about the Superintendent's conditions for recommending the approval of UP Academy Boston (UAB)'s charter renewal application. Mr. Loconto explained that if the Committee approves UAB's charter renewal application, the Superintendent will forward a memo to DESE detailing her recommended conditions for improvement. BPS Legal Advisor Cathy Lizotte explained that BPS has worked closely with UAB's leadership to achieve substantial alignment with the BPS Code of Conduct. UAB has committed to making additional changes prior to the start of the next school year that will result in further alignment.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved UP Academy Boston's Charter Renewal Application for the period from 2021-2026.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a Memorandum of Understanding between the Boston Public Schools and UP Academy Boston covering the period from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a Memorandum of Understanding between the Boston Public Schools and UP Academy Dorchester covering the period from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved UP Academy Boston's Enrollment Policy.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved UP Academy Dorchester's Enrollment Policy.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the management contract between The Board of Trustees of the UP Academy Charter School of Dorchester and UP Academy Charter School of Boston and UP Education Network, Inc.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved UP Academy Boston's Expulsion Policy.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved UP Academy Dorchester's Expulsion Policy.

REPORTS

Update on Columbia Point Parcel Request for Proposals (RFP) - Senior Advisor Rob Consalvo reviewed the Columbia Point Parcel RFP process to date. In May 2018, the School Committee approved a resolution authorizing BPS to partner with the City's Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) to issue an RFP for the redevelopment of a portion of the land located at 315-525 Mount Vernon Street in Dorchester to benefit students at the Dever and McCormack schools and other nearby BPS schools and residents in the surrounding community. Ten public meetings were held between 2018-2020.

The RFP received one response from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester, partnering with the Martin Richard Foundation, proposing the construction of a field house. The Boys and Girls Club's offer proposes that it will incur all costs associated with construction and operation of the Field House. The City (through BPS) will own the improvements at the conclusion of the lease term.

As part of this project, the City of Boston has committed \$200,000 to begin a public process to study future design improvements to the remaining open space at the Columbia Point Parcel. The process will include students, teachers, community members, School Committee and other external stakeholders. After this public process is complete, funding will be allocated as part of the Capital Budget to begin the renovations.

If approved, the City will continue student, school and stakeholder engagement. The project will be subject to the Boston Planning and Development Agency's Large Project Review which will trigger additional community input. BPS will work with the City to subdivide the property to assign it a new parcel ID. Property ownership will remain with BPS. The district will finalize the lease with the selected partner. The lease will specify that work will not begin until all applicable permits and approvals have been obtained (i.e., zoning relief, BPDA Large Project Review Process, building permits, etc.), and until BPS provides written notice to proceed.

Bob Scannell, president and CEO, Boys & Girls Club of Dorchester, and Bill Richard, founder, the Martin Richard Foundation, presented a proposal to create a new type of year-round space to share with BPS students, youth, families & our community. The facility would provide specialized indoor athletic and recreational resources for special education students and youth of all abilities, foster deeper partnerships with the McCormack and Dever staff & students, area youth, education and healthcare organizations, and create pathways for advancing youth passion for personal or community change. Mr. Scannell said that he would share with the Committee approximately 60 letters of support from members of the community.

Ms. Robinson asked if the facility will serve high school students, noting that the McCormack School is slated to expand to a 7-12 grade configuration. Mr. Scannell said that the facility will serve all ages. Mr. Consalvo spoke about the facility's year round use and open space component.

Dr. Rivera asked how the project ties in with the physical expansion of the McCormack School and nearby developments in the community. She encouraged coordination and community input. Mr. Consalvo spoke about the BPDA's large project review process, which includes the creation of an Impact Advisory Group and continued community engagement. Mr. Scannell spoke about the value of community input.

Mr. O'Neill expressed enthusiasm for the project's open space concept and year-round use.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila said that the Harbor Point community's input should remain a priority as the project evolves. She asked if the Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester employs people from the immediate community. Mr. Scannell said that more than 80 percent of employees are from the community and the majority of program staff are former club members.

Mr. Loconto expressed support for the proposal, saying that the project has strong potential to bring the community together.

Update on Exam Schools Admissions Test Request for Proposals (RFP) - Chief of Student, Family and Community Advancement Monica Roberts presented an update on the district's issuance of an RFP for a new exam school admissions test. The contract with the previous test vendor, Independent Secondary School Exam (ISEE), expired in June 2020.

In Fall 2019, BPS began planning to conduct an RFP process to identify a new exam. The goal of the RFP, identified through community input, was to ensure a fair test aligned to BPS/Massachusetts curriculum standards that is anti-bias and measures readiness for a rigorous high school curriculum. Using the BPS Racial Equity Planning Tool, a sub-committee of the

RFP Development Working Group conducted an equity analysis of exam school admissions prior to the RFP process. Four members of the RFP development committee overlapped with the RFP review committee, which considered racial equity and access for BPS students in choosing the final proposal to recommend for use. The three proposals received were evaluated for curriculum standards alignment; validation for use with students of all racial identities, English learners, and students with disabilities, and cognitive demand and rigor.

NWEA submitted a proposal to administer its Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth assessment for exam school admission. The computer adaptive test is an untimed, multiple choice test covering math, reading and language art that can be used as a formative test as well as for selective admissions processes.

The RFP Review Committee selected the NWEA because of its alignment to the MA Curriculum Frameworks, robust item bank, bias review, completion of Differential Item Functioning Analysis (DIF) to assess whether items are fair to students in different subgroups, built-in accommodations for English learners and students with disabilities. The MAP Assessment is also available in Spanish. BPS currently uses the test as a formative assessment. Chicago Public Schools, Kansas City Public Schools, Metro Nashville Public Schools use the MAP assessment as one of the components for their selective enrollment schools.

Ms. Roberts said that parents and community members have shared a range of considerations and concerns regarding fall administration, including:

- Increased access to test prep materials and BPS Exam School Initiative prep program
- Impact of potential trauma and learning loss during COVID related closure
- Use of student grades given district grading plan for remote learning

The district must weigh many considerations, including:

- The value of the new test to contribute to more objective admissions standards
- Planning for and addressing potential barriers to effective test administration
- Ability to pivot given the constantly changing context of COVID-19

The Superintendent announced that she will convene a Working Group to make recommendations on exam school admissions for School Year 2020-2021. The Working Group will consist of the three exam school leaders and invited community members. The membership will be made public. The Working Group will submit its recommendations to the Superintendent in September. The Superintendent will then make a recommendation to the School Committee for a vote.

Dr. Rivera asked how the establishment of a working group will impact the procurement of a new test vendor. Mr. Loconto explained that the working group will examine issues that have arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic and make recommendations so that the Committee can make informed decisions for the coming school year. The Superintendent said that if the Committee decides not to offer an admissions test this year, the district's contract with the vendor would still end in three years.

Dr. Coleman thanked the Superintendent and Ms. Roberts for identifying a more equitable exam school admissions test. He questioned if the exam should be offered during the COVID-19 pandemic. He said that he looks forward to the recommendation of the working group and asked for the Committee to review its charge. Dr. Coleman requested that the membership include the leader of a high performing non-exam school. He advocated for the Committee to review how high school students are assigned and its relationship to opportunity and achievement gaps.

Ms. Robinson suggested that the district explore using students' previous NWEA scores so that students do not have to take another test for exam school entrance this year. She said that initiatives such as Excellence for All and the expansion of the Exam School initiative, aimed to increase diversity in the exam schools, have not yet yielded significant results. She questioned the need for a working group on this issue.

Mr. Loconto spoke about the need for the Committee to make meaningful, thoughtful change.

Mr. O'Neill thanked the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force for pushing the Committee's thinking. He applauded the Superintendent for identifying an anti-bias test and expressed support for the creation of a working group, which he hopes will make its recommendation based on research and academics. He noted that other large urban school districts are also grappling with selective admissions school policies.

Dr. Coleman asked if the district has conducted an analysis of NWEA's MAP test performance by subgroups. The Superintendent agreed to follow up with the information.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila encouraged the district to look at reviews of NWEA's MAP test. She expressed concern for families of rising 6th grade students whose grades may have dropped because of difficulty with remote learning. She expressed faith in the working group. She said that the district must work hard to support students who are admitted into exam schools to be successful.

Mr. Loconto talked about taking informed action in service to our students. He thanked the RFP Review Committee for finding a responsive, unbiased, untimed online test. He thanked the Committee for pushing the issue.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

At approximately 11:07 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 written in black ink and is contained within a thin black rectangular border.

Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary