



## **OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REMOTE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE RETREAT**

**January 21, 2021**

The Boston School Committee held a remote retreat on January 21, 2021 at 4 p.m. on Zoom. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee), email [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto: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; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Dr. Lorna Rivera; Jeri Robinson; Quoc Tran; and student representative Khymani James.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Agenda

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Oliver-Dávila called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. Ms. Sullivan called the roll; all 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](http://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](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee) prior to the start of the meeting.

### **CONTINUATION OF PRIORITY SETTING DISCUSSION**

A.J. Crabill, Director of Governance, Council of Great City Schools continued the discussion from the January 20, 2020 School Committee retreat about student outcomes and guardrails. Earlier today, district staff provided Mr. Crabill with data to help the Committee synthesize the

goals discussed at yesterday's brainstorming session into potential SMART goals.

He presented the following revisions for review and discussion:

### ***Draft BPS School Committee Goals & Guardrails***

*After creating a strategic plan with extensive community engagement, the BPS School Committee adopted goals that describe the community's vision for what students will know and be able to do, and guardrails that describe the community's values that must be honored on the journey to accomplishing the goals. Once adopted, these goals and guardrails communicate the focus of the Committee's work: how it self organizes, what it does and doesn't focus time on, how it evaluates Superintendent recommendations, how it evaluates the Superintendent, and more.*

### ***Draft BPS School Committee Goals & Guardrails***

*After creating a strategic plan with extensive community engagement, the BPS School Committee adopted goals that describe the community's vision for what students will know and be able to do, and guardrails that describe the community's values that must be honored on the journey to accomplishing the goals. Once adopted, these goals and guardrails communicate the focus of the Committee's work: how it self organizes, what it does and doesn't focus time on, how it evaluates Superintendent recommendations, how it evaluates the Superintendent, and more.*

### ***Potential Goals***

*Strategic Plan Vision: BPS will be a nation-leading, student-centered public school district providing an equitable, and excellent, well rounded education, that prepares every student for success in college, career and life. To accomplish this vision, the BPS School Committee's five-year goals are:*

- *BPS will create the conditions for students to arrive in grade 3 ready to thrive in school by ensuring that the percentage of K-2 students who meet or exceed grade level expectations on the Reading Comprehension and Writing assessment at the end of the year will increase from [w]% in June 2020 to [x]% by June 2026. (1.01.0, 1.01.0)*
- *BPS will cultivate the linguistic and learning assets of students by ensuring that the percentage of students who are English Learners who demonstrate at least [v]% growth on the ELL Access test will increase from [w]% in June 2020 to [x]% by June 2026 (1.07.0, 2.06.0)*
- *BPS will cultivate the linguistic and learning assets of students by ensuring that the percentage of students with disabilities who demonstrate at least [v]% growth on English*

*SGPs and who are in full or partial inclusion will increase from [w]% in June 2020 to [x]% by June 2026 (1.07.0, 2.06.0)*

- *BPS will educate students to be able to critically reason, discern, and demonstrate academic mastery of math, science and literacy so that the percentage of students in 7th and 8th grade who perform at the proficient level in reading, math, and science will increase from [x]% in June 2020 to [y]% by June 2026. (1.04.0, 1.05.0, 1.06.0, 2.01.0, 2.02.0, 2.03.0)*
- *BPS will support students graduating with the agency to direct their futures by ensuring that the percentage of graduates who have 1) completed MyCAP and 2) either an industry/CTE certification, IB credential, score 3 or above on an AP exam, or 20hrs of dual credit will increase from [x]% in June 2020 to [x]% by June 2026. (1.03.0, 2.05.0, 6.1.0, 6.5.0, 6.6.0)*

The Committee collectively edited the goals. The Committee discussed what appropriate benchmarks might be, and potentially adding language about middle school grades.

Mr. Crabill then invited the Committee to review the synthesized list of potential guardrails and offer feedback.

### ***Potential Guardrails***

*Strategic Plan Mission: BPS will ensure that every child in every classroom in every school gets what they need. To honor this overarching value, the BPS School Committee's five-year guardrails are:*

- *BPS will leverage the cultural and linguistic wealth of students and families to incorporate authentic student voice and create partnerships that recognize their value, assets, and needs.*
- *BPS will [ work with community partners to ] prepare students for unlimited global and local opportunities.*
- *BPS will implement, with fidelity, opportunity and achievement gap-closing practices that are research-based; [ and ] data-driven at the district, school, and classroom levels*
- *BPS will recruit and retain a 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.*

- *BPS will deliver a universal Multi Tiered System of Support that addresses the social, emotional, and physical well being of all our students.*

The Committee took a break from 5:15-5:20 p.m.

## **EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE PRACTICES DISCUSSION**

***Evaluating School Committee Meeting Design*** - Mr. Crabill asked the Committee to consider what the impact would be if the Committee only put on its meeting agenda items that are directly related to its goals, directly related to its guardrails, or are legally required. The Committee discussed the need for more effective community engagement. The Superintendent said that districtwide equity roundtables and school-based equity roundtables provide opportunities for data sharing and engagement.

Mr. Crabill spoke about the need for the Committee to be intentional and focused with its limited time and energy. The Committee discussed the challenges of narrowing its focus and delegating matters to the Superintendent. Members engaged in a discussion about governing vs. managing. Ms. Oliver-Dávila said that if the Committee decides to focus on particular matters and delegate other matters to the Superintendent, members will still be informed about those issues. The Superintendent suggested that the Committee set aside a large percentage of its meeting time to focus on goals and guardrails, and a small percentage of its time on emerging issues. Mr. Crabill cautioned that if the Committee decides to take that approach, it should build a rubric to set the conditions for utilizing that smaller percentage of time in order to ensure equity. Mr. O'Neill said that the district may want to consider building in additional time for community engagement between when a policy is proposed and when the Committee votes it on. The Superintendent said that she looks forward to creation of an online policy manual, which School Committee staff are in the process of compiling in collaboration with the Massachusetts Association of School Committee. She suggested the creation of a policy review committee. Mr. Crabill said that a governing policy manual should be separate from an administrative manual.

The Committee took a break from 6:35-6:45 p.m.

***Evaluating Task Force/Committee Design*** - Mr. Crabill advised that the School Committee should only have task forces or sub-committees on issues that directly relate to its agreed upon goals or guardrails, or stem from a legal obligation. He said that a task force should be charged with a specific deliverable and due date.

Dr. Rivera spoke about her experience as co-chair of the Committee's English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force. She noted that BPS has an agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice related to providing services and supports for English learners. Mr. Crabill suggested that the ELL Task Force combine its legal obligation with community vision and quarterly monitoring reports.

Mr. O'Neill spoke about the history of School Committee task forces continuing as monitoring groups after they reach their mandate. Mr. Crabill suggested that task forces conduct progress monitoring of outcomes, not engage in project management. He recommended that the

Committee put together a body whose central charge is to monitor progress relative to the agreed upon goals and guardrails.

Ms. Robinson spoke about her experience as co-chair of the Committee's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (OAG) Task Force, and how it currently serves as a monitoring body. Committee members discussed how task forces provide continuity and help build trust in the district. Mr. Crabill suggested retooling the current task forces to be clearly governance-oriented, and setting a goal of eventually transitioning those responsibilities back to the Superintendent. The Superintendent said that the Committee's task forces currently operate more like standing committees rather than task forces that are time-bound.

Mr. Crabill shifted the discussion to agreeing upon norms. Ms. Oliver-Dávila suggested that the Committee agree not to spend meeting time asking the Superintendent about issues that are unrelated to the goals and instead contact her offline. Mr. Crabill suggested posting the Superintendent's responses online to be transparent. Ms. Robinson requested that the Committee receive all finalized meeting materials at least five days prior to the meeting to provide members with adequate time for review. The Superintendent suggested establishing a norm that the meeting agendas be set further in advance to provide district staff with sufficient time to prepare the presentations. Mr. Crabill said that in some school districts, the school board will pull an agenda item if materials are not received by a certain deadline.

*Next steps* - Mr. Crabill suggested that the Committee schedule another conversation to further refine the goals and guardrails. He will also work with the Committee to provide a framework to help guide the conversations at the upcoming community listening sessions.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Sharon Hinton, member, Black Teachers Matter, testified regarding the value and benefits of the Committee's retreat.
- John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding closing opportunity and achievement gaps.
- Rachel Miselman, Boston Parents Coalition for Academic Excellence, testified regarding exam schools admissions.

#### **WRAP UP/NEXT STEPS**

Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked Mr. Crabill for facilitating the discussion. She announced that the Committee will hold a series of listening sessions in February for the community to provide input on the proposed goals and guardrails. Dates will be posted soon on the School Committee's webpage [www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee).

**ADJOURN**

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

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan  
Executive Secretary