



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

November 4, 2015

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on November 4, 2015 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 O'Neill; Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman; Michael Loconto; Regina Robinson; Dr. Miren Uriarte; and student representative Savina Tapia.

School Committee Members Absent: Meg Campbell and Jeri Robinson.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

School Committee Meeting Minutes: October 28, 2015

2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) BPS Results

Innovation Schools in BPS

Office of Professional Learning

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O'Neill led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order. He announced that Emerson College student Rebecca Abrego was recording the meeting for 88.9 WERS. Mr. O'Neill welcomed a group of students from Princeton University who are visiting the district to learn more about school choice.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the October 28, 2015 School Committee meeting.

November 4, 2015

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

On Monday the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will publicly release the results of the PARCC assessment for grades 3 through 11. Boston is one of 194 districts in Massachusetts that used PARCC for grades 3 through 8; and one of 69 districts that used PARCC for grades 9 through 11 in some high schools. PARCC is a Common Core-aligned exam that assesses more rigorous learning. District leaders are currently analyzing the BPS PARCC results and expect to issue preliminary findings on November 9.

This week, Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, along with other members of the Foundation Budget Review Commission, released their final report that examined how state laws can better reflect the true cost of education today. The bipartisan commission's ambitious plan recommended hundreds of millions of dollars in additional spending on K-12 education throughout the state.

The Commission was charged with reviewing how the Foundation Budget of Chapter 70 is calculated and making recommendations for changes they believe will more adequately fund statewide educational goals in areas such as health care, special education and English Language Learners.

The Superintendent thanked Sen. Chang Diaz and the commission members for their thoughtful analysis. Given BPS's high concentration of low-income students and its large percentage of English language learners, the Superintendent is keenly interested in ensuring adequate state support for our diverse student population.

The Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) will hold its annual fall conference this weekend in Hyannis. Mr. O'Neill has been named to the MASC All-State School Committee in recognition of the Committee's collective work and his leadership on the superintendent search process. Mr. O'Neill encouraged people to read a recent MASC report, *Who is Being Served by Massachusetts Commonwealth Charter Schools*.
http://www.masc.org/images/news/2015/20151013_MASC_Charter-Schools_Who-Is-Being-Served_opt.pdf

The Russell and Holmes Elementary Schools co-sponsoring a 5K Run on November 7th to support enrichment activities at the two schools, including music lessons and health and wellness opportunities. The run starts at Carson Beach at 9:30 am. All money raised at this event will be used to help their students learn and achieve.

BPS is committed to creating environments that embrace safety, responsibility, and respect. The recent tragedy at Jackson Square involving two BPS students has had ripple effects extending beyond just the two schools they both attended. The Superintendent shared one example where a team at the Margarita Muniz Academy helped students cope with their grief and counseled them on making good choices as they manage their feelings. They coordinated "Restorative Justice Circles" that included the mothers of their students. The Superintendent commended the staff at the Muniz for their tireless efforts to keep students safe and on the path to good choices, and to involve families, in spite of the many influences they battle every day.

November 4, 2015

For the past two weeks, fourth graders at the Trotter Innovation School have been engaged in a hands-on science programs through i2. Each class spends each day engaged in high-energy, high-interest learning covering two courses: Engineering Ice Cream and Robotics. In the first program, students learn about food science, urban agriculture, community gardens, hydroponics, and aeroponics. They also explore the future of food and food production and learn how to make a favorite treat. Using LEGO® MINDSTORMS® technology, kids in the Robotics program learn how to build different robots and program them to move, working with real-life mechanisms like motors and sensors, and exploring how light, touch, sound, color and accelerometer and ultrasonic sensors can enhance our robots. They use creativity, logic and problem-solving skills to invent their own robots, and find out how exciting it can be to bring the digital world of computers into our physical world.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people testified in favor of the proposal to relocate Another Course to College (ACC) to the E. Greenwood building in Hyde Park.

- Rukiya Mohamed, student, Another Course to College
- Bryan Wright, student, Another Course to College
- Mariela Batista, student, Another Course to College
- Darwin Pemberthy, student, Another Course to College
- Robert Comeau, teacher, Another Course to College
- Kara Rainey, teacher, Another Course to College,
- Marina Gopie, alumna and teacher, Another Course to College

Carolyn Kain, chair, Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPac), testified regarding how school autonomy can impact students with special needs.

ACTION ITEM

Committee members asked questions about the cost associated with ACC’s relocation to the E. Greenwood building, and how much money would need to be invested in the building’s repairs regardless of the move. The presenters confirmed that 62 percent of ACC students live closer to the proposed Hyde Park location than to the current location in Brighton. Mr. O’Neill clarified that the Committee is not voting on a permanent home for ACC, explaining that long-term decisions will be made following the completion of the district’s 10-Year Facilities Master Plan.

Approved – By roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent’s recommendation to relocate Another Course to College to the Elihu Greenwood building in Hyde Park effective School Year 2016-2017.

November 4, 2015

REPORTS

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) BPS 2015 Results – Nicole Wagner Lam, executive director for the Office of Data and Accountability, presented the results of the 2015 NAEP exam, also known as the “nation’s report card.” BPS’ achievement in both reading and math are now on par with the national average. Some other highlights: for the first time since 2003, BPS 4th graders performed on par with students across all other school districts throughout the nation in reading; BPS has successfully closed the 14-point gap between the district and national average in 8th grade math that existed in 2003, sustaining performance on par with the nation since 2009. Unfortunately, significant achievement gaps persist.

Ms. Regina Robinson asked about the district’s strategy for closing the achievement gap, which includes expanding access to early education, revamping and expanding Advanced Work Class and MassCore, and working with the Committee’s Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force. Dr. Uriarte and Mr. O’Neill expressed concern that 100 percent of BPS students are now classified as low-income, making it difficult to analyze student data. Ms. Wagner Lam said that district leaders are working to tackle this complicated issue and will follow up.

Innovation Schools in BPS – Dr. Ross Wilson, managing partner, Office of Innovation, presented a brief history of autonomy in BPS, then highlighted current trends. Parents are choosing autonomous schools more than traditional schools. District leaders are working to create a central repository of information for storing key autonomous school documents and resources. Dr. Wilson said a need clear application and renewal process is needed for schools interested in gaining or maintaining autonomy, adding that the application process should be two years. He also emphasized that schools should demonstrate innovative practice, not just autonomous governance. The Office of Innovation is designing an accountability system for all autonomous schools. Dr. Wilson closed by sharing a detailed application timeline for schools with innovative practices.

Mr. O’Neill noted that the Boston Alternative School Experience Sites (BASES) has been renamed Boston Collaborative High School. Committee members asked questions about the application process and accountability, all of which were answered by the presenter and the Superintendent. Dr. Uriarte and Dr. Coleman suggested that instead using the category “Catholic schools” the district should use “Title 1 schools.” Dr. Coleman requested data on schools by level. Mr. O’Neill applauded the Superintendent for creating role of managing partner of innovation. He also requested a future presentation on the performance of autonomous schools and how are they delivering against their original plan, adding that it should be an annual report.

Office of Professional Learning – Dr. Doannie Tran, assistant superintendent of the Office of Professional Learning (OPL), presented an overview of the department, which consists of academics, instructional research and development, early education, the achievement gap and arts. He engaged the Committee in a cognitively demanding task to demonstrate the kind of critical thinking that the district is asking of teachers and students. OPL is coordinating systemic strategies focused on developing collective capacity to design and deliver cognitively demanding instruction. Instructional Learning Teams are at the core of this work.

November 4, 2015

School Committee members asked questions about college readiness, encouraging buy-in from teachers and principals, and the balance between creating unified systems and providing differentiated support. Dr. Uriarte and Dr. Coleman applauded Dr. Tran's work creating new systems and tracking outcomes.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Kenny Jervis, co-chair, Citywide Parents Council, said that the Roger Clap Innovation School welcomes an annual review by the district and invited the Superintendent to visit the Clap School as it prepares for its innovation renewal.

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the NAEP results, says persistent achievement gaps should be explicitly pointed out. He also requested data on achievement gaps by subgroups and suggested that problems with implementation prevented the current achievement gap policy from being effective.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. O'Neill announced that the School Committee meeting previously scheduled for December 2 has been moved to December 9.

ADJOURN

At 8:30 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary