



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

**November 6, 2019**

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on November 6, 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](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org), email [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:feedback@bostonpublicschools.org) or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

**ATTENDANCE**

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

School Committee Members Absent: Dr. Hardin Coleman; and Quoc Tran.

**DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Agenda

Boston School Committee Meeting Minutes: October 30, 2019

Grants for Approval Totaling \$335,000

Amount	FY	Grant Name	Status	Sites
\$50,000	2020	MassGrad Promising Practices Grant – BiNCA	New	BiNCA
\$50,000	2020	MassGrad Promising Practices Grant – English	New	English
\$35,000	2020	MassGrad Promising Practices Grant – McKinley	New	McKinley
\$200,000	2020	STARS Grant	New	Districtwide

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

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

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Field Trip Policy Proposal PowerPoint

Equity Impact Statement

Draft General Field Trip Guidelines Circular

Draft Day Field Trip Guidelines Circular

Draft Overnight Field Trip Guidelines Circular

Draft Guidelines for International Field Trips Circular

Draft Guidelines and Procedures for Homestays Circular

Draft Guidelines and Procedures for Water Activities Circular

Draft Policy Language Disallowing Revocation of Physical Activity as a Form of Punishment

BPS Code of Conduct Update Equity Impact Statement

2020 Census Update PowerPoint

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Loconto called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. He announced that interpretation services were available in Spanish.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: OCTOBER 30, 2019**

*Approved* – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the October 30, 2019 School Committee meeting.

**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

The Superintendent addressed the following topics in her oral report:

- Yesterday was Election Day, and marked the third year of the Student Poll Worker Program. The program is a partnership with the City of Boston Election Department, BPS History and Social Studies Department, Boston Student Advisory Council, and BPS Intergovernmental Relations. Through the program, about 50 of our students, ages 16 and over, worked as election officers on Election Day.

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- Yesterday, the Superintendent and Chair Loconto joined Mayor Walsh, Elementary Schools Superintendent Ana Taveres, and other City officials and BPS staff for the ribbon cutting for the new playground at the Higginson K-2 School. The Superintendent will propose that the new playground be dedicated to Principal Marie Mullen, who is retiring after six years leading the Higginson and more than 35 years in the Boston Public Schools.
- Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is officially designated a Dual Language School for American Sign Language and English. The Dual Language recognition will allow for the Horace Mann to realize its vision: for students to graduate on grade level for reading and writing in English and academic American Sign Language (ASL) through providing ASL as a common and shared language that all children in the school can access at all times. The Horace Mann, the oldest public day school for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the United States is also celebrating its 150th anniversary this year.
- Superintendent's Community Tour Update
  - 98 schools visited; 86 community meetings attended, including most recently:
    - A meeting with the Mattapan and Hyde Park communities at New Mission High School
    - A meeting with the Latinx community, co-hosted by the Greater Boston Latino Network and La Alianza Hispana. Thank you to Vice Chair Oliver-Davila for joining us.
    - A meeting with the Citywide Parent Council
    - A meeting with BPS partners
  - During one of her school visits to the Grew Elementary in Hyde Park, the Superintendent presented the Best in Class for Excellence in Custodial Services Award to John Khane.
  - Please visit [bostonpublicschools.org/communitytour](http://bostonpublicschools.org/communitytour) for meeting dates, times and locations.

Mr. O'Neill congratulated the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for its designation as a Dual Language School for American Sign Language and English and asked about school partnerships. The Superintendent said that she is working to ensure equitable distribution of partnerships among schools.

Mr. Loconto congratulated the candidates who were elected or re-elected to the Boston City Council yesterday, saying the School Committee looks forward to working with them in partnership. He offered special congratulations to the Latinx community, which increased its representation on the City Council.

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Mr. Loconto apologized for declining to comment in a recent *Boston Herald* article about the Boston School Committee. He said that the Committee, which is comprised of a majority of BPS parents, takes its responsibilities very seriously, dedicating long hours to Committee meetings, the Superintendent search and task forces. He said he is proud of the gains that the district has made under the current School Committee structure, which has yielded higher performing schools. Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked Mr. Loconto for his comments, adding that Committee members each have different areas of expertise and engage in meaningful debate. Mr. O’Neill said that there are many examples of the Committee its changing position because of input from the community.

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

### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following people testified seeking information facilities plans for the Jackson/Mann K-8 School and the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, which are currently co-located in Allston:

- Analy L., student, Jackson/Mann K-8 School
- Blanca Henriquez, parent, Jackson/Mann K-8 School
- Charlie Kim, school site council president, Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Stephanie Moussalli, teacher, Jackson/Mann K-8 School
- Morlyn Dorestant-Josa, teacher, Jackson/Mann K-8 School, testified regarding enrollment and future of the school
- Madeline Doherty, teacher, Jackson/Mann K-8 School

Maritza Ciliberto, headmaster, Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, testified regarding the school’s dual-language designation.

Dr. Michele Isaac Smith, administrator, Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, testified regarding the school’s dual-language designation.

Janina Seibel, parent, Henderson and Mather schools, said that her concerns about special education are being addressed by the district.

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding widening achievement gaps in the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results.

Katelyn Doherty, teacher, Higginson K0-2 School, testified in favor of dedicating the school’s new playground in honor of retiring Principal Marie Mullen.

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Megan Wolf, parent, and member, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), testified regarding the potential development of a parcel of land near the Dever and McCormack schools on Columbia Point.

Peggy Wiesenberg, advocate, testified regarding the potential development of a parcel of land near the Dever and McCormack schools on Columbia Point.

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Mr. Loconto thanked the Jackson/Mann K-8 School community for their comments, saying he appreciated their request for clarity. The Superintendent offered to meet with the Jackson/Mann community to discuss their concerns.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

Ms. Robinson asked for more information about the MassGrad Promising Practices grants. Anu Jayanth, director of Grants and External Funding, said that the funding will support schools with graduation rates below 67%; the work will be done at the school level and district-wide.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila requested that the Committee receive information on the outcomes of the MassGrad Promising Practices grants when available.

Mr. O'Neill encouraged Dr. Tony King, headmaster of Boston International Newcomers Academy (BiNCA) to set the school's grant goals even higher.

**Approved** – The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$335,000.

**Approved** – The Committee unanimously approved, on roll call, the appointment of Angelina Camacho; Fabián Torres-Ardila; and Rosann Tung to the Committee's English Language Learners Task Force.

**Approved** – The Committee unanimously approved, on roll, call the appointment of Marinell Rousmaniere to serve as co-chair of the Committee's School Quality Work Group II.

## **REPORTS**

**Field Trip Policy Proposal** – Director of Global Education Kayla Dorsey-Twumasi presented the Superintendent's recommendation to update the district's field trip policy. Ms. Dorsey-Twumasi explained that BPS currently has no field trip policy, instead relying on circulars that were last approved by the Committee in 2011. The proposed field trip policy would provide a definition of a BPS sponsored trip; addresses student conduct on trips; requires an assessment of trip risks, district and field safety protocols, increased student supervision, annual assessments of

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emergency response systems and insurance; and allows for the revision and addition of field trip specific circulars as needed. The policy recommendation would no longer require School Committee approval of international trips. Instead, applications would be vetted directly by the Department of Global Education. Signatures of the Superintendent, School Superintendents, and Chief Financial Officer would still be required.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked questions about equity and affordability. She requested that language be added to the policy that explicitly address affordability. Ms. Dorsey-Twumasi agreed, saying that the Department of Global Education is working to make field trip experiences more affordable for families. Ms. Oliver-Dávila suggested that trip applications include information about scholarship opportunities when applicable.

Ms. Robinson discussed viewing the city as classroom, offering a wealth of opportunities for learning from pre-K-12.

Mr. O'Neill took a broader view, saying that the city, nature, and the world should be seen as classrooms. He thanked Thompson Island and Outward Bound for their partnership with BPS, and praised Natacha Scott, director of History and Social Studies, for expanding access to the city's museums. He suggested that Ms. Scott connect with the Boston Student Advisory Council to promote opportunities.

Mr. Loconto said that the district now has a strong vetting system in place and that the time is right for the Committee to cede its approval of individual international trips. He expressed appreciation for the district's commitment to provide monthly written updates and an annual report on student international travel. He thanked BPS Legal Advisor Cathy Lizotte for her work on the proposal. The Committee will take action on the field trip policy proposal on November 20<sup>th</sup>.

***Code of Conduct Update*** – Secondary Superintendent of School Operations & Safety Sam DePina, presented the Superintendent's recommendation to add language to Section four of the BPS Code of Conduct that would prohibit the revocation of physical activity (including recess) as a disciplinary consequence for any other reason other than illness or safety.

The recommendation is in response to a request made by Ms. Oliver-Davila last week following the district's Health and Wellness presentation. Mr. Loconto thanked the district, and Mr. DePina in particular, for the quick turnaround on this important issue, adding that the Committee looks forward to receiving a comprehensive Code of Conduct update from the Code of Conduct Advisory Committee (COCAC) in the next few months.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked about the district's plan to communicate the policy update with school leaders. The Superintendent and Mr. DePina said that district leaders will work with school leaders and the Boston Teachers Union to educate them about the policy. The Committee is scheduled to take action on the proposal at the November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

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**2020 Census Update** – Sebastian Zapata, census liaison with the Mayor’s Office of Intergovernmental Relations, presented a report on the City’s efforts to support an equitable and complete count of Boston residents in the 2020 Census. Census day is April 1, 2020, starting the decennial count that determines everything from representation in Congress, to federal funds for schools, affordable housing, infrastructure, and health care programs.

Much of the funding that comes from the Census count helps the most vulnerable residents. It provides health care, education, food and nutrition programs, housing, and child care for low-income families. For every resident who is not counted in the state, \$2,372 in funding is missed. The Census has a significant impact on the services Boston and its neighborhoods receive; therefore an equitable and complete count is critical.

Next year's Census faces unprecedented challenges, including significant underfunding of the U.S. Census Bureau, and the nearly all-digital nature of the surveys. Boston is the ninth hardest to count city among the largest 100 U.S. cities Boston has the largest total number of people in MA living in Hard to Count (HTC tracts) (nearly 415,000 or 63% people in 2014). Particularly hard to count populations include renters, recent immigrants, populations that speak little or no English, and low-income populations.

Mayor Walsh has formed the City of Boston's Complete Count Committee, a group of cross-sector leaders who are working to ensure that all Boston residents are aware of the upcoming 2020 U.S. Census, know why it's important, and are prepared to participate. The Mayor has committed an additional \$100,000 in his FY20 budget to support Boston's outreach efforts by providing grants to community-based organizations and more support to City departments. This is in addition to a FY19 investment of dedicated staffing resources to support the City's census efforts.

City census staff will partner with BPS to identifying ways to engage students and conduct outreach to BPS families. The City has put together a one-pager available in six languages that provides an overview of the 2020 Census and answers common questions. The one-pager is available at [Boston.gov/2020-census](http://Boston.gov/2020-census).

Mr. O’Neill expressed concern that there is a concerted effort in Washington to undercount urban districts. He encouraged BPS student participation in all aspects of the count.

Dr. Rivera suggested that Boston explore setting up pop-up centers to engage undocumented residents.

Ms. Reyes said that BSAC is ready to participate in Boston’s census outreach efforts. Mr. Zapata welcomed the support, adding that the federal census bureau is behind in its hiring efforts for these well paid, part-time jobs.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila encouraged the City to consider providing BSAC with a grant for census outreach and suggested providing young people with stipends to serve as census ambassadors.

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She suggested a partnership with Success Boston. She encouraged the inclusion of youth representation on the Complete Count Children and Youth Subcommittee.

The Superintendent suggested that Mr. Zapata connect with BPS Senior Advisory Rob Consalvo and Chief of Student, Family, and Community Advancement Monica Roberts. She also suggested that the City consider sharing sample forms with families in advance to familiarize them with the census early in the process. Mr. Loconto stressed the importance of obtaining an accurate census count.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

No speakers.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. O'Neill said that the district learned lessons from McCormack-BCLA merger and suggested that the district engage with the Jackson/Mann K-8 School community upfront regarding facilities decisions. He asked the district for better communication and transparency with the Dever and McCormack school communities about the potential development of land on Columbia Point, saying that the Committee passed a resolution stating that those communities must be consulted and stand to benefit from such development.

Mr. Loconto said that the Committee will hold a retreat on November 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m., and that the next regular Committee meeting will be held on November 20<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. Both meetings are open to the public and will take place in the School Committee Chamber at the Bolling Building.

**ADJOURN**

At approximately 8:19 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan  
Executive Secretary