



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REMOTE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE RETREAT

January 20, 2021

The Boston School Committee held a remote retreat on January 20, 2021 at 4 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 Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Vice Chairperson Michael O'Neill (joined the meeting at 4:50 p.m.); Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. Lorna Rivera; Jeri Robinson; and Quoc Tran.

School Committee Member Absent: Student Representative Khymani James.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

BPS Strategic Vision 2020-2025

Graphic Notes from December 12, 2020 School Committee Retreat: Governance Training and Discussion

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Oliver-Dávila called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. Ms. Sullivan called the roll; Mr. James was absent; Mr. O'Neill was absent at roll call but joined the meeting at approximately 4:50 p.m. All other members were present. Ms. Oliver-Dávila said that the retreat 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 Spanish, 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. Meeting documents were translated into all of the official BPS languages and

publicly posted at www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee prior to the start of the meeting.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila briefly shared her personal reflections about President Biden's inauguration earlier that day and the importance of a peaceful transfer of power. She applauded Kamala Harris' election as the first African American, South Asian American woman vice president. She said that she was moved by Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman's performance. The Superintendent spoke about the significance of the day as a biracial woman. She praised Boston's Youth Poet Laureate, Fenway High School senior Alondra Bobadilla.

PRIORITY SETTING DISCUSSION

A.J. Crabill, Director of Governance, Council of Great City Schools, facilitated a discussion on priority setting. He shared graphic notes from the Committee's December 12th retreat. He explained that the School Committee had an obligation to represent the vision and values of the community. Committee members share their reflections about the retreat. Mr. Crabill spoke about all stakeholders being the legal and moral owners of Boston Public Schools (BPS). He said that whether elected or appointed, the School Committee's work is the same. He spoke about the owners and customers of the school system. Mr. Crabill explained that the Committee attends to the needs of the moral and legal owners of the school system, while the Superintendent attends to the needs of its customers. Ms. Oliver-Dávila said that the Committee receives many customer service requests at meetings. Mr. Crabill said that School Committee meetings are not the appropriate space for customer service requests, explaining that such requests should be handled by the district through other channels.

Mr. Crabill invited members to review pages 14-29 of the Superintendent's Strategic Vision 2020-2025 and look for

- Student outcomes
- Describe the student outcomes in a way that is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound)
- What would require adult behavior change?
- What are high leverage areas? High needs areas?

Brainstorming: SMART Goals

1. Combine
 - a. Increase % of students completing MyCAP
 - b. 95% of 8th and 11th graders create MyPlan
 - c. Graduate knowing their place in the world and have a strong sense of their own identity and the identities of others / cultural competence / sense of caring and being / good humans
 - d. Increase % of students completing a dual enrollment course and/or successfully completing an internship

- e. Improve the % of graduates who are [post-secondary ready? Post-graduation ready?] [college, life and] career ready, as defined by x, y, and z, from a% in June 2020 to [95?]% by June 2026
2. Combine
 - a. Improve progress of English Learners with disabilities' student growth percentiles in english and in their home language
 - b. opportunity gap for students with disabilities will decrease
3. Combine
 - a. % of PreKers entering K already K-ready will increase
 - b. % of K-2 students who meet or exceed grade level expectations in fluency
 - c. Children be able to read, comprehend, and communicate in home language and English prior to kindergarten
4. Children be able to think critically, reason, and discern
5. Combine
 - a. math growth or algebra completion by 8th grade
 - b. 95% of students in 3rd, 9th, and 11th grade proficient in reading, math, and sci AND 80% are advanced
 - c. More students will have the ability to pass MCAS and other assessments
 - d. 80% of students graduating from BPS will have completed science and algebra 2 or higher with at least a C
 - e. 80% of students graduate having completed at least one lab oriented course
 - f. Improve graduation rates for students who are english learners and who are from the Latinx community
 - g. Children be able to think critically, reason, and discern

The Committee looked for areas of duplication and combined some of the goals.

During the brainstorming session, the Committee discussed what it means to earn a BPS diploma and the value of a college education. Dr. Rivera spoke about targeted universalism and encouraged the Committee to focus on subgroups. The Committee discussed whether it should set goals for all students vs. a group or groups of students. Mr. Crabill spoke about the pros and cons of focusing on particular student groups. Ms. Oliver-Dávila supported Dr. Rivera's comments. Mr. O'Neill said he struggles with the two concepts. Mr. Crabill encouraged the Committee to look at the data and conduct a root cause analysis.

Citing time constraints, Mr. Crabill suggested continuing the discussion at tomorrow's retreat after the Committee has an opportunity to reflect on data provided by the Superintendent's team.

The Committee took a break from 7:02 - 7:07 p.m.

Mr. Crabill asked the Committee to think about community values and brainstorm guardrails, or non-negotiables, that need to be protected. The Committee discussed the challenge of balancing competing values.

Brainstorming: Guardrails

1. Combine
 - a. Authentic engagement that builds trust
 - b. Develop new and better ways to connect with and engage families, cultivate trust and increase transparency
 - c. Welcome and value all families and students
 - d. Celebrate the assets of our students and provide a joyous and positive school experience
 - e. Develop new and better ways to welcome, value, connect with, and engage families and students in ways that cultivate trust and increase transparency
2. Combine
 - ~~a. Provide rigorous culturally and linguistically affirming curriculum~~
 - ~~b. Provide rigorous culturally and linguistically affirming inclusive curriculum~~
 - ~~c. Provide rigorous culturally and linguistically affirming curriculum and experiences~~
 - d. Recruit and retain highly effective, racially and linguistically diverse, culturally proficient workforce that can provide rigorous culturally and linguistically affirming inclusive curriculum and experiences [that celebrate the assets of our students and provide a joyous and positive school experience?]
 - e. Celebrate the assets of our students and provide a joyous and positive school experience
 - f. City as a classroom
 - g. City, region, and world as our classroom
3. Combine
 - a. Committed to closing the opportunity and achievement gaps
 - b. Develop and monitor progress toward goals for students with disabilities including increasing inclusive practices
4. Combine
 - a. Address the racial and economic inequities in our schools through differentiating funding, and advance the OAG policy
 - b. Engagement with the community and amplifying voice and partnerships, in a way that is inclusive of cultural and linguistic diversity
 - c. All decisions lean toward equitable access to a high quality learning experience for all students
5. Combine
 - ~~a. Addressing the social and emotional well-being of all our students~~

- ~~b. An effective, MTSS throughout the district~~
- c. Create an effective MTSS that addresses the social, emotional, and physical well-being of all our students

The Committee reviewed the list and narrowed it down by identifying areas of duplication. The Superintendent spoke about the importance of assessment and accountability.

Citing time constraints, Mr. Crabill recommended continuing the discussion at tomorrow's retreat, at which time the Committee can reflect on data provided by the Superintendent's team. At that session, the Committee will discuss being intentional about selecting meeting agenda items in an effort to keep the Committee more focused on student outcomes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Robert Jenkins, BPS alumnus and volunteer, testified regarding the reopening of schools and the importance of athletics.

WRAP UP/NEXT STEPS

Ms. Oliver-Dávila announced that the School Committee will reconvene for part two of the retreat tomorrow, Thursday, January 21 from 4-8 p.m. on Zoom. Tomorrow's discussion will focus on effective governance practices.

ADJOURN

At approximately 7:56 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary