



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

November 20, 2013

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on November 20, 2013 at 6 p.m. at the Edward Winter Chambers, 26 Court Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

For more information about any of the items listed below, please contact the office of the Boston School Committee: feedback@bostonpublicschools.org or 617-635-9014.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Grant for Approval: Strategic Support to Specific Underperforming School Districts (Bridge Grant) - \$36,000.

Superintendent's Memo: First Phase of the Superintendent's Recommendations for Facilities Actions

Report: Human Capital Update

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael O'Neill; Vice-Chairperson Claudio Martinez; Meg Campbell; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Rev. Gregory G. Groover; Margaret McKenna; Mary Tamer; and student representative Ayomide Olumuyiwa.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O'Neill called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. He announced that the meeting was being broadcast live by Boston City TV (Comcast Channel 24 and RCN Channel 13) in cooperation with BNN-TV and would be rebroadcast at a later date. Michelle Harven, an Emerson College graduate student, also recorded the meeting.

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the November 6, 2013 School Committee meeting.

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SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

As part of Principal Partners Day, today more than 130 community, business and elected leaders joined BPS principals and headmasters to learn what it takes to help our students succeed. A luncheon followed, sponsored by the Boston Plan for Excellence and Bank of America, which several School Committee members attended. The Superintendent thanked Mayor Menino for his extraordinary support of education during his 20 years of service to this city.

Last night, the Superintendent held a successful "Superintendent + Teacher Share" event focused on collaboration that included a panel discussion from representatives of the Conley Elementary School and Urban Science Academy, both noted for their achievements through the EdVestors "School on the Move" program.

Research shows that having a highly-effective teacher throughout elementary school nearly eliminates the disadvantages of poverty, and students assigned to the strongest teachers for three years score 50 percent higher on standardized tests than those who have weaker instruction. To support the growth and development of every educator, the Superintendent announced that he is integrating with Office of Educator Effectiveness with the Office of Human Resources to become the Office of Human Capital. The work will be led by Dr. Ross Wilson, who currently oversees the district's educator effectiveness work and is a former teacher and school principal.

The Superintendent set an ambitious goal of hiring 75 percent of teachers in March and April for the following school year. He also released a progress report on the first full year of district's new educator evaluation process. Families can view the report, which includes school-by-school results, at www.bostonpublicschools.org/evaluations.

This report demonstrates that BPS is making rapid improvements:

- 93 percent of educators received an evaluation in the 2012-13 school year, compared to less than 23 percent in 2009;
- The evaluation system allowed principals to provide 48,725 hours of targeted professional development for 5,120 educators in response to trends in learning needs;
- The evaluations led to the removal of 31 people from the classroom who persistently struggled to meet the needs of our students;
- 13.5 percent of our educators received an "exemplary" rating; 79.5 percent received a "proficient" rating; 5.8 percent received a "needs improvement" rating; and 1.2 percent, or 48 individuals, received ratings of "unsatisfactory."

BPS is also addressing the following areas of concern:

- Educators in central office were more than twice as likely to receive an "exemplary" rating as people who worked in schools;
- A few lower-performing schools marked nearly all of their educators as "exemplary" or "proficient," which may also be a signal that a few schools are still not conducting robust evaluations;
- Educators over age 50, male teachers, and African-American educators were more likely to receive a "needs improvement" or "unsatisfactory" evaluation.

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The Superintendent's team is reviewing the data and the underlying issues with the Office of Equity and has already adjusted the evaluator training to ensure open discussions about the potential impact of bias in evaluation.

Earlier this week, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved a two-year trial run of a new standardized testing system, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. PARCC will offer the ability to better align instruction and assessment toward the goal of college and career readiness for students, while leveraging technology for students to demonstrate their learning and provide more real-time data back to schools and districts. With a field test of the assessment planned to roll out in Boston and across the Commonwealth in the spring of 2014, BPS has assembled a working group to help schools prepare for the new test. The working group is currently engaged in discussions with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, BPS stakeholders, and other districts, to develop a recommendation on providing MCAS exemptions to students taking the PARCC field test, as well as assessing our technology needs. A final recommendation will be reached by December 4th, 2013, and shared with the School Committee at that time.

Today, staff at the Dr. William Henderson Inclusion Elementary School and the Harbor Middle School voted overwhelmingly to support an inclusion plan which would create a K-12 inclusion pathway. The Superintendent will bring the proposal to the School Committee for approval at a later date.

On November 16th, BPS held its first-ever "Showcase in our Schools," opening schools that serve grades K through 8 to prospective families. The High School Showcase will take place on Thursday, December 5th at 6 p.m. at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School.

BPS is also updating all of its publications to align with the new Home Based School Choice plan and pledged to provide more clarity around schools that have special admissions policies.

The Superintendent announced that BPS will continue its current registration schedule for this year but is open to discussing it.

The new website, www.DiscoverBPS.org, has had more than 8,000 unique viewers since it launched. This far exceeds our expectations. At the Committee's request, the district has made several upgrades to the site and has launched videos in English and Spanish that explain the new Home Based plan.

Today the Boston City Council did not take action on a request to allocate resources for a study of the Quincy Upper / Boston Arts Academy combined facility. The Council is expected to schedule a hearing and a vote in the near future.

Two students and a driver were taken to the hospital as a precaution following a bus accident today. Police are investigating the cause of the accident and the driver will not return to service until the cause is determined.

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President Obama has signed a proclamation declaring this week “American Education Week.” He is calling all Americans to help improve instruction by volunteering and donating their time and energy to the classroom.

Ms. Tamer urged the district to ensure that schools are equipped with the technology necessary for the successful implementation of PARCC testing. Dr. Coleman requested an annual report examining potential biases in educator evaluations.

The School Committee approved the Superintendent’s report by unanimous consent.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Michael Koza, Executive Director, Project Right, testified regarding feeder school options for the Lilla Frederick Pilot Middle School.

Gloria West, parent, Lilla Frederick Pilot Middle School testified regarding feeder school options for the Lilla Frederick Pilot Middle School.

Dr. Marlyne Campbell testified regarding the importance of getting young people to vote.

John St. Amand, vice chair, Special Education Parents Advisory Council, testified regarding inclusion.

Karen Irizarry, parent, Dennis C. Haley Pilot Elementary School, testified regarding the school’s possible K-8 expansion.

Jennifer Potter, parent, Dennis C. Haley Pilot Elementary School, testified regarding the school’s K-8 expansion.

Nina Kallen, parent, Dennis C. Haley Pilot Elementary School, testified regarding liability concerns on district-sponsored field trips.

Molly Schen, chair, Boston Green Academy Governing Board, testified regarding the movement of school programs.

Heather Cochran, parent, George H. Conley Elementary School, testified regarding the possible expansion of the Dennis C. Haley Pilot Elementary School.

Karen Kast-McBride – parent, Washington Irving Middle School, testified regarding the Grow with Boston Facilities Master Plan.

Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent, testified regarding the Grow with Boston Facilities Master Plan.

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ACTION ITEMS

Approved – The School Committee approved by unanimous consent a grant in the amount of \$36,000.

School Committee members asked questions about school pathways and the costs associated with the facilities recommendations, urging transparency. They also urged the district to provide strong support for school leaders who will be implementing the proposed changes, and requested a timeline for the completion of a comprehensive facilities plan. Mr. Martinez requested a list of promises the district has made related to reprogramming over the last five years. Mr. O'Neill noted that the Superintendent's facilities recommendations support an earlier vote by the School Committee to expand dual language, inclusion and K-8 opportunities.

Approved – By roll call, the School Committee unanimously approved the First Phase of the Superintendent's Recommendations for Facilities Actions.

REPORTS

Human Capital Update – Dr. Ross Wilson presented the Superintendent's human capital strategy, which integrates the Office of Human Resources with the Office of Educator Effectiveness to form the Office of Human Capital. Dr. Wilson, who will lead the new office, explained the core components of the district's human capital strategy: performance evaluation, talent recruitment, strategic staffing and professional growth. With research indicating that the best teachers are hired early, BPS will allow all schools to exercise hiring autonomy and hire teachers earlier in the year. In addition, BPS will expand its recruitment process and better support teachers and school leaders, allowing the district to fill positions early with qualified, diverse candidates.

School Committee members expressed overwhelming support for the plan to hire teachers earlier, predicting the move will improve teacher quality. The Committee and Superintendent agreed that support from partners will be critical to the success of the district's human capital strategy. Committee members asked questions about the district's diversity strategy, student participation in the hiring process, and the excess process, all of which were answered by Dr. Wilson and the Superintendent. Mr. O'Neill stated that a presentation on diversity is scheduled for December. Mr. Martinez urged the Committee and the Superintendent to set diversity hiring goals as soon as possible. Ms. McKenna requested a future discussion about the role of Teach for America in BPS.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

John Mudd, education advocate, testified regarding the Human Capital Update.

Peggy Wiesenbergs, former BPS parent, testified regarding equity in the Home Based School Choice Plan.

School Committee Meeting
Edward Winter Chambers

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NEW BUSINESS

No new business was introduced.

ADJOURN

At 9:13 p.m., the School Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:

Elizabeth Sullivan

Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary