



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

October 30, 2019

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on October 30, 2019 at 6 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, email feedback@bostonpublicschools.org or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael Loconto; Vice Chairperson Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Michael O’Neill; Dr. Lorna Rivera; Jeri Robinson; Quoc Tran; and Student Representative Evelyn Reyes.

School Committee Members Absent: None

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Boston School Committee Meeting Minutes: October 16, 2019

Grants for Approval Totaling \$75,000:

Amount	FY	Grant Name	Status	Sites
\$50,000	2020	MassGrad Promising Practices Grant – Charlestown	New	Charlestown
\$25,000	2020	MassGrad Promising Practices Grant – Greater Egleston	New	Greater Egleston

Memo from Suzanne Lee and Dr. Lorna Rivera, English Language Learners Task Force Co-Chairs, to Boston School Committee, re: Proposed New Members, October 25, 2019

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Memo from Dr. Hardin Coleman, Chair, School Quality Work Group II, to Boston School Committee, re: Proposed Co-Chair, October 29, 2019

Boston Public Schools SY17-18 District Wellness Policy Annual Report PowerPoint

SY17-18 District Wellness Policy Annual Report Executive Summary

SY17-18 District Wellness Policy Annual Report Equity Impact Statement

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Loconto called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. He announced that a film crew was filming the meeting for a documentary about city government. He announced that interpretation services were available in Spanish.

CITATIONS

The School Committee and Superintendent Cassellius presented citations to two Boston Public Schools employees who are recipients of the Boston Municipal Research Bureau (BMRB)'s 2019 Henry L. Shattuck Award: Jocelyne Aboujaoude, nurse, Boston Arts Academy; and Jeff Lane, environmental specialist, BPS Facilities Department. Jen Stodola, operations manager, BMRB, extended her congratulations and encouraged nominations for the 2020 Shattuck Awards.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: OCTOBER 16, 2019

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the October 16, 2019 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The Superintendent addressed the following topics in her oral report:

- The Superintendent wished Mr. O'Neill a happy belated birthday.
- Last week, the Superintendent joined Mr. O'Neill and BPS staff at the Council of Great City Schools Annual Fall Conference. Chief of Strategy and Equity Charles Grandson, as well as Assistant Superintendents Cindie Neilson, Colin Rose and Priya Tahiliani were also in attendance and presented with members of their teams. It was a great opportunity to engage with and learn from colleagues from across the country on topics including facilities, achievement gaps, English learners, and ethnic studies.

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- Yesterday the Superintendent participated in a panel discussion with Boston City Council President Andrea Campbell about her education report: *Action for Boston Children: A Plan For BPS's Future*. Fellow panelists included Latoya Gayle, executive director of Boston School Finder; Paul Reville, former Massachusetts Secretary of Education; and Amy O'Leary, campaign director of Early Strategies for All, Strategies for Children.
- On October 19th, the Superintendent joined Mayor Walsh, Chairperson Loconto and other City and BPS leaders for the ribbon cutting of the Eliot School upper campus.
- Last week, BPS celebrated the 2nd Annual Massachusetts STEM Week with multiple events. Airbnb co-founder and 2001 Boston Latin Academy graduate Nathan Blecharczyk made \$1 million donation, which will fund two new computer labs and STEM initiatives at the school. He also pledged to match any donation to the Girls' Latin School/Boston Latin Academy Association through June 2020 up to \$1 million.
- The John D. O'Bryant School held a celebration for its new computer lab, funded by the GE Foundation and Project Lead the Way. The \$45,000 investment supported the brand new computer lab consisting of 31 desktop computers to support the software used in computer science classes
- The week ended with the STEM Discovery Expo at the Reggie Lewis Center on Saturday, October 26 showcasing the amazing work of BPS career technical education students in subject areas like biotech, environmental science, computer science, architecture and design. Both the Expo and College, Career and Internship Fair were held at the same location at the same time.
- Superintendent's Community Tour Update:
 - 94 school visits to date
 - 82 community meetings
 - 1,100 constituents at community meetings since August
- Bertrand Weber is assisting the Food and Nutrition Services department.
- Mike Turza has lent his services, consulting with the Transportation department to identify where improvements are needed.
- The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is wrapping up its comprehensive review of the BPS. The Superintendent looks forward to the information the review will provide us as we continue shaping our strategic direction.
- Today BPS issued a press release detailing the results of the 2019 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), a nationwide assessment for students in 4th and 8th

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grade, also known as “The Nation’s Report Card.” As a whole, the nation saw declines overall and especially in 8th-grade reading. Compared to 26 large school districts around the country, BPS performed the same or better than 20 districts in fourth-grade math and reading; 24 districts in eighth-grade math, and 23 districts in eighth-grade reading. Since 2015, Boston has remained on par with the national average in eighth-grade math scores and continued to do so on the 2019 assessment. Persistent achievement gaps remain and the Superintendent is committed to significantly improving student outcomes beyond what can be measured on a national test. NAEP itself is imperfect because it doesn’t fully align to include state standards. Take this as one more piece of our overall picture of how we are doing as a district.

- Tomorrow EdVestors’ will present the 14th Annual Thomas W. Payzant School on the Move Prize. Last week, the Superintendent joined EdVestors and BPS staff at a special reception for the finalists hosted by Jim and Cathy Stone. Congratulations to the three finalists: the Bradley Elementary School in East Boston led by Principal Claire Carney; the Harvard-Kent Elementary School in Charlestown led by Principal Jason Gallagher; and the Kenny Elementary School in Dorchester led by Principal Emily Bryan
- The Superintendent offered Halloween safety tips.

Mr. O’Neill, who serves as chair-elect of the executive board of the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS), provided a brief update on the Council’s Annual Fall Conference, which was held last week. He said that there is national interest in the work being done by the BPS Office of Opportunity Gaps and Food and Nutrition Services’ My Way Café. District leaders discussed concerns about student vaping and cyber security. He said that CGCS Executive Director Casserly noted that urban districts have made significant gains on the NAEP in recent years.

Ms. Robinson requested disaggregated data by race and ethnicity for the NAEP results. The Superintendent said that she would discuss the request with the BPS Office of Data and Accountability. Mr. O’Neill said that he would ask the CGCS to advocate for the disaggregation of racial and ethnic data on next year’s NAEP test.

Dr. Rivera said that there is currently a Data Equity Bill (H.2681) before the state legislature that is deserving of support.

Mr. Loconto extended condolences on the recent passing of Michael Giordano. For much of his career, Mr. Giordano served as director of the College Resource Center at Boston Latin School, and an athletics coach for more than three decades. He had recently started a new role with the BPS Health and Safety Office.

Mr. Loconto encouraged people to visit blags.org to make a donation the Boston Latin Academy/Girls Latin School Alumni Association. BLA graduate Nathan Blecharczyk ’01, founder of Airbnb, will match donations up to \$1 million.

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Approved - The Committee approved the Superintendent's Report by unanimous consent.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

Student Representative Evelyn Reyes presented her monthly update to the Committee. During the first week of October, the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) completed a four-day membership training and started to assemble its Working Groups. To date, 94 percent of BPS secondary schools have identified representatives to serve on BSAC. Earlier this week, members of BSAC met with a district review team from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). BSAC will conduct its annual Listening Project on November 4th.

Dr. Rivera asked for more information about BSAC's Listening Project, which is a student-to-student survey about BPS disciplinary practices that is conducted at four MBTA locations.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked BSAC for its advocacy on climate change and environmental justice and encouraged the students to maintain their focus.

Mr. Loconto thanked BSAC for its advocacy on the Student Opportunity Act, which represents a major overhaul of the state's Chapter 70 education funding formula and revision of foundation budget rates.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the 2019 MCAS results, achievement gaps, equity impact statements, program budget, and professional development funding.

Robert Jenkins, BPS alumnus and volunteer, testified regarding the importance of partnerships such as Generations Inc. and the condition of BPS facilities.

Ruby Reyes, executive director, Boston Education Justice Alliance, testified regarding concerns about the potential redevelopment of a parcel of land on Columbia Point.

Mr. Loconto said that the Superintendent's team has scheduled a meeting with the McCormack School community for the following week and noted that no recommendation has been brought to the Committee. He said that the District is committed to engaging with the community.

ACTION ITEM

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$75,000.

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REPORTS

English Language Learners Task Force Nominations – Dr. Rivera, co-chair of the Committee’s English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force, said that five members are stepping down from the ELL Task Force, and nominated the following new members: BPS parent Angelina Camacho; UMass Boston-based researcher Fabián Torres-Ardila; and independent researcher Rosann Tung. Dr. Rivera said that the focus of the ELL Task Force for this school year are improving program quality supporting the LOOK Act.

Mr. Loconto noted that a comprehensive update from the ELL Task Force update will be scheduled for another date. Members expressed enthusiasm and support for the nominees. A School Committee vote is scheduled for November 6th.

School Quality Work Group II Co-Chair Nomination – Dr. Coleman, chair of the Committee’s School Quality Work Group II (SQWG II), nominated Marinell Rousmaniere to serve as co-chair. Ms. Rousmaniere is a BPS parent, CEO of EdVestors, and a long-time member of the SQWG. A School Committee vote is scheduled for November 6th.

District Wellness Policy Report, School Year 2017-18 – Jill Carter, assistant superintendent, SELWell Instruction & Policy and co-chair of the District Wellness Council and Maryka Lier, assistant director of Wellness Policy & Promotions presented the district’s annual report on the BPS District Wellness Policy, presenting data from School Year 2017-18.

The District Wellness Policy is comprised of eight policy areas: 1) Cultural Proficiency, 2) School Food and Nutrition Services, 3) Comprehensive Physical Activity and Physical Education, 4) Comprehensive Health Education, 5) Safe and Supportive Schools, 6) Health Services, 7) Healthy School Environment, and 8) Staff Wellness. During the 2017-2018 School Year, each policy area developed a unique logic model, identifying key activities and outcomes and the associated metrics and tools by which to measure policy implementation progress.

Bright spots include:

Food & Nutrition

- Free for All school meal programs
- 87% of schools offer Breakfast After the Bell
- My Way Cafe Renovation Pilot in 3 schools

Comprehensive Physical Activity & Phys Ed

- 78% of schools K-12 are staffed to meet PE policy
- All students in PreK-5 have recess; over 90% meet policy
- Continued high-quality school supports provided centrally

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Comprehensive Health Ed

- 60% of schools implementing Sexual Health Education
- Continued high-quality school supports provided centrally

Healthy School Environment

- 100% online water fountains tested for water quality and issues addressed
- 11 schools brought online
- 9 schools with infrastructure upgrades
- Policy updates & new resources for green schools

Safe & Supportive

- 94% of schools with Student Support Teams
- 60 schools (48%) implementing Comprehensive Behavioral Health Model; 87% schools implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
- 50 schools with most or all staff trained on Social Emotional Learning standards
- 89% schools partnering with 1+ behavioral health partner
- 100% schools with Homelessness Liaisons
- 91% of high schools have Gay Straight Alliances

Health Services

- Increase in nurses: 100% schools with a minimum of 0.5 FTE
- 100% high schools with Condom Accessibility Teams
- Strong collaborations with community partners to provide health services

Cultural Proficiency

- Increase in central office trainings for schools and central office staff
- 44% of Wellness Action Plans included a Cultural Proficiency Goal

Staff Wellness

- 63% schools report implementing staff wellness initiative

Wellness Council

- Higher percent of schools submitting higher quality WAPs: 84% schools

Areas of concern include:

- Long-term increase in current marijuana use among students
- Long-term decrease in condom use among sexually active students
- Long-term increase in students who felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that stopped them from doing some usual activities
- Students identifying as Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual were significantly more likely to experience violence, bullying, and self-harm and report higher rates of depression and suicidality

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Noting that BPS has a tobacco-free policy in place, Ms. Carter presented a brief update on the district's vaping prevention efforts for School Year 2019-20. The district is communicating its policy to central and school leaders, working with the Boston Public Health Commission and District Wellness Council, conducting health education trainings on vaping and marijuana use and sharing prevention campaign materials with schools and school nurses.

Ms. Robinson asked about physical education opportunities, which have improved at the K-8 level but not at the high school level. Ms. Carter cited facilities and scheduling as the main challenges to offering more physical education. She also said the district could explore conducting more data analysis on non-compliant schools in an effort to increase accountability.

Ms. Reyes thanked the District Wellness Council for providing its student representative with voting rights. She noted that the BSAC Student Rights App has been updated to include information on the BPS Expectant and Parenting Student policy, menstrual products accessibility, and condom accessibility. She suggested connecting school site councils with wellness councils in an effort to increase family and student engagement. Ms. Lier said that School Wellness Support Coordinator works to increase the capacity of wellness councils. She also said that the BPS portal helps to pair schools with partners to improve health and wellness.

Mr. Loconto thanked Ms. Robinson for volunteering to serve on the District Wellness Council.

Dr. Coleman asked about managing the relationship between the work and school autonomy. Ms. Carter said that the district does not currently collect that data. Dr. Coleman suggested that the district consider building this information into the School Quality Framework. He also suggested that the district collect data that distinguishes tobacco vaping vs. marijuana vaping among students.

Dr. Rivera asked about barriers to offering comprehensive sexual health education. Ms. Carter cited staffing and scheduling as the primary barriers. She also asked about vaping prevention and alternatives to suspension. Ms. Carter explained that BPS aims to educate students about the dangers of vaping and provides cessation referrals, and does not consider suspension an option until the third offense.

Mr. O'Neill expressed concerns about the impact of vaping, opioids, and bullying, all of which are issues that position students to learn. He suggested that the district consider rewording its BPS Youth Risk Behavior Survey question about opioid use to include language about opioid usage among family members. He said that bullying and suicidality should be on the radars of all school psychologists.

The Superintendent said that students are telling her they would like to receive more sexual health education and life skills courses.

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Mr. Tran expressed concern about the health and wellness of GLBT students. The Superintendent said that Assistant Superintendent of Equity Becky is recommending the creation of a new GLBT specialist position, which she supports. Secondary Superintendent of School Operations & Safety Sam DePina is exploring how the district can make additional restorative justice investments. The Superintendent suggested adding a question to the BPS Youth Risk Behavior Survey that collects data on students who identify as transgender.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila praised the goals of District Wellness Council. She said that BPS should abolish the practice of withholding recess from students as a punishment. Mr. Loconto agreed and suggested adding such language to the BPS Code of Conduct in quick order. Ms. Oliver-Dávila expressed concern that bullying rates may be higher than reported. She suggested that there may be a disconnect between cultural proficiency and equity training. She requested disaggregated data on suicidality. She also said that bathroom cleanliness is a concern for many students, families and school staff.

Mr. Loconto echoed the comments of Committee members about the importance of health and wellness in preparing students to be ready to learn.

The Superintendent said that any future updates to the district's strategic plan will include SELWELL data.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

No speakers.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Loconto announced that the Committee has scheduled a retreat for November 13th at 5:30 p.m., and that the next regular Committee meeting will be held on November 6th at 6 p.m. Both meetings will take place in the School Committee Chamber at the Bolling Building.

ADJOURN

At approximately 8:38 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary