



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

October 14, 2015

The Boston School Committee held a meeting at 6 p.m. on October 14, 2015 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 O’Neill; Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman; Meg Campbell; Michael Loconto; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; and student representative Savina Tapia.

School Committee Member Absent: Dr. Miren Uriarte.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

School Committee Meeting Minutes: September 30, 2015

Grant for Approval: Teen Pregnancy Prevention: Partners for Youth Success - \$81,000.

Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Updated Membership Memo

2015 Compact Among the City of Boston, Boston Public Schools, Boston Charter Alliance, and Archdiocese of Boston

Responses to School Committee Questions Re: Boston Compact

School Quality Framework: Implementation Update

Update to School Committee on the Conclusion of Hiring Season 2015

School Facilities Updates: Decisions for School Year 2016-2017

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CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O'Neill led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the September 30, 2015 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

This past week, Chairman O'Neill, Vice-Chair Coleman and Superintendent Tommy Chang had the opportunity to attend the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) annual fall conference in Long Beach, CA. Boston Public Schools was showcased in three workshops:

- **HOW URBAN DISTRICTS ARE OPENING THE DOORS TO COMMUNITY SUPPORT**
 - Megan Webb, principal of Orchard Gardens K-8 School, Boston Public Schools
 - Patrick Kirby, chief growth officer and executive director, Citizen Schools
- **Lessons Learned From a National Superintendent Search Under Strict Open Meeting Law Provisions**
 - Michael O'Neill, chairperson, Boston School Committee, Boston Public Schools
 - Dr. Hardin Coleman, vice chair, Boston School Committee and dean, Boston University Graduate School of Education
- **ENSURING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS**
 - Dr. Frances Esparza, assistant superintendent, Office of English Language Learners, Boston Public Schools
 - Dr. Karla Estrada, deputy superintendent of Student Support Services, Boston Public Schools

The class size review process was completed on October 5th, significantly earlier than in past years. As a result, schools in need of additional staffing support are receiving it much sooner.

All BPS schools have engaged in a collaborative process with their Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) to identify and refine an instructional focus for their work. This process included timely and actionable written feedback from principal leaders that helped ILTs fine tune their focus.

On October 8th, principals participated in a Crucial Crisis and Emergency Response Training Program. This one-day session, entitled *School Safety Through Prevention and Intervention*, provided school leaders with key aspects to crisis and emergency response that must be in place to ensure the safety of students. The principals reviewed prevention strategies and were given actual, real-life crisis scenarios from our schools and challenged to work in teams to develop appropriate responses.

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School leaders also reviewed important procedures for reporting child abuse. City officials provided additional awareness training on issues such as gang involvement and human trafficking, and how BPS staff can intervene and help access needed resources for students and families. Based on principal feedback, BPS will be offering follow-up training with school safety teams to assist schools in helping prevent crisis and emergency situations from arising, and being prepared if and when they do.

BPS is excited to participate in the October 24th release of a collaboratively developed plan for increasing employment and post-secondary options for students with disabilities. The plan is the work of BSET, or the Boston Special Education Transition Task Force, of which BPS is a proud member. BSET was convened by Massachusetts Advocates for Children and the Boston Foundation to increase inclusive workforce and post-secondary education placements and opportunities for Boston youth with disabilities of all types and severity, while enrolled in BPS and beyond. Currently nearly 70 organizations are represented on the Task Force.

Madison Park Technical Vocational High School Football Head Coach Roosevelt Robinson has been named “Coach of the Week” by the New England Patriots. WBZ-TV will film Coach Robinson receiving the recognition, and the segment is scheduled to air on October 16th at 7 p.m. on the show, “Patriots All Access.” As part of the recognition, the Patriots will donate \$1,000 to Madison Park. Coach Roosevelt recently led Madison Park in its 46-6 victory over Charlestown High, earning a 5-0 record this season.

On October 4th, Lynne Moody Teta and representatives of the Boston Latin School staff and student body launched the school's accreditation visit with an outstanding presentation that highlighted student musicians and student speakers, as well as the voices of parent and faculty leaders. The presentation set the tone for a highly successful accreditation process which concluded on October 7th.

The Superintendent thanked the following generous partners:

- Ernie Boch Jr. recently donated musical instruments to the Curley K-8 School in Jamaica Plain.
- *The Horn Book Magazine*, a local children's book review journal, donated approximately 3,000 new books to Boston Public School's libraries last week. This is the third time that *Horn Book* has donated books to BPS libraries.
- BPS also received a donation of 5,000 books from WGBH. The books, valued at \$32,000, will go into the 5,000 gift bags that Countdown to Kindergarten prepares for BPS Welcome Centers to give out to families when they register in January.

The Superintendent provided a brief update on his 100-Day Plan. Team leaders and team members have been chosen, and they are working to put plans in place to be able to come back to the Committee with recommendations in January. On October 16th, BPS will launch a new webpage reminding everyone about BPS' core values and the plan's eight projects.

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District leaders continue to work with Madison Park Technical Vocational High School's Executive Director Kevin McCaskill and invested stakeholders regarding the school's admissions policy. The Superintendent will bring the revamped policy to the Committee at a future meeting.

The Superintendent has been notified by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that their investigation into the English High School's MCAS scores may take several months. The district is fully cooperating and has ensured that all current 11th graders affected are scheduled to retake the Math MCAS in November, as MCAS is a graduation requirement.

Yesterday, Mayor Martin J. Walsh testified that while he favors allowing more charter schools, he called Governor Baker's plan dangerous. In paraphrasing the Mayor, he believes the Governor's plan sets up both charter public schools and Boston Public Schools up for failure. He favors an approach that is more deliberate. The Mayor also asks for funding reform to ensure a sustainable public education system. He also asked for facilities and transportation parity along with greater access to school turnaround tools.

Mr. O'Neill said that Orchard Gardens K-8 School was cited at CGSC conference, adding that he was delighted to present on BPS superintendent search. Mr. O'Neill asked if students at The English High School are being given appropriate supports in the event that they need to retake the MCAS exam. The Superintendent assured the Committee that English High Headmaster Ms. Noriega-Murphy has a plan to support the students.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Robin Pelletier, teacher, Margarita Muniz Academy, testified regarding the school's location.

Jan Phlegar, board member, Margarita Muniz Academy, testified regarding the school's location.

Bob Goodman, parent, Mission Hill K-8 School, testified regarding the school's location.

Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson testified regarding the Boston Compact Renewal proposal.

Joe Golding, parent, Mission Hill K-8 School, testified regarding the school's location.

Asha LeRay, parent, Mission Hill K-8 School, testified regarding the school's location.

Kevin Whalen, co-director, Center to Support Immigrant Organizing, testified regarding identifying a permanent location for Muniz Academy.

Suzanne Lee, co-chair, English Language Learners Task Force, testified in support of keeping the Muniz Academy at its current location.

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Rachel Goldsmith, parent, Mission Hill K-8 School, testified regarding the school's location.
Meredith West, parent, Mission Hill K-8 School, testified regarding the school's co-location.

Delhia Emanuel, parent, Muniz Academy, testified regarding the school's location.

Megan Wolf, BPS parent and member, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), testified regarding the proposed Boston Compact Renewal.

Heshan Berents-Weeramuni, BPS parent and co-chair, Citywide Parents Council, testified regarding transportation issues, kindergarten enrollment, the Boston Compact Renewal proposal and the charter cap.

Chris Rotti, parent, Mission Hill K-8 School, testified regarding the school's location.

Ana Black, faculty, Margarita Muniz Academy, read a letter signed by more than 80 Muniz Academy students regarding the school's location.

Carolyn Kain, chair, Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPac), testified regarding the importance of a master facilities plan and the Boston Compact Renewal proposal.

Mary Battenfeld, BPS parent and member, QUEST, testified regarding the Boston Compact Renewal Proposal.

Cindy Linfoot, parent, Mission Hill K-8 School, testified regarding the school's co-location.

Betsy Caruso, former staff/volunteer, Mission Hill K-8 School, testified regarding the school's co-location.

Peggy Wiesenberg, advocate, testified regarding the Boston Compact Renewal proposal.

ACTION ITEMS

Committee members asked how the Teen Pregnancy Prevention grant has been implemented and its impact to date, as well as the number of students served. Jill Carter, director of Health and Wellness, agreed to follow up with the information at a later time.

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent a grant in the amount of \$81,000.

Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force Co-Chair Jeri Robinson provided a brief update on the two meetings held to date by the Task Force. She shared some of the insights expressed by students about challenges with facilities, resources and technology. Mr. O'Neill then announced the names of the additional Task Force members as recommended.

Approved – By roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the updated membership for the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force.

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Ms. Jeri Robinson asked if the Boston Compact will abide by open meeting law and post minutes. Mr. O'Neill explained that the Boston Compact is not a government body subject to open meeting law and is also not a policy meeting body. Ms. Regina Robinson encouraged the Compact Steering Committee to allow a community presence at its meetings. Ms. Tapia suggested adding three students to the Compact Steering Committee. Dr. Coleman noted that the School Committee is being asked to make decisions before receiving all the data, a risk that he said is worth taking. Countering a statement from Dr. Coleman, Mr. O'Neill responded that he does not believe that his affirmative vote on the Compact renewal is implicit of an affirmative vote later on the unified enrollment proposal, which the Committee will consider at a later date. *Ms. Campbell recused herself from the discussion and the vote to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.*

Approved – By roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the 2015 Compact Among the City of Boston, Boston Public Schools, Boston Charter Alliance, and Archdiocese of Boston.

REPORTS

School Quality Framework: Implementation Update – Assistant Superintendent of Engagement Monica Roberts and Executive Director for the Office of Data and Accountability Nicole Wagner Lam presented an update on the District's efforts to implement the School Quality Framework, which was approved by the Committee in October of 2014. A cross-departmental team studied the School Quality Framework and identified three potential barriers to smooth implementation: (1) the District does not have adequate time to test the systems before school choice season begins; (2) the District needs a plan to intentionally leverage the framework to redirect district support to schools and improve school quality; (3) and the District needs to strengthen internal buy-in. The presenters stressed that the District is still committed to implementing the framework, however, and presented a proposal for an adjusted timeline for implementation in school year 2016-17.

Ms. Campbell, who co-chaired the School Quality Working Group (SQWG), said she will support the request for a delay in implementation. She requested that the Committee receive monthly progress reports, which the Superintendent agreed to provide. She also requested that the District adhere to the wishes of the SQWG and only adjust school tiers every three years. After Ms. Campbell offered the SQWG's assistance with implementation, Mr. O'Neill asked Ms. Campbell to consider reconvening the Group on quarterly basis.

Mr. Loconto and Ms. Regina Robinson asked questions about family engagement, all of which were answered by the presenters. Mr. O'Neill encouraged all schools to establish active school site councils and parent councils and to have a representative on the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC).

At its next meeting, the Committee will take action on the Superintendent's recommendation to delay the implementation of the School Quality Framework.

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Update to School Committee on the Conclusion of Hiring Season 2015 – Dr. Emily Qazilbash, assistant superintendent for Human Capital, and Ceronne Daly, director of diversity programs, presented an update on the district’s hiring season, which focuses on early hiring, mutual consent and increasing diversity. Eighty-three percent of positions were filled by July 1st, with 40 percent of those vacancies filled by diverse candidates. BPS has designed and launched a portfolio of pipeline programs to cultivate talented and diverse educators.

Ms. Campbell asked the District to track its ability to attract male teachers. She also requested data on school leadership diversity. Ms. Regina Robinson encouraged discussions among higher education leaders to increase teacher diversity. Noting that the issue of teacher diversity is a national problem, Mr. Loconto suggested that the District look at hiring efforts across the nation. Dr. Coleman requested additional data on the talent of the new hires. He encouraged the District to push the state to collect data linking teacher certification with effectiveness. Mr. O’Neill asked about the District’s program which trains paraprofessionals to be teachers. He noted that former Committee member Margaret McKenna, now president of Suffolk University, was keenly focused on strengthening the District’s teacher pipeline.

School Facilities Updates: Decisions for School Year 2016-2017 – Assistant Superintendent of Operations Kim Rice presented a brief update on the District’s 10-Year Facilities Master Plan, “BuildBPS,” which Mayor Walsh officially kicked off on September 29th at the McKay K-8 School. City and District leaders have established five subcommittees: educational planning, demographics, facilities assessment, community engagement and finance. The current cost of BPS deferred maintenance is estimated to be approximately \$480.7 million. This winter, the Council of Great City Schools will conduct an audit of the BPS facilities department, with a focus on maintenance and custodial services. Ms. Rice also provided a brief update on two projects pending with the Massachusetts School Building Authority: the School Building Committee approved the submission of four siting options for further exploration for the Josiah Quincy Upper School; and demolition of the existing Dearborn building will begin in November, with construction to begin immediately thereafter on the new Dearborn 6-12 STEM Early College Academy. The building is expected to be complete in the winter of 2017.

Ms. Rice then presented the Superintendent’s off-cycle facilities recommendations, which call for Boston Green Academy to remain at the Taft building and grow to its full charter enrollment of 595. Another Course to College (ACC) would relocate to the E. Greenwood building in Hyde Park during the interim period. The Superintendent also recommends that the Margarita Muniz Academy and Mission Hill K-8 School both remain at the Agassiz building while the Master Plan is being conducted. ACC Interim Headmaster Michele Pellam said that she has engaged with the ACC community about a possible move to Hyde Park and the response has been positive. The Superintendent and Mr. O’Neill will visit the impacted schools in near future. Community meetings will be held at impacted schools prior to a vote by the Committee.

Ms. Campbell called for facilitated discussions between the Mission Hill K-8 School and Muniz Academy communities, saying creative solutions are needed. She added that she was personally upset by some of the testimony from parents during the public comment period. Mr. O’Neill acknowledged Ms. Campbell’s extensive knowledge of BPS facilities and thanked her for her

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passion and dedication. Ms. Jeri Robinson said it's time to seriously consider building new schools rather than investing resources to maintain older buildings. Mr. Loconto asked a number of questions about the costs associated with the ACC's proposed relocation (approximately just under \$7 million) and alternatives considered for all of the impacted schools. Dr. Coleman suggested the creation of a capital campaign. Mr. O'Neill said he was encouraged by the ACC community's openness to move to the E. Greenwood building, adding that a tenable solution is needed for the Mission Hill K-8 School & Muniz Academy.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Kim Janey, senior project director, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, testified regarding the human capital diversity initiative.

Peggy Wiesenberg, advocate, testified regarding the facilities update.

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the human capital diversity initiative.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

At 10:19 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary