



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REMOTE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

January 12, 2022

The Boston School Committee held a remote meeting on January 12, 2022 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 Jeri Robinson; Vice Chairperson Michael O'Neill; Dr. Stephen Alkins; Lorena Lopera; Rafaela Polanco Garcia; Quoc Tran; and Student Representative Xyra Mercer.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Approval of Meeting Minutes: December 15, 2021; and January 3, 2022 Organizational Meeting

Superintendent's Report with a Focus on COVID Health and Safety Updates: BPS COVID 19 Surge Mitigation Protocol Update, January 12, 2022

Grants for Approval Totaling \$400,174,120

Homelessness Education Resource Network (HERN) PowerPoint

HERN Memo

HERN Equity Impact Statement

Safety Services Update PowerPoint

January 12, 2022

Safety Services Update Memo

Safety Services Update Equity Impact Statement

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Jeri Robinson called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. All members were present with the exception of Ms. Mercer, who joined the meeting shortly after roll call.

Ms. Robinson said that tonight's meeting was being streamed live on Zoom. It will be rebroadcast on Boston City TV. It will also be posted at bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee and on YouTube. She announced that simultaneous interpretation services were available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cabo Verdean, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin and American Sign Language (ASL). The interpreters introduced themselves and gave instructions in their native language on how to access simultaneous interpretation by changing the Zoom channel. Translated meeting documents were posted at www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee prior to the start of the meeting.

Ms. Robinson welcomed Dr. Stephen Alkins, who was sworn in earlier that day as a member of the Boston School Committee. Dr. Alkins serves as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer for TERC, a Cambridge-based non-profit focused on STEM research education, research evaluation, and professional development. He's a member of the Rennie Center's Education Policy Fellowship Program. Dr. Alkins is a graduate of Morehouse College and holds both a masters degree and a Ph.D. from Brandeis University. He is also a spoken word and SLAM poet and resides in Mattapan.

Dr. Alkins thanked Mayor Wu for his appointment. He pledged to work collaboratively to strive towards educational equity. Committee members welcomed and congratulated Dr. Alkins.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the December 15, 2021 meeting and January 3, 2022 annual organizational meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

As prepared for delivery.

Thank you, Madame Chair, and thank you all for joining us tonight. Happy New Year, and what a year it has been! Who would have thought 2 years later, we would still be living through the uncertainty of an ever-changing pandemic. The past 2 weeks have been among the most challenging many of us have experienced. Many of my colleagues near and far, and all

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

January 12, 2022

professionals in and out of education are feeling the brunt of COVID. We are all in this together and we will get through this together.

Tonight, I have many updates and some highlights to share on our work to keep schools open, to monitor public health trends, and to continue planning for the now and for the future. Before we get into that, I want to take a few moments to memorialize two members of the BPS community who were lost too soon.

I was saddened to learn of the recent passing of Janet Palmer Owens, a native of Boston, graduate of the Boston Public Schools, and longtime leader in our district. While I did not know her, I have heard from so many that Janet was a champion for students and a fierce advocate for inclusion. She began her career in BPS as a school counselor and later as school leader before joining the central office team as the Chief Academic Officer. She led a long and well-documented career in BPS that often drew national attention. Upon her retirement, Janet spent considerable time mentoring and supporting new and aspiring school leaders in her role as a distinguished leader and teaching fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Many educators across our system were influenced by Janet's leadership and she will be greatly missed.

This new year began with more heartbreak. It is never easy for me to memorialize anyone during my report: but it is especially difficult when it is a young person. It pains me to acknowledge the passing of Jucelena Gomes Ramos, a student at Madison Park High School, who was senselessly gunned down on January 4. I have been told Jucelena is remembered as joyful, marked by her bubbly personality and her commitment to entrepreneurship. She started her own hair braiding business and had a dream to start her own beauty shop with some family members. I cannot imagine how incredibly devastated her family and friends are. I send sincere condolences to all who knew Jucelena, and I hope that you are one day comforted by the light she brought into your lives. I know she will be sorely missed. BPS had our counseling support services on site at Madison Park and other schools Jucelena attended in the days after we learned of her passing. I will now begin my report with a few district highlights and then share a few updates.

On Monday, January 3, Mayor Wu administered the Oath of Office to the new and re-elected members of the Boston City Council. Congratulations to at-large Councilors Flaherty, Mejia, Louijeune and Murphy, and district Councilors Edwards, Flynn, Baker, Arroyo, Bok, Breadon, Worrell, Lara, and Fernandes Anderson. I'd like to congratulate Senator-Elect Lydia Edwards on her win last evening. We are very proud of all of our leaders. I look forward to working with each one of the new City Councilors to move Boston forward for our students and families. And I want to thank Mayor Wu for her ongoing support and partnership especially during these challenging times.

I will quickly echo Chairwoman Robinson's sentiments and welcome to the School Committee its newest member, Dr. Stephen Alkins. Dr. Alkins is an accomplished professional and a valued community member, but most importantly, Dr. Alkins is an education and equity advocate. I want to again welcome him to his first meeting tonight. I am excited to partner with Dr. Alkins and to work alongside him and all of the School Committee members.

Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom

January 12, 2022

I will now share important updates on behalf of the district. I know that January is an exciting time for a lot of our seniors and their families as they begin to submit applications for their favorite colleges and universities. Early January and February is the typical time for graduating seniors to submit their regular decision applications and they will be hearing back in March/April. I want to wish each and every one of you the best of luck in your search for a college or university that is a perfect fit for you, your skills and your many passions. Boston Public Schools is made up of many talented and brilliant students and I know that you will continue to strive for excellence in all that each of you do. All of the educators and staff in Boston Public Schools continue to ensure that every BPS student is academically prepared to succeed after graduation. We also want to support you as you plan to finance your education. Please make sure you fill out the FAFSA or the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The deadline is January 15. Please visit bostonpublicschools.com/college for resources and tools for college and career planning including financial aid information.

For the school year starting in September of 2022, the priority registration period for students entering grades K0, K1, 6, 7, and 9 officially began on January 5 and will run until January 28. Priority registration for K2 and all other grades will begin on February 7. In an effort to keep all of our families and staff safe and to limit exposure to COVID-19, school registration will be completed by appointment or virtual appointments. There are three simple steps to follow to create an appointment with one of our welcome centers. BPS Welcome Services is also hosting two registration information sessions on January 22 and again on February 3. All of the information for how to register, and dial-in details for joining one of our upcoming info sessions, as well as recordings of past sessions can be found on our website with links and translations for families to follow. Please visit: bostonpublicschools.org/registration for additional details.

I want to acknowledge the upcoming Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Day, which will be observed this Monday. Dr. King dedicated his life to the pursuit of equality, while calling all of us into servant-leadership, to create a better world for his family, his world, and the generations to follow. We still benefit from his sacrifice today. Though Dr. King is famously known for his time spent in Atlanta - where he attended Morehouse College like Dr. Alkins, and also in Montgomery and Selma - he also spent formative years in Boston. It was here he attended graduate school and met his wife, Corretta. It is important to note that Boston is a city that fosters the prowess of people who become global catalysts for change, fighting for a better tomorrow for all. I hope this is meaningful to someone. I wanted to be sure to showcase Dr. King with a color picture. Sometimes black and white photos allow our minds to categorize certain people or events as happening so long ago, but our fight for justice and equity is ever present. It is just as important as it was almost 60 years ago when Dr. King gave his legendary "*I Have A Dream Speech*", and will remain important to center equity as we fight through this pandemic.

As a reminder, the district will be closed on Monday and there will be no school. Self-care is an important part of life and I urge you all to take some time to rest and reflect this weekend. But I also urge you to look at Monday as a "day on" instead of a "day off". Find a simple way to be of service to someone else. Take out the trash or pick up groceries for your elderly neighbor who may be too fragile to leave the house due to COVID. Call your families and friends and check in

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

January 12, 2022

on them. Send that hard working teacher or front line worker in your life a note of thanks and appreciation. Make a donation to an organization with boots on the ground in Boston. As always, if you decide to interact with people, mask up and practice social distancing measures. You can both be safe and be of service.

I want to provide a brief update on Mission Hill. The investigation into the serious complaints we've received is ongoing. I have asked the firm we hired to be thorough and conduct a full investigation and to talk to as many students, family members, and staff as possible. This takes time. We will communicate findings of the investigation within a week of its completion. The Emergency School Review and the Investigation together will provide the district with comprehensive information to inform recommendations about next steps. I understand that the families, staff, the governance board, and the community are eager for information and I remain committed to providing updates as soon as I have them. I have asked for a preliminary update so that we can make timely decisions and communicate transparently with our Mission Hill community. I know they are anxious for this information.

I also want to provide a brief update on the Charlestown Prospectus. We were unable to host our meeting on January 7th. BPS Chief of Equity and Strategy, Dr. Charles Grandson, has been in touch with the prospectus authors about completing the Racial Equity Planning Tool. They have shared what they have so far. We've also discussed the possibility of the prospectus authors presenting at a future community equity roundtable. After further discussion with Dr. Grandson, they did not feel like they had the data needed to present, and our team could not produce the complex research and analysis they requested in the time needed. We continue to be in touch with the authors as we prepare for next week's meeting in which we will vote on the prospectus.

You will hear from the team at the end of my report on all that we are doing to respond to this latest surge, but I wanted to provide you with more details on a few pieces of critical information.

We have ordered thousands more KN95 masks and COVID-19 rapid tests. We are working with BPHC and the City's procurement office to get these in the hands of our students and staff as soon as possible. We've also been in touch with DESE regarding the additional 26 million rapid tests that they purchased and are working with them to determine next steps on when we will be able to receive and then distribute them. We are planning to provide each student and staff member with rapid tests before February vacation. As part of the guidance with BPHC, we made the difficult decision over winter break and into this latest surge to temporarily pause athletics, musical performance, singing, and field trips. As an athlete myself and the mother of athletes, I know how important these experiences are for our students. I have been working closely with the Boston Public Health Commission to understand CDC guidance and mitigation efforts to stem transmission during a surge in community positivity rates.

Over the past several days, I have heard and read all of your messages and I understand how important these activities are to our students' health and wellbeing. I spoke with Dr. Ojikutu and Sanchez today and just this afternoon, they shared with me that although they remain concerned about COVID spread among our athletes, they also understand the balance we all need to make

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

January 12, 2022

to give our students overall well-being. They also approved for us to return to practices and small group conditioning on Tuesday January 17 and if the numbers begin to decline, we can resume to competition on the 24th. However, all students must consent to twice weekly testing in order to do so. This is a new policy and we are in the process of securing these tests so that our students may resume their activities. I hope this puts our students, coaches and families at ease and that we all continue to place our students' health and safety front and center.

As an additional mitigation effort, Mayor Wu announced the City of Boston staff compliance mandate with a new vaccination verification program, which requires city workers to show proof of the first shot of the vaccine by January 15. We are working with all of our Department Heads, School Leaders and union partners to ensure our employees comply with the new vaccine policy. We're hosting dozens of vaccine clinics at our schools this week and next. We're also deploying vaccine clinics to our bus yards, central office and other administrative offices to ensure everyone can get their vaccine.

Mayor Wu also announced a temporary remote work schedule for some City of Boston workers, which began on January 4 and will tentatively continue through January 18 as an additional step to mitigate risk and keep our workforce and our communities healthy and safe. As part of that effort, the City temporarily decreased the number of employees in City buildings, including BPS central office. Though most of our central office staff are able to work remotely, many of them were actually deployed to some of our schools that were experiencing staff shortages. I want to give a huge shoutout to all of our staff who have been helping out in schools to continue to lend a helping hand to ensure we can continue to keep students learning in person.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank all of our incredible educators, paras, custodians, lunch monitors and cafeteria workers, bus monitors and bus drivers and all of the support staff in our schools. I think many of us were hopeful this year would be different, but it has proven to be our most challenging one yet. I know we will get through this, just as we have before. One day at a time, sometimes one hour at a time, but we will be ok. Team BPS has really rallied over this past week. I'm so proud of this team. It's been an all hands on deck situation, I want to thank Chair Robinson for even jumping in at the Hale last week when we needed extra help for some of our youngest learners.

I am going to turn it over now to Dr. Sarimer Sanchez to go over the latest COVID-19 surge and Deputy Superintendent of Academics Drew Echelson who will share our process for how we are evaluating both our staffing challenges and COVID cases in our schools on a daily basis.

BPS COVID 19 Surge Mitigation Protocol Update

And that is my Superintendent's Report for this evening.

Ms. Polanco Garcia expressed concerns about the impact of COVID on chronic absenteeism and safety in schools. She said that undocumented families may be fearful of repercussions from the district or legal authorities if their students have many absences. She encouraged the district to provide families with flexibility. Mr. Marques said that district leaders are examining attendance

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

January 12, 2022

challenges and taking into consideration all of the factors that are impacting whether students are going to school every day. He added that the state allows students to be marked constructively present if they are in quarantine and they're participating in remote tutoring, or using the Paper platform. He said that the district's revised attendance policy focuses on relationship building and outreach and communication to support the students and families.

Ms. Lopera thanked all BPS teachers and staff for their hard work during the recent COVID surge. She asked if the district is testing close contacts regardless of their vaccinations status. Dr. Sanchez said that she submitted a formal request to the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) proposing twice weekly surveillance testing for both vaccinated and unvaccinated students and staff and is awaiting a formal response.

Ms. Mercer asked how students who are in quarantine can access food. Deputy Superintendent of Operations Sam DePina said that families can pick up food from their school.

Mr. O'Neill thanked all BPS teachers and staff for their hard work during the recent COVID surge. He applauded the attention to detail and the collaborative effort to keep schools open for in-person learning. He asked if district leaders are comfortable with the testing resources being provided by the state and federal government. The Superintendent spoke about the district's efforts to obtain more tests and difficulties with shipments. Mr. DePina is working with the Boston Public Health Commission to secure more tests.

Mr. O'Neill asked about classroom ventilation. The Superintendent explained the district's health and safety protocols, which include opening windows and the use of air purifiers. BPS has also held numerous vaccine clinics.

Ms. Lopera asked if the Superintendent is considering a vaccine mandate for students. The Superintendent said that the FDA has only cleared the Pfizer vaccine for children ages 16 and older. She said that she does not anticipate mandating the vaccine until it is fully authorized.

Ms. Lopera requested clarification about tutoring services for quarantining students. Dr. Echelson said that the district has hired a cadre of tutors who are providing remote instruction for small groups of students who are in quarantine. Ms. Lopera asked how classroom instruction is being managed in light of so many student and teacher absences. Mr. Echelson acknowledged that there has been variability in the quality of instruction given the large number of student and staff absences over the past two weeks. He thanked Senior Director of Data and Accountability Monica Hogan and Chief Information Officer Mark Racine for their support. The Superintendent thanked the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) for sharing their experiences at a meeting held earlier today. She said that there has been variation in the disruption experienced among schools.

Dr. Alkins asked if there has been an increase in the demand for mental health support. The Superintendent outlined the many supports available for students, including social workers in all schools and the hiring of additional family liaisons.

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

January 12, 2022

Ms. Robinson asked how BPS is helping families and schools prepare for the possibility of a return to remote learning. The Superintendent said that CIO Mark Racine and his team have done a tremendous job providing tech support. Mr. Racine said that BPS has reached the point where students and teachers view Chromebooks as tools to support instruction. He said that the district is providing schools with additional Chromebooks, chargers, and hotspots in the event that the district has to pivot to remote learning.

Ms. Mercer provided a brief update on BSAC. The group held their first in person meeting of the SY 21-22 on December 16, followed by a virtual meeting on January 6. BSAC currently has representation from 26 schools on the council and continues to recruit students from schools that are not represented. BSAC is organizing a student walkout and protest on Friday, January 14th urging DESE and Governor Baker to authorize remote learning and to count remote learning towards the 180 days required. The walkout will be followed by a webinar.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent’s Report.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Tiffany Luo, Allston resident and Boston Latin School student, testified in favor of a remote learning option.
- Stacy Tran, Dorchester resident and Dearborn STEM Academy student, testified in favor of a remote learning option.
- Nisrine Feham, Roxbury resident, John D. O'Bryant student and Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) member, testified in favor of a remote learning option.
- Annissa Essaibi-George, Dorchester resident and BPS parent, testified in favor of ending the district’s pause on athletics due to COVID.
- Ryan Maziarka, North End resident and Boston Latin School student, testified in favor of ending the district’s pause on athletics due to COVID.
- Michael Maziarka, North End resident and Boston Latin School parent, testified in favor of ending the district’s pause on athletics due to COVID.
- William Hu, West Roxbury resident and Boston Latin School student, testified in favor of a remote learning option.
- Patrick Harnan, South Boston resident and Boston Latin School student, testified in favor of ending the district’s pause on athletics due to COVID.
- Tom Harnan, South Boston resident and Boston Latin School student, testified in favor of ending the district’s pause on athletics due to COVID.
- James Tobin, West Roxbury resident and Boston Latin Academy student, testified in favor of ending the district’s pause on athletics due to COVID.
- Grace Sullivan, West Roxbury resident and Boston Latin School student, testified in favor of a remote learning option.
- Aneisha Adorno, Dorchester resident, Boston Green Academy student, testified in favor of ending the district’s pause on athletics due to COVID.
- Lunn Bova, North End resident and Boston Latin School parent, testified in favor of ending the district’s pause on athletics due to COVID.

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

January 12, 2022

- Richard Petrucci, Back Bay resident and Boston Latin School student, testified in favor of ending the district's pause on athletics due to COVID.
- Laniyah Turner, Dorchester resident and PA Shaw Elementary School student, testified regarding the future of the Shaw School.
- Andrew Robinson, Dorchester resident and PA Shaw Elementary School student, testified regarding the future of the Shaw School.
- Jules Owens, Dorchester resident and PA Shaw Elementary School student, testified regarding the future of the Shaw School.
- Brenda Ramsey, Dorchester resident and PA Shaw Elementary School parent, testified regarding the future of the Shaw School.
- Morgan Keohane, Brockton resident and PA Shaw Elementary School teacher librarian, testified regarding the future of the Shaw School.
- Zerimar Ramos, Dorchester resident and PA Shaw Elementary School parent, testified regarding the future of the Shaw School.
- Ymaris Matias, South End resident and Orchard Gardens K-8 School parent, testified regarding COVID safety.
- Sugey Scannell, Roslindale resident and Hurley K-8 School parent, testified in favor of a remote learning option.
- Maria Mejia, Roxbury resident and Blackstone Elementary School resident, testified in favor of a remote learning option.
- Estephany Almanza, Dorchester resident and Blackstone Elementary School resident, testified regarding the impact of COVID on absenteeism.
- Nancy Lessin, Jamaica Plain resident and members of BPS Families for COVID Safety, testified regarding COVID safety.
- Samantha Laney, Dorchester resident and Holmes Innovation School teacher, testified regarding COVID safety and staffing concerns.
- Michael Heichman, Dorchester resident and member of Boston Education Justice Alliance (BEJA), testified regarding COVID safety.
- Matthew Ruggiero, Jamaica Plain resident and Charlestown High School teacher, testified against the Charlestown Innovation and Inclusive High School prospectus.
- Go Sasaki, Somerville resident and John D. O'Bryant School teacher, testified regarding COVID safety.
- Mary Dibinga, Roslindale resident and Boston Latin Academy teacher, testified regarding COVID safety.
- Soraya Harley Roxbury resident and BPS parent, testified regarding COVID safety.
- Tara Donohue Bonaceto, West Roxbury resident and Lyndon K-8 School parent, testified in favor of keeping schools open for in-person learning.
- Dacia Morales, South End resident and BPS parent, testified in favor of a remote learning option.
- Elise Pechter, Jamaica Plain resident and member of the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH), testified regarding COVID safety.
- Jeb Banks, South Boston resident and BPS parent, testified in favor of ending the district's pause on athletics due to COVID.
- Catherine Brady, Charlestown resident and Charlestown High School parent, testified against the Charlestown Innovation and Inclusive High School prospectus.

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

January 12, 2022

- Suzanne McGlone, Back Bay resident and BPS teacher, testified regarding classroom conditions.
- Andy Groh, Charlestown resident and Boston Latin School parent, testified in favor of ending the district’s pause on athletics due to COVID.
- Katie Kersey, West Roxbury resident and Kilmer K-8 School parent, testified in favor of a remote learning option.
- Ana Shapiro, Jamaica Plain resident and Charlestown High School teacher, shared students’ concerns about the Charlestown Innovation and Inclusive High School prospectus.
- Sarah Horsley, Jamaica Plain resident and member of BPS Families for COVID safety, testified regarding COVID safety concerns.
- Suleika Soto, South End resident and member of BEJA, testified regarding COVID safety concerns and the budget.
- Nancy Minucci, South Boston resident and BPS parent, testified regarding students.
- Jennifer Gordon, Brighton resident and O’Bryant School parent, testified in favor of ending the district’s pause on athletics due to COVID.
- Sarah Parker, West Roxbury resident and Lyndon K-8 School parent, testified in favor of keeping schools open for in-person learning.
- Hugh Coleman, Mattapan resident, Charlestown High School basketball coach, testified in favor of ending the district’s pause on athletics due to COVID.
- Patrick Keating, Dorchester resident and BPS parent, testified in favor of ending the district’s pause on athletics due to COVID.

ACTION ITEM

Ms. Lopera requested an update on Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. Director of Grants and External Funds Yvonne Macrae said that the grants presented for the Committee’s approval this evening are ESSER II and ESSER II funds. The Superintendent said that 86% of schools (97 schools) have been approved in rounds two and three, one school is not yet submitted, two schools need to revise their proposals and 13 schools are currently under review. Funding for FY 23 is being managed through a collaborative budget planning process.

Approved - On roll call, the Boston School Committee unanimously approved grants for approval totaling \$400,174,120.

REPORTS

January 12, 2022

Homelessness Education Resource Network - Brian Marques, senior director of Opportunity Youth, presented a report on the district's Homelessness Education Resource Network (HERN). HERN utilizes a school-based, Hub and Spoke model to support students and families experiencing homelessness. Through this model, BPS has improved access, expanded services and removed barriers for students facing housing insecurity. BPS served approximately 4,000 homeless students in School Year 2020-21.

HERN's Priorities

- Build capacity at the school level to increase access to resources, services and supports for students and families experiencing homelessness.
- Develop systems and strategies for greater communication and collaboration, internally, among functional areas within the district and schools, and externally, among community partners, stakeholders and leaders.
- Significantly increase awareness of available homeless-related services and eligibility rights among students and their families, school leaders, support staff and key constituencies.
- Eliminate inequities by aligning services at the school level that are agile and responsive to the needs of all students.
- Close opportunity gaps by adopting an asset-based approach that enhances educational and life outcomes for all students.
- Approach the work from an understanding of how the housing crisis and rising housing costs affect families beyond those experiencing extreme poverty.

Utilizing the Hub and Spoke model, HERN:

- Coordinates with network of 175 school-based homeless liaisons
- Provides a HERN Toolkit for Schools
 - Homeless funding allocated to school budgets
- Ensures educational stability and access
 - Immediate enrollment
 - Transportation
- Specialized programs and resources
- Case management, consultation and referrals
- Navigating complex cases
- Provision of basic necessities
- Coordination with community partners and city and state agencies

Resources & Support

- Citywide Services and Resources
- Food Access
- Technology Access
- Clothing & Hygiene Items
- Housing Support Resources:
 - Housing Vouchers

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

January 12, 2022

- Emergency Assistance Programs
- Resources for Immigrant Families
- Medical and Healthcare
- HelpSteps
- Priority access to BPS programs

Ms. Robinson applauded the depth and growth of the district's support for families experiencing homelessness.

Mr. Tran spoke about his experience with intermittent homelessness growing up. He requested clarification about unaccompanied minors. Mr. Marques explained that the term is not related to immigration status or citizenship but refers to a young person without a parent or guardian.

Dr. Alkins asked how BPS is helping homeless students remain in the city. Mr. Marques said that BPS is committed to helping families find stable housing within Boston, and that students who are placed outside of Boston can remain enrolled in BPS for the duration of the school year.

Ms. Lopera asked what additional strategies are being implemented to ensure that all of the students and families who are experiencing homelessness are identified. Mr. Marques explained the role of school-based homeless liaison in identifying students who need support while protecting confidentiality. Ms. Lopera said spoke about growing up as an undocumented child and experiencing intermittent homelessness and expressed support and gratitude for the liaisons. She encouraged the district to communicate more broadly with families about the many resources that are available.

Ms. Polanco Garcia spoke about her personal experience with homelessness. She suggested that BPS consider partnering with the Boston Housing Authority to prioritize housing for BPS families.

Ms. Mercer requested clarity about the projected number of students being served. Mr. Marques spoke about the district's efforts to increase student identification and support. Ms. Mercer asked how HERN will help to decrease the portion of homeless students who are English Learners and students of color. Mr. Marques spoke about the housing stabilization service, adding that HERN does not track undocumented students.

Mr. O'Neill thanked Mr. Marques for his care and compassion. He praised the Superintendent for her leadership on this issue. The Superintendent thanked her team for their work. Mr. O'Neill applauded the use of the term navigator, noting that the term is used by Nashville Public Schools.

Ms. Robinson asked how many homeless students are in the district. Mr. Marques estimated approximately 4,000, or between 7- 8% of the total BPS student population. Mr. Robinson asked how BPS can make the broader community aware of the kinds of services that are available for homeless students. Mr. Marque spoke about finding a balance between taking a discrete approach and a "no wrong door approach," where families can access services though a variety of avenues.

January 12, 2022

Safety Services Update - Interim Chief of Student Support Neva Coakley Grice and Deputy Superintendent of Operations Sam DePina presented an update on the Office of Safety Services, formerly known as the Boston School Police. The primary role of Boston Public Schools (BPS) Safety Specialists is to serve as a visible, uniformed, and familiar resource to cultivate a secure learning environment in schools. The Office of Safety Services has transformed the work of the district's 40 Safety Specialists since the passage of Massachusetts Reform Bill S. 2963 in December 2020. The Chief of Safety Service and staff conducted an extensive community engagement process to solicit input and ideas from a broad range of stakeholders. This reimagining is centered in the district's core values: providing a safe learning environment in every school and classroom by working hand in hand with school staff to foster positive relationships with youth, resolve conflicts through restorative justice, and protect all students.

The Safety Services team partners with school administrators, designated safety teams, and all school-based staff to provide a safe and welcoming environment for the school community. The Safety Specialists serve as a proactive link between students and other school support staff, act as role models, and exercise appropriate safety and security procedures as necessary.

Safety specialists serve as liaisons for the Office of Safety Services to school administration and the BPD, and/or other law enforcement agencies (as necessary) with specialty training to solve potential concerns and relay pertinent safety information, in or around the school and to effect appropriate action when necessary. Safety Specialists no longer wear police-style uniforms; instead, they wear a redesigned, more approachable uniform consisting of cargo pants and signed polo shirt that has received very positive feedback from students and staff. Similarly, vehicles have been rebranded to focus on safety rather than policing.

Safety Services aims to intentionally and diligently break down barriers by building relationships and facilitating communication between students, staff, and community stakeholders, including partner organizations, the Boston Police Department (BPD), and the Bureau of Community Engagement. Through service, initiatives, and new professional development programming, Safety Services works to mitigate, deconstruct, and reverse any structural and cultural disconnect within the department and help close opportunity gaps.

In accordance with the district's Data Privacy Sharing Policy approved by the School Committee in 2020, only the Chief and Deputy Chief of Safety Services may share incident reports or other information with BPD except in the case of a health or safety emergency.

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

January 12, 2022

Sam DePina reviewed proposed updates to the Code of Conduct. Over the last 10 years, BPS in conjunction with internal and external stakeholders, including Safety Services, have developed a more progressive Code that focuses on educating students to make better choices and using discipline as a last resort or only in egregious cases. BPS eliminated the zero-tolerance policy within the Code of Conduct. This proposed 2022 Code continues that practice by adopting the Greater Boston Legal Services Agreement (GBLS) agreement which eliminates suspensions for grades K-2, drastically reduces the violations for suspension in grades 3-5, and works to ensure that suspension is used as a last resort whenever possible by increasing the use of restorative practices.

The updated Code focuses on the adult work that needs to be done to support students; the role of staff in addressing and preventing disproportionality of suspensions; the responsibility of adults to utilize promotion and prevention support for students on a Tier 1 level; strengthening school to home partnerships; revised MTSS framework to ensure a balanced and equitable approach to conduct; training, planning time with staff, and implementation of the model; and providing opportunities for collective feedback, problem solving and sharing best practices. The Superintendent is requesting the Committee's approval of the updated Code of Conduct at its January 26th meeting.

Mr. Tran asked clarifying questions about investigations, reports, and restorative justice practices. Ms. Grice explained how incidents are documented and most are resolved within the Code of Conduct without involvement from the Boston Police Department. Mr. Tran encouraged Safety Services to provide safety specialists with diversity training and to expand its use of translation and interpretation services.

Dr. Alkins asked if Safety Services has a toolkit to provide schools with guidance. He also asked if safety specialists receive cultural competency training. Ms. Grice said that Safety Services is very intentional about creating systemic platforms to support black and brown students. She said that safety specialists reflect student demographics and receive extensive training.

Ms. Robinson asked how safety specialists interact with students since the department's redesign. Ms. Grice said that while some officers transitioned out of the department during the redesign, several new specialists have been hired to carry out the new mission of the office. Ms. Robinson asked how children can learn what is expected of them before they are held accountable for it. The Superintendent that the Office of Social Emotional Learning and Wellness (SELWell) and Office of Equity provide support to schools related to expectations for students. She suggested that Dr. Echelson provide the Committee with a presentation on social emotional wellness in the near future. The Superintendent said that she will ask BSAC to update its Student Rights app after the Committee approves the revised Code.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

January 12, 2022

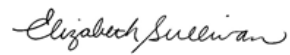
NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

At approximately 11:12 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary