



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

December 4, 2019

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on December 4, 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, email 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; Quoc Tran; and Student Representative Evelyn Reyes.

School Committee Member Absent: Dr. Hardin Coleman.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Boston School Committee Meeting Minutes: November 20, 2019

Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School PowerPoint

Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School MOUs, Accountability Plan, and Enrollment Policy Change Equity Impact Statement

Memorandum of Understanding: Type A Agreement between the Boston Public Schools and Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School’s Board of Trustees

Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School Enrollment Policy (revised since 11/20/19)

Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School 2017-2022 Accountability Plan

Memorandum of Agreement between the Boston Plan for Excellence (BPE) and the Board of Trustees of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School of Boston

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Financial Update PowerPoint

Financial Update Equity Impact Statement

FY20 Budget Update Cover Letter for October 2019

FY20 Budget Update Tables for October 2019

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: NOVEMBER 20, 2019

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the November 20, 2019 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The Superintendent addressed the following topics in her oral report:

- School was canceled yesterday due to snow. The Superintendent thanked the Central Office team for communicating with families with regarding the weather. She offered a special thank you to the facilities and custodial staff who worked very hard to make sure parking lots were plowed and treated and sidewalks and stairs were cleaned. The Superintendent thanked Mayor Walsh and all the City departments – including Public Works, the BCYF Centers, Transportation, and Emergency Management – for their response to the storm.
- On Tuesday, November 26, 2019 Chair Loconto and the Superintendent joined Governor Baker, Mayor Walsh, and many of the state's elected officials at The English High School as Gov. Baker signed the Student Opportunity Act funding reform bill. This education finance reform will result in an additional \$1.5 billion in state funding for public K-12 education over the next seven years. Once fully implemented, this legislation could potentially result in \$100 million in additional funding for the district. This is a huge step forward for the state, as it will directly impact municipalities with the largest proportion of high-need students (those in special education, economically disadvantaged students, and English learners). The Superintendent thanked the Boston Teachers Union, teachers, parents, students and hundreds of BPS community members who lobbied for this funding. Special thanks to Headmaster Caitlin Murphy and English's Marching Band and Step Team for making the bill signing a true celebration!

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- The Superintendent has just a few school visits remaining in her community engagement tour. A Youth Town Hall in partnership with the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) and Sociedad Latina will be held on December 5th at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School. The meeting previously scheduled for last night, which was postponed due to snow, will take place at the Henderson Upper School on Tuesday, December 10th at 6 pm.
- You can view a calendar of meetings and school visits, and share your feedback at bostonpublicschools.org/communitytour.
- The Superintendent will share the first draft of her strategic plan next week with the School Committee on December 11th, followed by a month-long public comment period.
- The final version of the strategic plan will be published on February 1st.
- Upcoming Events:
 - BPS Athletics and Roxbury native Michael Bivins (of New Edition and Bell Biv DeVoe) will co-host the 2nd Annual Rep Your School Peace Jamboree Basketball Classic at Madison Park High School on Sunday, December 8th at 12 noon.
 - Next week is Computer Science Education Week, an annual program dedicated to inspiring K-12 students to take an interest in computer science. This year, BPS Technology will host it's first-ever "Tech Talk," an evening to showcase successes, challenges, and best practices around technology and computer science. The Tech Talk will be held in the School Committee Chamber on Thursday, December 12th at 6 p.m. All are welcome.

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Mr. O'Neill thanked the Superintendent for allowing him to join her on several school visits and commended her for visiting every BPS school, saying that the visits will help to inform her strategic plan. Mr. Loconto thanked Ms. Robinson for representing the Committee at many of the community engagement tour events.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Leidy Quiceno, outreach director, Educators for Excellence, testified in favor of increasing funding to expand restorative justices practices.

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David Noiles, director, Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Project, testified in favor of preserving the green space at the McCormack Middle School, as well as expanding restorative justice practices.

Christie Gibson, parent, Quincy Elementary School, and member, Citywide Parent Council, testified in favor of expanding restorative justice practices.

David Martinez, member, Educators for Excellence, read testimony on behalf of Kristabel Stark, researcher at Boston University, in favor of expanding restorative justice practices.

Savannah Lodge Scharff, educator, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, testified in favor of expanding restorative justice practices.

Ivelisse Caraballo, former BPS parent, and member, Collaborative Parent Leadership Action Network (CPLAN), testified in favor of expanding restorative justice practices.

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the achievement gap.

Mr. Loconto encouraged anyone interested in restorative justice to consider joining the district's Code of Conduct Advisory Committee (COCAC) and to contact him or Ms. Sullivan for more information.

ACTION ITEMS

Mr. Loconto noted that Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School has slightly revised its proposed enrollment policy in response to a suggestion by Ms. Reyes to have the enrollment application translated into the City's nine major languages.

Ms. Robinson thanked Hakim Harris, co-chair of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School (DSNCS) Governing Board, for his enlightening presentation at the November 20, 2019 Committee meeting.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a Memorandum of Understanding Type A Agreement between the Boston Public Schools and Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School's Board of Trustees.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School's Enrollment Policy.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School's 2017-2022 Accountability Plan.

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Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a Memorandum of Agreement between the Boston Plan for Excellence and the Board of Trustees of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School of Boston.

Mr. O’Neill apologized to the King K-8 School community for an earlier comment in which he mistakenly suggested that the school had been closed and the facility reopened as home to the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School. He had been referring to the former Emerson School.

REPORTS

Financial Update – Chief Financial Officer Nate Kuder presented a report looking back on Fiscal Year (FY) 19, along with an update on the current year’s budget, FY20, and a preview of the FY21 recommended budget, which will be presented to the School Committee on February 5, 2020.

BPS ended FY19 within budget for the 29th consecutive year. The district’s FY20 investments include:

- Increased access to Pre-K through community-based partners
- Provided M7 MBTA passes to all 7-12 BPS, charter, private-parochial students living in Boston attending school in Boston to ride the T for free, seven days a week
- Expanding exam school access and brought ISEE into the classroom
- Expanded Becoming A Man program
- Doubled the funding available for school security upgrades consisting of multiple work streams: classroom door locks, camera systems, and public address systems
- Reduced waitlists and filled classrooms through improved service at Welcome Centers and automated waitlist calls. Welcome Services decreased waitlists by more than 600 students when comparing October 2019 to October 2018.

As part of its commitment to transparency and community engagement, BPS has launched a new web tool where stakeholders can explore the budget proposal www.bostonpublicschools.org/explorebudget.

A number of expenses in FY20 are higher than expected:

- Transportation
- Food & Nutrition Services
- Special Education
- Long-term Leave

In addition, FY20 federal entitlement grants came in \$1.065 million below projection. The District continues to monitor salaries and non-personnel spending to offset those items. Mr. Kuder expressed confidence that the district will close FY20 on budget.

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The Superintendent will present her preliminary FY21 budget recommendation to the School Committee on February 5, 2020. The budget proposal will be aligned with the district's Opportunity and Achievement Gaps policy, emerging themes from the Superintendent's listening tour, and the School Committee's Strategic Goals.

Early work on the budget proposal has identified four strategies:

1. Take a bold, tiered approach to improve performance in the highest need schools
2. Ensure equitable, rigorous, and inclusive liberal arts education to ensure all students succeed
3. Investments in technology and data systems to accelerate student learning and accountability
4. Make smart investments in central operations that improve performance and BPS customer experience

BPS is facing a number of challenges that will play out during budget season, such as declining enrollment and rising student need, as well as a call to action to intervene in the lowest performing schools. Investments will be prioritized based on the demonstrated ability to improve outcomes for students with the greatest needs. To ensure that school budgets are equitable, the district will focus is on addressing the core elements of a rigorous and equitable liberal arts education; developing a tiered approach to accountability for results through support and collaboration; and basing decisions on student needs.

BPS enrollment declined for the third year in a row, dropping by 1,059 students compared to October of last year. Since FY17, enrollment has declined 2,910 students (5.2%). This is the first multi-year enrollment decline since Weighted Student Funding (WSF) was implemented. Grades K2 to 5 enrollment declined by 800 students compared to October of last year, a 1,700 student decline since FY18. Total K2 to 5 enrollment has declined by 2,056 students (8%) over the last three years. Enrollment in grades 6 to 8 remained steady since last October. Middle grades enrollment should remain stable next year, but could start to decline in the following year as smaller cohorts enter grade 6. This trend is expected to shift as BPS adds more K-6 elementary schools. Grade 9 to 12 enrollment has declined by 1,171 students (6.8%) over the last three years, as historically small cohorts have continued to move through high school grades. High school enrollment should begin to stabilize next year, as one of the relatively large cohorts exits grade 12. There has been a decline in both the city's school-age population and the BPS capture rate. From FY14-FY19, Black enrollment in BPS declined by 1,433 students (7.8%), while the number of Latinx students in grades K2 to 5 declined by 2,087 students, a decrease of 17.2%.

Ms. Reyes requested that BPS partner with BSAC to sponsor and publicize an FY21 budget forum for students. Mr. Kuder expressed support for the idea.

Dr. Rivera asked about the decline in federal entitlement grants, which Mr. Kuder characterized as relatively minor, and attributed to the imprecision of the district's estimates. Dr. Rivera

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requested additional data on enrollment trends among English Language Learners, which the Superintendent agreed to provide.

Mr. O'Neill said that the leadership of the Council of Great City Schools is cautiously optimistic that there may be increases to Title I funding, though less optimistic about the possibility of seeing increases to other federal entitlement grants.

Ms. Robinson said that a larger conversation is needed to discuss enrollment practices and equitable funding. Mr. Kuder discussed the district's use of soft landings and said that BuildBPS will address where the district places programs. Ms. Robinson suggested that the district consider providing a baseline budget for all schools, then use the Weighted Student Funding formula to support additional needs.

Mr. O'Neill asked clarifying questions about cost overruns in FY20, which were answered by Mr. Kuder. He expressed concern about the decline in K2 enrollment. Mr. Kuder said that BPS is working with the Boston Planning and Development Agency to better understand population trends. Mr. O'Neill said that more analysis is needed in order to better understand the enrollment trends and provide the resources to make BPS the first choice among Boston families.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila suggested that the district offer exit surveys to better track and understand why families un-enroll from the BPS. She expressed concern about the high cost of housing in Boston and discussed her personal experience with the complexities of the BPS student assignment system and wait list process. She suggested that the district explore creative marketing opportunities.

Mr. Tran asked clarifying questions about FY20 long-term leave costs and cost overruns for special education services, all of which were answered by Mr. Kuder, who said that BPS spends more on special education services than all other comparable districts in Massachusetts. Mr. Tran expressed support for expanding restorative justice practices.

Mr. Loconto encouraged people to explore the online budget tracker at www.bostonpublicschools.org/explorebudget. He asked the Superintendent to update the Committee on the results of the district's investments in expanding access to the Exam School Initiative and ISEE testing. The Superintendent agreed to follow up when more information becomes available. Mr. Loconto thanked the Office of Welcome Services for making improvements to the wait list process that have reduced wait times. He asked about the initial findings from the transportation expert hired earlier this school year. The Superintendent said that early findings indicate a complex problems that will require hard decisions. Mr. Loconto asked Mr. Kuder to provide more clarity on the implications for BPS when Massachusetts begins mandating paid family and medical leave for its workers, starting January 1, 2021. Mr. Kuder said that BPS will work with the City to more fully understand the implications.

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Ms. Robinson requested attrition rates for homeless students who are placed in temporary housing out of the district. Mr. Kuder said that the district will follow up with more information, noting that BPS provides transportation for those students with transportation.

The Superintendent thanked the planning teams from the offices of finance and enrollment for their hard work. She closed by saying that a budget is a reflection of one's core values, and that BPS is committed to addressing student needs.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

No speakers.


NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Robinson requested that the School Committee hold a discussion about teacher training and support. Mr. Loconto praised the district's partnership with the Boston Teacher's Union related to professional development, and said that a presentation by the Office of Human Capital scheduled for January 29, 2020 will address those topics.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

At approximately 8:20 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn to executive session to discuss collective bargaining strategy related to the Boston Association of School Administrators and Supervisors (BASAS). The Committee did not return to public session.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary