



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REMOTE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

October 27, 2021

The Boston School Committee held a remote meeting on October 27, 2021 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: Hardin Coleman (departed at 7:45 p.m.); Chairperson Jeri Robinson; Lorena Lopera; Rafaela Polanco Garcia; Quoc Tran; and Student Representative Xyra Mercer.

School Committee Members Absent: Ernani DeAraujo; and Vice Chairperson Michael O'Neill.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Minutes: October 6, 2021 Boston School Committee Meeting

Minutes: October 12, 2021 Retreat

BuildBPS Update PowerPoint

BuildBPS Equity Impact Statement

Update of Strategic Plan Implementation PowerPoint

Memo from Dr. Charles Grandson

Update of Strategic Plan Implementation 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. Mr. DeAraujo and Mr. O'Neill were absent. Ms. Mercer arrived after roll call. All other members were present.

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 announced that she was tabling the action items until the next Committee meeting on November 3 due to the absence of two members and a third, Dr. Coleman, who needed to leave the meeting early.

CITATION

Ms. Robinson presented a citation on behalf of the School Committee and Superintendent to Delavern Stanislaus, recipient of the Boston Municipal Research Bureau (BRMB)'s 2021 Henry L. Shattuck Award. The award recognizes public servants who exemplify integrity, initiative, leadership, and commitment to the public good. BMRB president Pam Kocher, the Superintendent and Committee members extended her congratulations. Ms. Stanislaus offered brief words of gratitude, thanking her team and family.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the October 6, 2021 meeting and October 12, 2021 planning retreat.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

As prepared for delivery.

Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you all for joining us tonight. I hope you have been staying warm and dry this week. We have a robust presentation schedule tonight, so I will keep my report as brief as possible. I'd just like to cover some recent district highlights and will start with an update on school attendance.

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It has been so wonderful to see our students back in classrooms. During our September 22nd meeting, I provided you with an update on our attendance, now that all of our students are back in our school buildings, learning alongside their peers. The lighter blue bars on this [graph](#) show average attendance through September 20th and the darker blue bars show average attendance through October 22nd. Over the past month, we have seen increases in attendance across nearly all grades, with the exception of K0, which has stayed roughly the same. Overall, our average attendance has increased from 86% to 90%. We are seeing lower average attendance in our upper grades, which is consistent with previous years. Our Secondary Schools team and particularly our Supervisors of Attendance are working every day to increase our student attendance. While we are not seeing perfect attendance, we are encouraged by the student attendance we've seen this year, particularly following the disruption to in-person learning of the previous two school years and still mitigating the effects of COVID.

Moving on to some recent events around the district...BPS STEM Week ended this past Saturday, October 23, and it was so exciting to have this district-wide celebration dedicated to STEM, which allows our students the access and opportunity to explore the world of STEM while using it as a lever for change in their communities. Last week, students participated in a design challenge around the theme of looking at how they can improve the health of Boston using STEAM. Educators helped our students dive into STEM Week with various activities, challenges and projects with a goal of creating a product that would serve as a solution to one of our city's pressing issues. From career fairs and alumni panels, to info sessions and in-person game nights, our students took STEM Week to another level and it was great to see the many science, technology, engineering and math rock stars we have in our classrooms. We even had special visitor, Massachusetts Secretary of Education Jim Peyser, visit the Henderson Inclusion School to see what students worked on. Our STEM department also hosted a number of virtual and in-person events this past week for students and families to have access to additional information and resources around STEM education and careers. We even partnered with the Boston Public Library to host a wonderful STEM Pop Up event at the Codman Square Library. Beyond the work in the classroom, our students and families were also able to end an amazing STEM week with BPS family day at the Franklin Park Zoo. I want to give a quick shout out, and thank all of our educators and staff that worked so hard to make BPS STEM Week such a success. Thank you for all of your planning and dedication to ensuring our students see themselves in STEM.

On Friday, October 15th, I joined the City of Boston's Parks and Recreation department, and stakeholders from Boston's youth sports and nonprofit communities for a ribbon cutting ceremony of the Madison Park-O'Bryant's newly renovated athletic complex. This athletic field includes a new football, track, baseball, and softball field, and will benefit youth and school athletic programs that use it for practices and games. The fields were supported by a comprehensive \$1.75 million renovation project that began in August 2020 and was recently completed this September. The rebuilding of the complex was funded by the City of Boston's Capital Improvements Program and a \$250,000 grant from the NFL Foundation's Grassroots Program. We also had the pleasure of hosting New England Patriots President and CEO Robert Kraft at the ribbon cutting ceremony. Athletics and outdoor recreation are crucial for our students' social-emotional development and this renovated complex gives not only BPS students more opportunities, but also all Boston youth a space to utilize and reconnect with peers as well.

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I, and all of BPS are excited for this new addition and appreciate the continued support and advocacy of our community for making this a reality for youth throughout the city of Boston.

This month has been filled with celebratory events and I was excited to join the East Boston Early Education Center for a ribbon cutting ceremony of their new playground on October 7th. I was joined by Representative Adrian Madaro and City Councilor Lydia Edwards to cut the ribbon. Getting the playground designed, funded and then built was a true testament to the efforts of the entire school community. Between BPS, parents, the city and most importantly the students at EBEEC, together we were able to bring the visions to life for our young learners. The new playground includes brand new play structures, areas for students to climb, an outdoor classroom, as well as musical devices. We also celebrated the completion of two amazing murals that were created by HarborArts Boston as part of their Sea Walls series. It was great to see the playground space filled with beautiful colors, music and art for our students and kids throughout the East Boston neighborhood to enjoy. Every corner of the playground was filled with little laughs, playing, climbing and all around joy. This new playground offers BPS students another opportunity to spark creativity, problem solving skills, and self-expression while also connecting with their peers, an important part of all stages of development. Thank you to everyone who worked to create this beautiful space for our kiddos!

I also wanted to take a moment to recognize two outstanding educators who were recently recognized by McDonald's. Kevin Crowley who is a teacher at the Carter School, and Kevin Tersilas who is a paraprofessional at the Ellison Parks School were honored by McDonald's on October 14 with a surprise ceremony with colleagues and family. Kevin C. and Kevin T., as they are affectionately known, previously worked together in the same classroom at the Carter and became very close friends. During a recent week in October when McDonald's was honoring teachers nationwide, they put out a tweet asking for people to recognize excellent teachers. Kevin Crowley immediately tweeted out Kevin Tersalis. Kevin Tersilas immediately replied with his own recognition of Kevin C., and McDonald's took note. Both Kevins received flowers, tickets to a Celtics game, and gift cards at their honoring ceremony. But that's not all, these amazing educators also received \$25,000 for each of their schools. Thank you McDonald's! We are BPS Proud of our rockstar educators and their continued work towards creating positive learning experiences for our students.

This morning, I attended the EdVestors' School on the Move Ceremony, joined by Chair Robinson, Member Lopera, and many other members of Team BPS. The three finalists this year were New Mission High School in Hyde Park, the PJ Kennedy Elementary and Otis Elementary, both in East Boston. I am so thrilled for the James Otis Elementary School, which was named the winner of the \$100,000 award earlier this morning. Congratulations to Principal Paula Cerqueira Goncalves and the entire community of Otis Owls! I've been so inspired by Paula's leadership, especially watching her in action during my visits to the Otis. This is such a well-deserved honor, as Paula has served the students and families of BPS for 33 years. She has spent her entire BPS career at the Otis, starting as a teacher there in 1988. She became principal in 2010. I also must applaud the fearless leadership of Will Thomas and Kristen Goncalves and their amazing school communities. The PJ Kennedy and New Mission High School each received a \$30,000 prize this morning as well. This was my third year attending this wonderful event, and it's such a great opportunity to highlight BPS schools demonstrating rapid improvement, exemplary progress and

academic achievement. I want to thank Marinell Rousmaniere and the entire team at EdVestors for being such an amazing partner to BPS, working with us on many school improvement initiatives including arts expansion, CTE pathways, and so much more. Thank you for celebrating the success of our schools!

Finally, I wanted to share some great news that we just received earlier today. The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Board approved four Accelerated Repair Program projects for BPS. These projects include the replacement of windows and doors at two schools in Roxbury: Boston Day and Evening Academy and the Hernandez K-8 School; and boiler replacements at the Henderson Upper School and the Russell Elementary in Dorchester. My team will have additional updates on our Facilities and Capital Planning during the BuildBPS report later this evening. And now I am going to turn it over to Chief Roberts who can provide a brief update on exam school implementation and timeline.

Chief of Student, Family and Community Advancement Monica Roberts presented a brief update on the exam school policy implementation process for School Year 2022-23. To be considered for admission to one of the city's three exam schools, students must be currently enrolled in grades 6, 8, or 9 and live in the City of Boston. Families of students not currently enrolled in BPS must verify their residency in the City of Boston between October 25 and November 19, 2021. BPS students are not required to verify residency and will begin the application process in January. Information about the new exam schools admissions policy and application process can be found at <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/site/default.aspx?PageID=8809>. BPS is in the process of drafting a Superintendent's Circular detailing the policy implementation.

Ms. Roberts confirmed for Ms. Robinson that the exam school admissions webpage is linked to Google translate and that all documents are translated. Ms. Robinson asked for an update on (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum. The Superintendent said that Deputy Superintendent of Academics Drew Echelson will discuss curriculum in detail at the November 3rd School Committee meeting. Ms. Robinson congratulated the recipients of the 2021 School on the Move Prize.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent's report.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Jovanny Burgos, Dorchester resident, Quincy Elementary School parent, requested that her child be retained a grade due to the pandemic.
- Ruby Reyes, Dorchester resident, Boston Education Justice Alliance executive director, testified regarding BuildBPS.
- Morgan Keohane, Brockton resident, teacher librarian, P.A. Shaw School, testified in support of the Committee's decision to approve the BPS Library Services Strategic Plan.
- Meredith Hamilton, West Roxbury resident, Grew Elementary School parent, testified in support of adding a 6th grade to the school in SY 22-23.
- Allison Cox, Jamaica Plain resident, Mission Hill K-8 School parent, testified with

concerns about the district's recent actions at the school.

- Alan Tian, West Roxbury resident, BPS parent, testified regarding the exam schools admissions policy.
- Bill Young, Roslindale resident, Sumner Elementary School parent, testified in support of adding a 6th grade to the school in SY 22-23.
- Sarah Barnat, East Boston resident, Alighieri School parent, testified with concerns about the use of bonus points as part of the exam schools admissions policy.
- Susan Bird, Roslindale resident, Grew Elementary School parent, testified in support of adding a 6th grade to the school in SY 22-23.
- Avery Saulnier de Reyes, Roxbury resident, Mission Hill K-8 School parent, testified with concerns about the district's recent actions at the school.
- Daryl Best, Dorchester resident, Grew Elementary School parent, testified in support of adding a 6th grade to the school in SY 22-23.
- Stuart Wang, West Roxbury resident and parent, testified with concerns about the use of bonus points as part of the exam schools admissions policy.
- Andrew Iliff, Jamaica Plain resident, Mission Hill K-8 School and Boston Latin Academy, testified with concerns about the district's recent actions at the school.
- Ariana Sicairos-McCarthy, Roslindale resident, Grew Elementary School parent, testified in support of adding a 6th grade to the school in SY 22-23.
- Rachel Young, Roslindale parent, Sumner Elementary School parent, testified in support of adding a 6th grade to the school in SY 22-23.
- Katie Markiewicz, Roslindale parent, Sumner Elementary School parent, testified in support of adding a 6th grade to the school in SY 22-23.
- Erica Kouka, West Roxbury resident, Holmes Elementary School teachers, testified in support of ethnic studies.
- Bill Barrar, West Roxbury resident, Sumner Elementary School parent, testified in support of adding a 6th grade to the school in SY 22-23.
- Margaux Leonard, Roslindale resident, Sumner Elementary School parent, testified in support of adding a 6th grade to the school in SY 22-23.
- Mike Ritter, Dorchester resident, Lee Academy Pilot School parent, testified regarding the need for HVACs in every BPS school.
- Stephanie Galeota, Roslindale parent, Sumner Elementary School parent, testified in support of adding a 6th grade to the school in SY 22-23.
- Elizabeth Ferrenz, Roslindale parent, Sumner Elementary School parent, testified in support of adding a 6th grade to the school in SY 22-23.
- Anne-Marie Vaduva, Jamaica Plain resident, Mission Hill K-8 School parent, testified regarding her child's special education services.
- Sandra Lavellee, Back Bay resident, Eliot K-8 School parent, testified regarding the exam schools admissions policy.
- Carolyn Shadid Lewis, Jamaica Plain resident, Mission Hill K-8 School parent, testified with concerns about the district's recent actions at the school.
- Brian Clougherty, West Roxbury resident, Lyndon K-8 School, testified with concerns about the use of bonus points as part of the exam schools admissions policy.
- Diana Ainsley Paul, West Roxbury resident, Sumner Elementary School parent, testified in support of adding a 6th grade to the school in SY 22-23.
- Allison Friedmann, Roslindale resident, Sumner Elementary School parent, testified in

support of adding a 6th grade to the school in SY 22-23.

- Mike Heichman, Dorchester resident, Boston Education Justice Alliance member, testified regarding exam schools admissions and student assignment.

REPORTS

BuildBPS Update - Nate Kuder, Chief Financial Officer, and Monica Roberts, Chief of Student, Family and Community Advancement, presented an update on BuildBPS, the district's 10-year educational and facilities master plan. BuildBPS is informed by equity analyses and continual stakeholder engagement.

BuildBPS aims to

- Modernize schools to provide more spaces that facilitate 21st-century learning
- Embark on the construction of new school buildings, expanding classroom seats in areas of the city with the most need
- Minimize school transitions for students, adopting two preferred school grade configurations: K-6/7-12 and K-8/9-12
- Ensure greater equity of program placement to meet the needs of English learners, students with disabilities, and other populations.

In 2019, the Committee adopted a grade configuration strategy by which the Boston Public Schools is primarily a K-6/7-12 and K-8/9-12 system, offering BPS students educational experiences that require fewer transitions for most students, while still offering the choice of various options.

Middle school closures remain a necessary driver of the available K-6 pathways for SY22-23. To that end, the Superintendent is requesting Committee approval of the following actions:

- Close the Jackson Mann K-8 School at the end of the 2021-22 school year
- Close the Washington Irving Middle School at the end of the 2021-22 school year
- Close the James P Timilty Middle School at the end of the 2021-22 school year

Starting in January 2022 at the earliest, students will re-enter the school choice process for Fall 2022. Grade 8 students will transition to a BPS school serving grade 9 in Fall 2022. Grade 9 school choice begins in January 2022. Students in all impacted grades will receive priority in the student assignment process for their new school for September of 2022. For current grade K1, 5 and 6 students, the choice process begins in January 2022. For current students in grades K2, 1, 2, 3, 4 or 7, the choice process begins in February 2022.

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The district is finalizing the hiring of school-based transition coordinators whose role is to support students and families through the transition. The Office of Welcome Services will host Satellite offices (Pop-up Center) to support families and work with Family Liaison to inform families of the Showcase of Schools and School Preview Times. All families will receive Continuous Choice forms to support families with the transfer and registration process.

The Office of Recruitment, Cultivation, and Diversity Programs is providing high priority employee support to impacted teachers.

As announced on May 12, 2021, BuildBPS aims to establish three new K-6 school buildings:

1. Dorchester PK-6 (new school site needed)
2. Roxbury PK-6 (new school site needed)
3. Allston-Brighton PK-6 (repurposing of the current Jackson-Mann building site via MSBA project application process)

While these new builds may serve as a long-term solution, BPS does not project these new builds to begin site and school selection until 2026, making it the least favorable solution for schools that urgently need expansion capabilities.

The following schools will convert to K-6 in SY22-23: Mozart, Philbrick, Bates,* Chittick,* Grew, Ellis, Holmes. John F. Kennedy, Taylor, Winship, and Winthrop.

**Requires modular classrooms*

Due to physical space limitations, the Blackstone, Mendell and Sumner schools are not able to add grade 6 in SY22-23. BPS is pursuing two options for SY22-23: 1) Provide a guaranteed pathway to a different school; 2) Give families a priority during the student assignment lottery. The district team will hold meetings with school leaders and communities to determine which option families prefer before presenting a final recommendation in December. BPS will continue to work towards grade 6 solutions for SY23-24 and beyond.

With the closure of the Timilty and Irving, there is a need to add more 7th and 8th grade seats. For next school year, Fall 2022, BPS will add 7th & 8th Grades at The English High School, providing a clear pathway for students while minimizing the disruption to other school communities. The English High School is the only high school with the Emotional Impairment - Internalizing program that has physical space to expand in SY 22-23.

To determine the next 7-12 school expansions and to understand the impact of these expansions on K-8 schools, BPS will engage with the community by school situation:

- Individual community meetings with 9-12 schools with space: Brighton, Burke, CASH, English, Excel
- Joint community meetings with schools organized by category (4 separate community meetings):
 - K-8

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- Middle Schools
- Non-exam 6/7-12 Schools
- 9-12 schools without space to expand

BPS will engage with individual school communities to convert some K-8s to K-6s in order to strengthen programs for special education and English learners, expand art, music, therapeutic and other support spaces, and fulfill the district's commitment to universal K1 and expand access to our high quality early childhood programs.

Temporary swing space for SY21-22:

- Carter School
 - The school will move to the Frederick Middle School SY22-23 while their school construction is being completed. Design work is being finalized.
- EMK Academy
 - Currently, the school community is located in the Endicott School through June 2022. BPS has signed a letter of intent to relocate the school in SY22-23 at 384 Warren Street. A lease agreement will be signed in the coming weeks
- Horace Mann
 - The school community will be temporarily moved to the Edwards School in SY2023-24 as BPS works to submit the HM school for our next MSBA proposal

The Superintendent noted that there was a typo on slide 32 of the BuildBPS Update PowerPoint and clarified that the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will be temporarily moved to the Edwards School in School Year 2023-24. Mr. Kuder said that he would correct the typo.

Ms. Polanco Garcia expressed concern that the Blackstone, Mendell and Sumner schools are not being offered a 6th grade next year. She noted the demographics of those schools and expressed concerns about equity. She also expressed concerns about the impact of multiple transitions on students and families.

Mr. Kuder spoke about the district's efforts to minimize disruptions for families and support families through the school choice process. He said that the recommendation to close middle schools is about the quality of the middle school experience and not about funding. He said that school communities that are not being offered a sixth grade next year have the option to create a new feeder pattern or receive priority in the school assignment process.

Ms. Lopera spoke about her personal experience transitioning to different schools in the middle school years. She expressed concern that the options outlined in the presentation do not include an analysis of the quality of academic offerings. She asked how BPS is incorporating academic quality into its decision-making process.

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Mr. Kuder said the district is operating under the assumption that all elementary schools would benefit from having a sixth grade. He spoke about available space being a factor in high school expansion. He expressed his belief that students who are moving out of standalone middle schools will have a more academically and educationally enriching experience in 7-12 schools. The Superintendent agreed, adding that 7-12 schools will have more opportunities for arts and athletics.

Ms. Lopera spoke about her recent visit to East Boston High School, which is expanding to grades 7-12. She asked how the district is supporting schools with grade expansion. The Superintendent and Mr. Kuder spoke about the facilities and academics planning and professional development support provided by the district.

Mr. Tran expressed support for the plan as presented. Referring back to questions raised during public comment, he requested clarity about possible promises made by district leadership regarding adding a sixth grade to Roslindale elementary schools. The Superintendent said that she has asked her team to review notes from the community listening sessions she held in 2019, adding that it would have been out of her character to make such a promise so early in her superintendency.

Ms. Mercer asked for clarity about the future plans for the Timilty, Irving, and Jackson Mann J-8 school buildings. Mr. Kuder said that all three buildings will be upgraded and used for future BPS schools.

Ms. Mercer asked about the impact on extracurricular activities. Mr. Kuder said that students who are moving out of standalone middle schools will have a more academically and educationally enriching experience in 7-12 schools.

Ms. Robinson spoke about the importance of having a comprehensive long-term facility plan. The Superintendent agreed, adding that such a plan will require a significant funding commitment, political will, and support from the City of Boston. Ms. Robinson spoke about the importance of transparency.

Ms. Polanco Garcia spoke about the district's responsibility to support families.

Ms. Lopera asked about the district's engagement with the Latinx community. The Superintendent said that school-based community meetings featuring interpreters were held via Zoom, followed by letters to families. Ms. Lopera asked if the Timilty and Irving families fully understood the proposals. The Superintendent spoke about the district's outreach to families.

Ms. Robinson asked about the impact of the proposed school closures on teachers. The Superintendent said that BPS is committed to helping displaced teachers find another position.

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Mr. Kuder clarified for Ms. Robinson that the Warren Street location would be one of two campuses for the Edward M. Academy for Health Careers. Ms. Robinson asked about the impact on moving cohorts of special education and ELL students. Mr. Kuder said that special education placements are part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. He spoke about how the district supports families in making the best choices for their students.

Ms. Robinson asked about plans for early learning centers. The Superintendent said that BPS is looking to expand K0 and K1 opportunities in elementary school, citing research on the importance of early learning. The Superintendent invited Committee members to attend school-based community meetings with the Blackstone, Mendell and Sumner schools. Mr. Kuder said that any responses from the district to questions raised by the Committee will be translated and made publicly available on the BPS website. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the school closure recommendations on November 17, 2021.

Update of Strategic Plan Implementation - Chief Equity and Strategy Officer Charles Grandson presented an update on the Superintendent's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. The BPS Strategic Plan, adopted and approved by the Committee in April 2020, is the district's five-year roadmap to providing equitable, high-quality education for every student in every classroom in every BPS school. Implementation is led by the Superintendent, Executive Team, and department heads. These leaders are somewhat representative of BPS students and families and include individuals with experience with English learners and Special Education. To ensure the plan's success, the district has committed to monitoring its progress toward the goals in each of its six commitment areas. Dr. Grandson provided an update on Year One of the plan's implementation (SY20-21) and the progress BPS has made toward each of its commitments, as well as a brief review of the planning process to date and an outline of the next steps. The full Strategic Plan Annual Report for SY20-21 will be released in January of 2022.

Ms. Polanco Garcia spoke about the importance of incorporating parental voice in the district's decision-making process. She said that it is vital for BPS to provide interpretation services at school-based meetings. The Superintendent agreed, adding that BPS uses software tools to broaden its communication with families who are not fluent in English. She praised former School Committee Chair Alexandra Oliver-Dávila for expanding language access at Committee meetings.

Ms. Robinson asked about the expansion of Excellence for All (EFA) at transformation schools. Dr. Grandson clarified that the coaching model was expanded at transformation schools. The district will present more details about EFA when the Superintendent presents her Academic Vision to the Committee on November 3. Ms. Robinson asked about lessons learned during the pandemic. The Superintendent said that she and her team learned valuable lessons about the importance of language access and technology. She said that English Learners are struggling and need support. She spoke about the benefits of the district's increased focus on anti-racism.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

At approximately 10:23 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary