



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

**October 10, 2018**

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on October 10, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington Street, School Committee Chamber, Roxbury, Massachusetts. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org), email [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:feedback@bostonpublicschools.org) or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

### **ATTENDANCE PRIOR TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael Loconto; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Michael O'Neill; and Jeri Robinson.

School Committee Members Absent: Vice Chairperson Dr. Hardin Coleman; Regina Robinson; and Dr. Miren Uriarte.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Loconto led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order. He announced that the Committee would immediately adjourn to executive session to discuss collective bargaining strategies related to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO, Council 93, Local 230A (“Storekeepers”) and the Administrative Guild of the Boston School System, a Chapter of Local 888, SEI, CTW-CLC. To conduct this discussion in an open session could have a detrimental effect on the Committee’s negotiating position, he explained. The Committee will return to public session.

**Approved** – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion to adjourn to executive session to conduct a strategy session to discuss collective bargaining strategies related to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO, Council 93, Local 230A (“Storekeepers”) and the Administrative Guild of the Boston School System, a Chapter of Local 888, SEI, CTW-CLC.

The Committee returned to public session at 6:12 p.m.

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## **ATTENDANCE AT PUBLIC SESSION**

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael Loconto; Vice Chairperson Dr. Hardin Coleman; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Michael O'Neill; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; and student representative Evelyn Reyes.

School Committee Member Absent: Dr. Miren Uriarte.

## **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Agenda

Boston School Committee Meeting Minutes: September 26, 2018

Grants for Approval Totaling \$916,101:

- Boston Children's Collaboration for Community Health Grant - 50 sites districtwide, including community centers - \$100,011
- Federal Disaster Relief Grant New - Quincy Upper, Hernandez, Orchard Gardens, Gardner, Grew, McCormack, Curley, BInCA - \$772,695
- MCIEA Performance Assessment Support – Districtwide - \$43,395

In-Kind Donations with a Total Estimated Value of \$1,512,500.07:

- Matt Asiaf - Wurlitzer Baby Grand Piano - Paul A. Dever Elementary School - \$3,000.00
- Headspace - Headspace App license - BPS educators and Staff - \$972,510.84
- Vertex Pharmaceuticals - Science Lab Equipment - \$52,000.00
- Salesforce - Timilty Middle School - \$120,000.00
- DonorsChooseTeacher Project Materials - Materials for teacher projects on DonorsChoose platform that were delivered in August and September - District wide - \$276,037.14
- AFSCME - School supplies and backpacks - Elementary and middle schools - \$88,952.09

## **PRESENTATION OF CITATIONS**

The School Committee and Interim Superintendent Perille presented citations the following Boston Public Schools employees who are recipients of the 2018 Shattuck Public Service Award from the Boston Municipal Research Bureau:

- Maria Rodriguez, lunch monitor, Tobin K-8 School; and
- Claudia Rufo, lead surround teacher, Baldwin Early Learning Pilot Academy.

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## **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

**Approved** – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the September 26, 2018 Boston School Committee meeting.

## **INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

*\*As prepared for delivery.*

Good evening everyone. I hope by now we’ve all had some time to settle into the school year. We certainly have had no shortage of events and great highlights from across the district to share since our last meeting. On Monday, October 1, we had the pleasure of hosting a Town Hall with the Commissioner of the Mass. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Jeff Riley. The meeting addressed the State of Latino Education, and was hosted in collaboration with a few of our partner organizations in the Latinx community - Latinos for Education, Amplify Latinx and the Greater Boston Latino Network, with remarks by the Mayor and School Committee member Alex Oliver-Dávila, along with Chairperson Loconto, Dr. Coleman and Dr. Uriarte among many others.

It was great to welcome Commissioner Riley back to BPS, where he previously served as an educator, administrator and academic superintendent. He had never been to the Bolling Building before, so it was great to have him here in this room. We had many other community leaders and familiar faces join us for the reception and town hall including Chairman Loconto, Dean Coleman, Dr. Uriarte, and of course Alex Oliver-Davila. I’d also like to thank Mayor Walsh, Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, Headmaster of the Margarita Muniz Academy Dania Vazquez, and so many others for joining us. Commissioner Riley led a spirited discussion during the Town Hall. In my remarks, I mentioned that we are committed to building a diverse central team capable of supporting teachers and school leaders of every background. We have a number of key open positions at the senior and executive level, many of which were very recently posted, and we are continuously committed to expanding the diversity of our staff.

As many of you may know, this is HUBweek, a leading arts, science, technology, and innovation festival in Boston, with more than 200 a la carte sessions, and art and tech exhibits, many of them on City Hall Plaza. Throughout this week, over 500 middle and high school students and over 40 teachers from across the district will be participating in HUBweek experiences at City Hall Plaza. The goal for these experiences is to expose our students to jobs of the future and give our educators the tools to prepare our students for those jobs. Our thanks to the team at HUBweek, our Office of External Affairs, and a number of industry partners for coordinating professional development for educators and student experiences. Amazon Robotics, iRobot, LEGO Education, Vertex Pharmaceuticals, Apple, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Yuemey, and Ben and Tonya Mezrich, authors of BPS summer reading book Charlie Numbers and the Man in the Moon.

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College Month is under way! Last Friday we kicked things off by celebrating “College Pride Day”, where students, faculty members, and administrators joined in wearing their college gear. I saw quite a few college sweatshirts and hats around the Central Office last Friday!

A few notes on upcoming events:

Students in our middle grades will be introduced to college and career exploration through the American Student Assistance Operation Exploration Program. This program includes curriculum on budget and life planning, in-demand job and career options, the diversity of post-secondary pathways, the opportunity to practice interviewing, and more.

In addition to October being College Month, we will also be celebrating STEM Week, October 22nd-26th. Among other events and activities, a group of BoSTEM students from the McKay will be visiting the new Spyce restaurant that is run by robots as part of their programming with CitySprouts.

Finally, we’ll hold our 7th annual Citywide College, Career, & Internship Fair at the Reggie Lewis Center on Saturday, October 27th. The fair offers the opportunity for students across the city to meet with representatives from various colleges, nonprofit organizations, and employers. Additionally, seniors will have access to financial aid experts from partner organizations to help with the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Fittingly for College Month, on Tuesday, October 2, I had the pleasure of joining Lt. Governor Polito, Education Secretary Peyser, Commissioner of Higher Education Carlos Santiago, Chief of Education Rahn Dorsey, and others as we visited Charlestown High School. Charlestown’s Early College Program with Bunker Hill Community College give students the opportunity to take early college courses so they are better prepared for college, while earning credits at no cost before they graduate high school. During the visit, we toured some classrooms and had a group discussion with students and teachers involved in the program. Expanding early college programs is a priority for the governor’s administration, and it’s wonderful that we can point to a success story for this type of programming within our district.

Today we celebrated Fall Walk to School Day across the district. Walk to School Day is a biannual event held in April and October, coordinated by Safe Routes to School Boston, and funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies Partnership for Healthy Cities, to promote walking to school as safe, popular, and fun. Wally the Green Monster was at the Sarah Greenwood K-8 School in Dorchester bright and early this morning to walk with students and welcome them to school, alongside Principal Karla Gandiaga. Other schools, from the Guild in East Boston, to the Curley in Jamaica Plain, also participated in the city-wide event this morning. The students at the Greenwood were especially excited to celebrate with Wally, given the big Red Sox win last night. It was great to see our students and be part of the movement, as Safe Routes likes to say.

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Boston Public Schools (BPS) is committed to ensuring that all students have equitable access to rigorous learning environments regardless of race, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, or background. The results of the Rappaport Institute's research are useful in helping BPS continue to identify barriers to the district's three exam schools for students from traditionally marginalized groups, along with potential interventions to eliminate those barriers. In recent years, BPS has taken a number of steps to increase diversity at the exam schools and are committing to additional steps to eliminate barriers for students, particularly those who are Black and Latino. BPS will continue to work thoughtfully and aggressively toward generating a student population that is more representative of the district's racial demographics.

It is important to note that the Rappaport study's conclusions, while meaningful, are based on data only through the 2013 exam school admission year, and the district's intensive efforts to address these gaps began in 2015. In 2016, BPS, with the support of Mayor Walsh and the Boston Latin School Association, expanded the number of seats in the Exam School Initiative prep course by 350 seats, nearly doubling the percentage of Black and Latino students from 24% in 2014 to 46% in 2016 and 50% this year. For the current school year, 44% (n=81) of students who were recruited by BPS to participate in the Exam School Initiative based on criteria other than meeting the threshold on the Terra Nova (a standardized test taken in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade) were invited to Exam Schools. Historically, these students would have been excluded from the Exam School Initiative.

Black and Latino students who went through the Exam School Initiative are twice as likely to be invited to an exam school as compared to those Black and Latino students who applied but did not go through the program. BPS is taking a number of steps to remove potential barriers of access to students eligible to take the exam school entrance test, which is called the "ISEE." Beginning in the fall of 2019, all BPS sixth-grade and eighth-grade students will be able to take the ISEE at their current schools. As of now, students can only take the ISEE at seven locations on a Saturday, which may pose transportation issues and other barriers. BPS will be working with school leaders and teachers to assess the operational and implementation issues of this move, which we believe will further address equitable access issues for more students. BPS is expanding the number of students eligible to automatically pre-register for the ISEE by including new criteria, including MCAS and grade point average (GPA).

BPS is embarking upon expanded communication to the families of students who are pre-registered to take the ISEE to inform them about the benefits of taking the exam and an exam-school education. This includes multilingual emails and automated and personal phone calls to parents. In 2016, BPS decreased the number of forms of identification that students are required to possess to take the ISEE from two to one. Previously, a requirement of two forms of identification, such as a social security card or birth certificate, presented a barrier to some students' participation. Since 2015, BPS has increased the rate of exam school invitations from 30% to 40% for Black and Latino students moving into grade 7. At Boston Latin School, the percentage of Black and Latino students invited to attend increased from 16% in 2015 to 25% in 2018. At Boston Latin Academy, the percentage went from 38% in 2015 to 45% in 2018. At the

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John D. O’Bryant School for Mathematics and Science, the percentage went from 51% in 2015 to 64% in 2017.

At next week’s meeting, our BuildBPS team will be presenting its proposed plan for the next phase of the BuildBPS educational and facilities master plan. In addition to the presentation, members of our team will be speaking with school leaders in the coming week, as well as engaging with the greater Boston community in various community meetings throughout the city in the coming months.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila suggested that the district consider prioritizing BPS students for admission to the exam schools. She also encouraged exam school leaders to continue making progress with professional development and culture shifts to make sure all students feel welcome. She requested data on high schools offering dual enrollment and internship opportunities. Ms. Perille said that district staff will follow up with the information.

Mr. O’Neill advocated for parity in grading practices among BPS, private, and parochial schools. He said that the admissions exam for the district’s three exam schools should cover the curriculum currently offered in BPS. He suggested that the Committee hear from exam school leaders about current school culture, as well as from elementary school leaders about potential barriers for students entering exam schools.

Dr. Coleman suggested that the district consider eliminating the exam school admissions test altogether.

Mr. Loconto said that the School Committee will discuss exam school admissions in greater detail at a future meeting. He asked the district to include in that report demographic data on exam school acceptance and retention rates.

The Committee approved the Interim Superintendent’s Report by unanimous consent.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jennifer Boyd Herlihy, parent, Boston Latin Academy and Warren Prescott K-8 School, advocated for the district to provide bus transportation from all neighborhoods to the exam schools.

David Nave, BPS parent, testified regarding his son’s experience as an off-track student in BPS. Amanda Lapham, parent, Manning Elementary School, advocated for an inclusive 6<sup>th</sup> grade pathway for Manning students.

Letty Storm, parent, Manning Elementary School, advocated for an inclusive 6<sup>th</sup> grade pathway for Manning students.

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Jose Lopez, chair, Boston Branch NAACP Education Committee, testified regarding the composition of the superintendent search committee.

Adam Rudow, BPS school psychologist, testified regarding funding for school psychologists and social workers.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

Ms. Jeri Robinson asked for more information about the Boston Children's Collaboration for Community Health grant. BPS Universal Pre-K Director TeeAra Dias explained that the funding will allow the district to conduct a gaps analysis to determine the types of services that are needed by families, as well as the cost.

Ms. Reyes asked for more information about the Headspace in-kind donation, which is currently designated for educators and staff.

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$916,101.

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent in-kind donations with a total estimated value of \$1,512,500.07.

### **REPORT AND ACTION ITEM**

Ms. Perille excused herself from the discussion. Chairperson Loonto presented a memo and read aloud the complete membership roster proposed for the Superintendent Search Committee. He said that the 11-member search committee represents the diverse perspectives of BPS stakeholders, including students, parents, school leaders, and community partners. He asked the Committee to approve the search committee's charge as presented in his memo from the September 26, 2018 Committee meeting.

Committee members praised the inclusion of a student member on the search committee.

Ms. Regina Robinson suggested adding an African American parent of a K-8 student.

Mr. O'Neill praised the range of perspectives on the search committee and encouraged those who expressed interest in serving on the committee to participate in the process moving forward.

Chairperson Loonto said that he has asked the search committee co-chairs to reach out to partner with community organizations host listening forums. The search committee will draft a job description for School Committee approval.

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Ms. Oliver-Dávila promised an inclusive process that will include surveys and many opportunities for participation.

**Approved** – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the charge and membership of the Superintendent Search Committee as presented.

## **REPORTS**

***Student Residency Policy Update*** – BPS Ombudsperson Carolyn MacNeil explained the that the purpose of the district’s residency policy is to ensure that Boston Public Schools seats are filled by City of Boston residents. She presented the following recommendations to strengthen the district’s existing residency policy: (1) require students attending a public school outside of the district to obtain a letter from their school district acknowledging Boston residency; and (2) to allow BPS to request additional proofs of documentation from those families re-registering their child(ren) who previously have been found to be in violation of the residency policy. Ms. MacNeil said that the district is sensitive to the needs of families from historically marginalized populations, such as students experiencing homelessness, who may be experiencing life challenges that result in behaviors that raise inaccurate suspicion.

Mr. O’Neill praised the district’s efforts to protect educational placements for Boston residents.

The Committee will take action on the proposal at the October 17<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting.

***American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 230A (“Storekeepers”) and Administrative Guild SEIU Local 888 Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreements*** – BPS Labor Counsel Jeremiah Hasson presented an overview of tentative collective bargaining agreements between the Boston School Committee and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 230A (“Storekeepers”) from 2016-2020. The agreements include a 2 percent annual wage increase, increased contributions to the Storekeepers Housing Trust, and paid parental leave consistent with the City of Boston’s paid parental leave policy. The Interim Superintendent is requesting that the Committee approve an FY19 supplemental appropriation request in the amount of \$16,077 to cover the cost of the agreements.

Executive Director of Human Capital Zack Scott presented an overview of a tentative collective bargaining agreement between the Boston School Committee and the Administrative Guild SEIU Local 888 from 2016-2020. The agreement includes annual wage increases of 2 percent, additional compensation benefits, greater staffing flexibility, and changes to the evaluation rubric. The Interim Superintendent is requesting that the Committee approve an FY19 supplemental appropriation request in the amount of \$1,013,755 to cover the cost of the agreement.



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The Committee will take action on the agreements and the supplemental appropriation requests at the October 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

***Sickle Cell Disease: BPS Proposed Policy*** – Jill Carter, acting assistant superintendent of Social Emotional Learning and Wellness, presented a proposed policy that recognizes Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) as a disability and provides Section 504 appropriate services and accommodations to students living with the disease. All schools must follow established protocols and procedures for addressing the needs of students with SCD and regularly evaluate the implementation of these plans. The district is conducting an awareness campaign to educate school communities about the policy.

Ms. Jeri Robinson asked how the policy will impact students who are diagnosed with the Sickle Cell trait. Ms. Carter responded that those students will be given a comprehensive evaluation and school staff will be trained.

Ms. Regina Robinson asked about nursing services for students with sickle cell. Ms. Carter said that all schools have some-level of nursing staff coverage, and that the student's 504 plan will determine appropriate services even if a nurse is not present at the school full-time..

Mr. Loconto asked for more information about the SCD awareness campaign, which Ms. Carter explained will include outreach to all levels of school and community stakeholders.

The Committee will take action on the policy proposal at the October 17<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting.

***2018 State Assessment and Accountability Results*** – Mary Dillman, interim executive director of the Office of Data and Accountability, presented the results of the district's 2018 state assessments and accountability designations.

The state's new accountability system no longer ranks schools by using the numerical levels 1-5. The new system includes additional factors such as chronic absenteeism rates, engagement of students who do not graduate within four years, raising the performance of each school's subgroup of lowest-performing students, progress toward English proficiency for English learners, and advanced coursework completion. Because the new accountability system assesses schools using additional factors, the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not recommend comparing a school's overall percentile ranking from the 2018 accountability results with previous years.

The new system has four categories for ranking schools and districts, which are:

- Meeting Targets. This is the designation for 23 BPS schools.
- Partially Meeting Targets. This is the designation for 29 BPS schools.

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- Needing Focused/Targeted Support (requiring intervention.) This is the designation for 41 BPS schools.
- Requiring Broad/Comprehensive Support (requiring intervention). This is the designation for nine BPS schools.

The John Winthrop Elementary School in Dorchester is exiting “Turnaround” status. Two other BPS schools were highlighted by DESE as “Schools of Recognition” for making significant gains: the Winship Elementary School in Brighton and the Joseph P. Manning Elementary School in Jamaica Plain.

In grades 3-12, BPS improved or stayed level overall on English language arts and math — with the subgroup of lowest-performing students exceeding the math target for grades 3-8, and meeting the target for English language arts for grades 3-10. BPS also surpassed targets for high school dropout rate, and met many targets for growth in math for grades 9-12. However, the results identify room for improvement on DESE’s newest accountability indicators: chronic absenteeism, progress toward obtaining English proficiency for English Learners, and advanced coursework completion for high school students.

Dr. Charles Grandson, interim chief academic officer, discussed the district’s strategies to boost academic achievement. BPS continues to focus on several areas in need of improvement, including science, chronic absenteeism and persistent achievement gaps. Over the last year, BPS reorganized schools with the highest needs of support into small networks to collaborate and receive additional assistance from BPS academic specialists. This followed BPS conducting targeted assessments and interventions of these particular schools. BPS will continue to support these schools with individualized assistance and resources.

Committee members expressed strong concerns about the results in science, outcomes for English Language Learners, chronic absenteeism, and achievement gaps. Ms. Perille agreed, saying that these issues are areas of focus and concern for district leaders as well. She explained that the recent central office reorganization will help the district better support schools.

Ms. Regina Robinson encouraged the district to partner with STEM organizations in Boston to improve student outcomes in science. She also encouraged district leaders and educators to connect with science professors at local colleges to learn current best practices to support the curriculum.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila encouraged the district to work with partners to redesign high schools in order to better serve students at how high schools are designed to serve students. She requested disaggregated data on assessment results for former English Learners, which Ms. Dillman agreed to provide. Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked the district to respond to the following questions from Ms. Reyes, who departed the meeting earlier: Who is responsible for getting students the resources that they need? Are there action steps towards decreasing stigma? How can we cut down on high stakes testing?

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Assistant Superintendent of the Office of English Language Learners Priya Tahiliani discussed how DESE's new methodology impacts ELLs.

Ms. Jeri Robinson requested disaggregated data by race.

Dr. Coleman encouraged the district to examine why former ELL students are so successful and look for areas of replication and why the district is seeing declines in student performance from elementary to middle school. He also asked what leading indicators the district is using to determine if progress is being made.

Chairperson Loconto asked why The English High School, which has made significant progress in recent years, has not yet exited turnaround status. Deputy Superintendent of School Support Dr. Donna Muncey explained that the school's graduation rate is holding it back from exiting turnaround status. Ms. Perille said that many of the district's special education students are concentrated in low performing, open enrollment schools, creating structural equity issues that must be addressed through long-term strategies such as BuildBPS.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

Megan Wolf, former BPS parent, testified regarding the ISEE exam and the process for signing up for public comment on reports.

John Mudd, education advocate, testified regarding opportunity and achievement gaps and encouraged the Interim Superintendent to meet with Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force.

Mary Battenfeld, member, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), testified regarding chronic absenteeism.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Regina Robinson asked the district to provide more information on strategies to address the areas of concern that emerged from the 2018 State Assessment and Accountability presentation. She asked Chairperson Loconto whether the Committee will be conducting a performance evaluation of the Interim Superintendent. Chairperson Loconto said that he will take the suggestion under advisement. She also encouraged the district to facilitate conversations among K-8 teachers regarding student outcomes.

### **ADJOURN**

At approximately 10:21 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

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Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan  
Executive Secretary