



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

November 6, 2013

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on November 6, 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

Grants for Approval Totaling \$725,595

- @Scale Project Initiative: Mathematics and Science Achievement - \$58,695
- Strategic Support to Specific Underperforming School Districts - \$100,000
- Strategic Support to Specific Underperforming School Districts – \$563,900
- MA 21st Century Community Learning Centers – Enhanced Programs for Students with Disabilities Pilot Fund Code 245A - \$3,000

Report: Improving School Choice: Quality Commitments

Report: Grow with Boston: Facilities Master Plan Update

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael O’Neill; Vice-Chairperson Claudio Martinez (departed at 8 p.m.); Meg Campbell (arrived at 6:20 p.m.); 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.

November 6, 2013

Mr. O'Neill welcomed Margaret McKenna as a member of the School Committee. Ms. McKenna, a visiting professor at the Heller School of Social Policy at Brandeis University and civil rights attorney, was sworn in by Mayor Menino on November 4, 2013.

Mr. O'Neill lauded Mayor Thomas M. Menino for making education a priority during his 20 year tenure, thanked Councilor John Connolly for focusing on education during his mayoral campaign, and congratulated Mayor-Elect Martin Walsh.

CITATIONS

The School Committee and Superintendent presented citations to the following schools for earning accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

- Curley K-8 School – Katherine Grassa, principal; Myrna Vega-Wilson, former acting principal
- Gardner Pilot Academy – Erica Herman, principal
- John F. Kennedy Elementary School – Waleska Landing-Rivera, principal
- Mather Elementary School – Emily Cox, principal
- Ellis Mendell Elementary School – Julia Bott, principal
- Richard J. Murphy K-8 School – Karen Cahill, principal

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the October 16, 2013 School Committee meeting and the October 28, 2013 School Committee Working Session on the Facilities Master Plan.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The Superintendent congratulated Mayor-Elect Walsh and thanked all of the mayoral candidates for raising the level of discourse about the future of public education in Boston. He also welcomed Margaret McKenna to the School Committee.

BPS is extending hiring flexibilities to all of its schools, allowing the district to compete in the marketplace for talent and to better serve students.

In response to feedback from school leaders and members of the School Committee, the Superintendent announced some revisions to his facilities proposals for the 2014-15 school year.

The Superintendent will move forward his recommendation to begin K-8 expansions at the James F. Condon, James W. Hennigan and William Monroe Trotter Schools; he will not recommend expansions at the William Blackstone, Michael J. Perkins, Joseph P. Tynan and Mattahunt Elementary Schools at this time but expects to return to the Committee with this recommendation for the following school year.

November 6, 2013

The Superintendent maintains his proposal to move Boston Green Academy to the Taft building in Brighton, enabling its expansion as required by its charter and our earlier BPS commitments; he will not recommend a new location for Another Course to College at this time, citing the need for further discussions with the ACC community.

The Superintendent will continue with his proposal to open the P.A. Shaw building for early grades next year; however, he will not make any recommendation on the movement of Boston Adult Technical Academy at this time, again citing the need for further discussions with the school community.

The Superintendent will not recommend any programmatic changes for the Fuller building until the district has the opportunity to collect additional data; he will, however, begin to engage in conversations with Community Academy in the event that the Fuller building is needed for other purposes in the future.

The Superintendent will recommend the relocation of the Dearborn to swing space during the time that the current facility is under construction.

Today the Boston City Council approved the allocation of \$4 million toward the continued study of the Quincy Upper/Boston Arts Academ schematic design concept, contingent upon Fenway High School remaining in its current location and the Alleghany Street site being opened as a K-8 school. This action by the Council creates a conflict with the School Committee's earlier vote regarding the Alleghany Street building and the location of Fenway High School. The district is assessing its options for moving forward.

The BPS school choice process for school year 2014-15 is underway. Last week, the district launched a new web site, www.DiscoverBPS.org, that allows families to search and sort through their school options in the Home-Based plan. The district will hold 24 community meetings to help families and community partners learn more about the new student assignment system; and on Saturday, November 16th, every school in grades K through 8 will open its doors to prospective families.

Veolia Transportation has terminated four bus drivers in response to the October 8th wildcat bus strike. Approximately 600 drivers who participated in the service disruption will receive a letter of reprimand. The Superintendent noted that on-time service has been sustained since mid-October at approximately 95 percent.

Karen Glasgow has been appointed Director of Labor and Employee Relations. She previously held a similar role in the Boston Fire Department.

Education Commissioner Chester is still deciding how to proceed with the Paul A. Dever and the John P. Holland Elementary Schools, which he recently designated as Level 5 schools. BPS will fully support the state's decision.

November 6, 2013

Rev. Groover requested more information on the City Council's vote, which the Superintendent agreed to provide.

Ms. Tamer urged the district to expand the Joseph P. Manning Elementary School to a K-8 school. The Superintendent explained that the district is exploring the issue.

Mr. O'Neill repeated an earlier request for information on current gaps in school programming.

The Committee voted by unanimous consent to accept the Superintendent's Report.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people testified regarding the Superintendent's facilities recommendations:

Luis Restituyo, student, Margarita Muniz Academy
Veronica Anguiano, student, Margarita Muniz Academy
Delhia Emanuel, parent, Margarita Muniz Academy
Yvette Modestin, director, Encuentro Diaspora Afro
Vanessa Calderon-Rosado, board member, Margarita Muniz Academy
Harriet and Edward Kotomori, guardians, Another Course to College
Carolyn Kain, chair, Special Education Parents Advisory Council
Aida Marquez, parent, Margarita Muniz Academy
Arturo Garcia, teacher, Community Academy
Brendan Donovan, teacher, Community Academy
Antonio Benson, teacher, Community Academy
Gerard Crimlisk, teacher, Community Academy
Malcolm Bryant, teacher, Community Academy
Xavier Bigger, student, Community Academy
Carly Johnson, student, Community Academy
Peter Forbes, Department of Youth Services
Mary Murphy Porche, grandparent, Community Academy
Ruth Shane, chair, Another Course to College Governing Board
Johanna Waldman, teacher, Another Course to College
Shantanette Patrice, teacher, Another Course to College
Alexandra Oliver-Davila, Sociedad Latina and Margarita Muniz Academy Governing Board
Nadia Monteiro, student, Boston International High School/Newcomers Academy
Leonel Peguero, student, Boston International High School/Newcomers Academy
Celoni Espinola, teacher, Boston International High School/Newcomers Academy
Marcelina Edwards, teacher, Boston International High School/Newcomers Academy
Kate Finkenstaedt, teacher, Boston International High School/Newcomers Academy
Isabel Senat, guidance counselor, Boston International High School/Newcomers Academy
Stacy Brown, after school coordinator, Another Course to College
Rony Alvarez, student, Another Course to College
Makia Moses, student, Another Course to College
Christopher Mee, teacher, Another Course to College

November 6, 2013

Evekiel Mercer-McDowell, student, Another Course to College
Jerry Howland, former headmaster, Another Course to College
Diana Presser, parent, Another Course to College
Barbara Barns, parent, Another Course to College
Ada Diaz, parent, Boston Green Academy
Lucia Mandelbaum, teacher, Boston Green Academy
Christina Alva, student, Boston Green Academy
Yoceyris Martinez, student, Another Course to College
Sara Arias, student, Another Course to College

Rayna Thibodeaux, parent, Joseph P. Manning Elementary School, testified in favor of the school's expansion to K-8.
Bette O'Gara, executive director, Key Steps, testified regarding student services
Megan Wolf, parent, Boston Latin School, testified regarding the Home Based School Choice Plan.

ACTION ITEMS

Dr. Coleman repeated an earlier request for the Committee to receive additional information regarding grants for approval, including goals and measurable outcomes.

Approved – The School Committee approved by unanimous consent grants in the amount of \$725,595.

Approved – Following a brief discussion, the School Committee unanimously approved by roll call the addition of three members of the School Committee Inclusion Task Force.

REPORTS

Improving School Choice: Quality Commitments – Chief Operating Officer Kim Rice presented an overview of the recommendations made by the External Advisory Committee (EAC) on Improving School Choice and the quality commitments made by BPS. Commitments include the creation of more K-8 pathways, expanding dual language and full inclusion programs, and improving school quality through a tiered structure of supports.

School Committee members asked questions about high support schools, high school admissions, and residency requirements. Dr. Coleman asked that the Committee receive quarterly or bi-annual reports on high support schools. Ms. Tamer requested data showing the residency requirements for each high school. Mr. O'Neill and Ms. Campbell made suggestions for improving the district's new school choice web site, www.DiscoverBPS.org.

School Quality Working Group Update – Dr. Coleman and Ms. Campbell, co-chairs of the School Committee's School Quality Working Group, presented a brief update on the group's work to date. The group has formed three subcommittees focused on metrics, policies and

November 6, 2013

procedures and communications. Ms. Campbell thanked Rebecca Frisch of the Mayor's Office and Nathan Kuder of BPS for their assistance.

Grow with Boston: Facilities Master Plan Update – Carleton Jones, Executive Director for Capital & Facilities Management, highlighted several changes that the Superintendent has made to his facilities proposal for the 2014-15 school year. (The Superintendent outlined these revisions earlier in his Superintendent's Report.) Planning for school year 2015-16 and beyond will involve a two-phase process of community engagement, concluding in the spring of 2014. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the Superintendent's facilities recommendations for school year 2014-15 on November 20th.

School Committee members asked questions about the district's priorities and K-8 pathways, all of which were answered by the Superintendent and his staff. Ms. Tamer and Ms. Campbell expressed concerns about the district's plans to house students at the Dennis Haley K-8 School at the William Barton Rogers Middle School building.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Joshua Weiss, BPS parent, testified regarding the Home Based School Choice Plan.

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

NEW BUSINESS

Rev. Groover expressed concern about BPS personnel who testify regarding the Superintendent's proposals. Mr. O'Neill referred the matter for future discussion by the Committee.

Mr. O'Neill congratulated Superintendent McDonough who began his career with Boston Public Schools 40 years ago.

ADJOURN

At approximately 10:21 p.m., the School Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary