



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REMOTE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

December 15, 2021

The Boston School Committee held a remote meeting on December 15, 2021 at 5 p.m. on Zoom. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee, email feedback@bostonpublicschools.org or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Jeri Robinson; Vice Chairperson Michael O'Neill (joined after roll call); Dr. Hardin Coleman; Ernani DeAraujo; Lorena Lopera (joined after roll call); Rafaela Polanco Garcia; Quoc Tran (departed during reports); and Alternative Student Representative Tiffany Luo.

School Committee Members Absent: Student Representative Xyra Mercer.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Approval of Minutes: December 1, 2021 School Committee Meeting

Memo: Edward M. Kennedy (EMK) Academy of Health Careers Charter Amendments, School Year (SY) 2018-2023: Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) A and B; and Accountability Plan

EMK Charter Amendment DESE Cover Sheet

EMK Charter Amendment Letter of Request to DESE

EMK Charter Amendment PowerPoint Presentation

EMK Charter Amendment Supporting Documents with BTU Certification

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

December 15, 2021

EMK 2021 21 Charter Amendment Request Equity Impact Statement

Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter Amendments, SY 2018-2023: MOUs A and B; and
Accountability Plan

BDEA Memorandum of Understanding A

BDEA Memorandum of Understanding B

BDEA Accountability Plan

Equity Impact Statement BDEA Charter Amendments

BuildBPS Update, October 27, 2021

Office of Equity Annual Report

Office of Equity Memo

Office of Equity School Committee PowerPoint

Office of Equity Equity Impact Statement

Financial Update

Financial Update Cover Letter

Financial Update Equity Impact Statement

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Jeri Robinson called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. Mr. O'Neill and Ms. Lopera joined the meeting after roll call. All other members were present.

Ms. Robinson said that tonight's meeting was being streamed live on Zoom. It will be rebroadcast on Boston City TV. It will also be posted at bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee and on YouTube. She announced that simultaneous interpretation services were available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cabo Verdean, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin and American Sign Language (ASL). The interpreters introduced themselves and gave instructions in their native language on how to access simultaneous interpretation by changing the Zoom channel. Translated meeting documents were posted at www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee prior to the start of the meeting.

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

December 15, 2021

Ms. Robinson announced that the terms of Committee members Dr. Hardin Coleman and Ernani DeAraujo will expire in January and both have decided not to seek reappointment. She thanked them for their service and commitment to improving student outcomes.

During his tenure, Dr. Coleman served as the Committee's Vice Chair; co-chair of the Mayor's External Advisory Committee on Improving School Choice; co-chair of the School Quality Work Group; co-chair of the Superintendent Search Committee; and a member of the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force. Mr. DeAraujo served as co-chair of the English Language Learners Task Force.

Dr. Coleman spoke about the important role that the Committee plays in hiring and evaluating the Superintendent. He said that it has been his honor to serve alongside Chair Robinson and particularly Vice Chair O'Neill, whom he described as a great civic leader. Mr. DeAraujo thanked his fellow members, Superintendent and district staff for their support, adding that he looks forward to supporting the district in a different capacity.

Mr. O'Neill thanked Mr. DeAraujo and Dr. Coleman for their service.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Approved – On roll call, the Committee approved the minutes of the December 1, 2021 meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

As prepared for delivery.

Thank you, Madame Chair, and thank you all for joining us tonight. Tonight marks our last School Committee meeting of the year. We have endured so much over the past calendar year. There have been some difficulties, challenges and trials; but there have also been some wins, areas of progress and certainly, some highlights.

As we embark upon a new year, I would like each of us to reflect. Living and working through a pandemic has been beyond tough. The people we've lost, the plans we've had to delay, and the isolation so many of us feel. We are all reassessing life at this moment and the tremendous change and opportunity in front of us to embrace the things that matter, family, purpose, and friendships. Despite the difficulty, we continue to persevere and work through these uncertain times together. Thank you for being a part of the BPS community. We are always better when we are unified.

I would also like to take a moment and acknowledge the passing of Ronald Johnson, a beloved BPS educator for 47 years. Mr. Johnson began his teaching career in 1977 at Charlestown High, and later worked at Boston Trade, Dorchester High School, and The Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School. He became a guidance counselor in 1997 first at Boston High and finished his career at Boston Community Leadership Academy in Hyde Park. Resistant to retirement because

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

December 15, 2021

of the love of his work, Ron finally retired on November 30, 2020. Ron dedicated his life to our students. He was known to write recommendations with painstaking care, and to give glowing remarks about the success of former students he encountered outside of school hours. He was the quintessential embodiment of a servant leader. BPS is incredibly grateful for his commitment to bettering the lives of our students and for his service to the district. Ron will be missed, but he will also be remembered for the indelible legacy he left through his impression on his colleagues and students. Thank you Ron, for everything.

I will now begin my report with a few district highlights and then share a few updates. This fall, students at the Boston International Newcomers Academy, also known as BINCA, made up of about 500 recent immigrants, were invited to take part in York Athletics' *Blank Canvas* shoe design competition. Before the contest, York Athletics surveyed the students to see what they knew about creativity careers like marketing and shoe design. Many had never directly experienced a career in marketing or had awareness that this was something they could pursue as a career. After the contest, a new survey found awareness nearly doubled, bringing newfound interest in marketing and advertising-related careers among the students.

Jean Dario, a BINCA junior who had never painted anything before, drew a landscape of his native country, Haiti for the competition. And much to Jean's surprise, he won the competition. The winning design inspired the "Frank by Jean Dario" sneaker. Jean now sees a new career path for himself. He said "Art is in my heart now. I would like to do more and learn more about art in the future". And with a kickstart like this, his future is bright. The presale for [Jean's shoes](#) has already ended, but you can still view and purchase the sneakers at yorkathleticsmfg.com and by searching "The Frank Trainer". Profits from the presales placed by December 12 will go towards his college education. This story is a testament to the power of the arts, creativity and the willingness to try something new despite your perceived ability or experience. We should all embody the courage that Jean has shown in our lives. Congratulations Jean!

The holiday season is marked by two, or maybe three things in Boston if you count the snow. Those two things are generosity and need. As blessed as many of us consider ourselves to be, the holiday season can also bring awareness to our community members who may have a specific need. This has been such a tough year, that many of our community members are experiencing some type of insecurity. An additional marker of the holiday season is the willingness to help out and extend a hand when a need arises. And that is exactly what Local 1952, our Boston Custodians Union, did. Last Friday, several members of the Local 1952 Union dropped off 12 boxes of toys for our students. Along with BPS Chief of Schools Corey Harris, I greeted them in the lobby of the Bolling Building to thank them for their kindness. The toys were turned over to Donna Lashus, who leads our Family Liaisons. Donna worked with the Family Liaisons to provide toys to families experiencing housing insecurity and families who had contacted the school seeking support to get gifts for their children. Every day our custodians open up our schools, keep them clean and safe and close them when we are all gone. They remove our snow so we don't fall and they greet our students in the hall as role models. I am so proud of our custodial team in BPS. They have gone above and beyond these past two years and never a complaint once. And this expression of generosity is just another way they show up every day for our students.

December 15, 2021

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the operational challenges we still face as this pandemic continues to be a part of our daily lives. It was emphasized at the beginning of the Pandemic that the number of COVID cases was the metric to watch. We had limited testing at the time and still didn't have vaccines so if someone caught COVID the severity of their case was unpredictable. Collectively, we needed to do everything in our power to stop the spread and limit the number of cases as much as possible. This is why we closed schools citywide. It's why we all stayed home as much as we could. It's why we kept our distance, wore our masks and washed our hands if we did go out. It was a frightening time when so much was unknown.

Former Chief Marty Martinez said to me at the beginning of this school year that we are now in the phase of learning to live with COVID. It will continue to be a part of our daily lives and we must all continue to do our part to protect ourselves and each other by wearing masks, regular testing and getting vaccinated as soon as possible, and we must use metrics that help us not only understand the number of cases, but the severity of those cases, like our hospitalization rate. We are in a much different place than we were at the beginning of the pandemic, we've learned a lot and we know how important it is for our students to be back in our classrooms learning in person. As we continue to navigate this phase of the pandemic I know there is still a lot of anxiety and trauma many of us are working through.

Our priority is to always keep our students and staff safe. It's why we've taken a number of steps that make schools look a bit different than years past. We wear our masks, we have air purifiers in every classroom, we wash our hands frequently and have sanitizing stations, and we've hosted numerous vaccine clinics at our schools.

One of the important mitigation tools we've spoken about and promised families and staff we would have, is access to weekly pool testing provided by the State. I am grateful that the state acknowledged how important regular testing is and provided this resource, but I also feel and share the frustrations of our families, students and staff with the execution of the testing program. DESE pool testing has not met the expectations of what was promised. We've had numerous formal calls and many more informal conversations to discuss our concerns and problem solve together. I also want to acknowledge that contact tracing hasn't been happening fast enough in all cases. As a district, we are responsible for contact tracing. We have hired an outside vendor to support our contact tracing because as a district this large it wasn't manageable on our own. There have been delays and I have expressed firmly to our vendor that this is unacceptable and needs to improve. My team has been in constant communication with them and setting expectations.

I know everyone is trying and working very hard to ensure we have proper weekly testing at every school. We will continue to work with the state to problem solve, and today I shared with school leaders and families some of the adjustments we're making, funded by a \$3M dollar increase, which includes but is not limited to:

- Adding 27 additional contact tracers to the district

Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom

December 15, 2021

- Contracting with a nurse staffing agency (Aveanna) to provide 10 additional nurses to fill vacancies and add needed capacity in schools
- Streamlining the steps to initiate Test and Stay by ensuring consistency between our digital platforms, Permission Click and Crush the Curve, and granting schools the opportunity to communicate close contacts directly to CIC.

The health and safety of our students is a top priority, and the district is committed to COVID prevention and mitigation efforts. We meet daily with the Boston Public Health Commission to review cases and our COVID protocols. I want to thank Dr. Sari Sanchez from the Health Commission who has formally joined us at BPS as part of our COVID management team, as we continue to respond to this pandemic. Managing a health crisis and keeping school open is challenging, it is especially difficult given the current surge we are seeing and expect as we return from the holiday break. I wish we could say we are coming out of this, but it will be a bit more challenging the next several months and we need everyone to get vaccinated, heed public health official advice and avoid going out when sick. I can't say it enough. It is so important for our continued ability to keep our classrooms open that we all

I want to shift and talk a bit about school safety. It remains our goal as a district to ensure that all students and staff feel safe when they are in our schools and that as leadership we are doing all we can to support that goal. Schools develop and finalize safety plans each year that direct how they respond to all issues that might arise in schools. These are reviewed annually and reported to DESE every three years. Deputy Superintendent Sam DePina and his team have established a new internal School Safety Committee, a cross-department group that will review these plans and also take a whole-district look at overall safety procedures, including a full run-down of security cameras, metal detectors, and other visual deterrents that are strategically deployed to schools in partnership with leadership. The committee is also reviewing the systems of support we have in place to work with students and staff in response to unfortunate incidents and also to ensure proper protocols are followed to inform communities as warranted.

The task of this group is to:

- Complete a review of safety materials in buildings (cameras, alarms, external lighting, etc.)
- Survey school leaders on their concerns
- Determine short and long term priorities to address concerns identified
- Create communication streams to keep key stakeholders informed

I believe we can only be successful if we approach this work in partnership and that includes all who are involved: our students and their families, teachers and staff, the central office, union partners, the Boston Police Department, and our city at large. We are strongest when we are united and I would encourage everyone to work together, talk to each other, and stay committed to taking steps to ensure everyone's safety in our schools: for our students, staff, families, and all community members.

At the last School Committee meeting, there were several questions from members during the OHC update, and I committed to bringing additional data during this week's superintendent's report. This slide shows the diversity of staff, separated by job code, and specifically displays

Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom

December 15, 2021

data for nurses, school psychologists, school social workers and special education teachers. As you can see, our school social workers have the greatest racial parity to our student body. This slide shows a breakdown of teacher licensure. We have approximately 345 educators on an emergency license and 162 educators hired on a license waiver. We are already proactively reaching out to these educators to try to prepare them for passing the MTEL. While this challenge may be larger than some years, due to the emergency licenses, we have always had a disproportionate number of black and latinx educators who we hired on waivers. This has been an important part of our strategy to diversify the workforce, because we know that there are not enough licensed educators of color coming out of educator prep programs statewide. And while this does lead to non-renewals of some of these educators, we have a strong track record of rehiring the vast majority of these folks, and we have programs in place to support their journey towards licensure.

As a part of the BuildBPS master plan, the district is continuing to reconfigure schools towards more clear and predictable pathways for students as passed by the Boston School Committee. Our goal is to increase the number of students making only one transition during their K-12 experience by reconfiguring more pre-K-6 elementary schools and 7-12 secondary schools while preserving strong K-8/9-12 options for families. That being said, fifteen schools will expand from K-5 to K-6 - which includes the Blackstone, Sumner, and Mendell Schools - and one school, English High School, will expand from 9-12 to 7-12 in September 2022. We shared with Families last week the space solution for their school. The Sumner and Blackstone schools are using BCYF community centers for the additional classrooms needed and the Mendell School will be utilizing space at the Egleston Square YMCA just down the road. In the upcoming weeks the BuildBPS team will work alongside school leaders and their school teams to determine programming, staffing, and resources needed to make these spaces a success. We will also be finalizing which grades will be using this expanded space and we will go back to the school communities in February with an update. We are also committed to continuing to assess other options for the fall of 2023, to create a solution that fits the needs of each school community. I want to thank our school leaders, our community partners, the YMCA and BCYF, our community members and our families for working in partnership with the district to find resolutions for each school community so that students have the ability to experience grade 6 in their current schools. And many thanks to the Finance, BuildBPS, Operations, and Facilities teams for working to find solutions for our schools to create the predictable pathways our students need and deserve.

As members will recall, we have received a prospectus proposal to open an innovation school in what is currently Charlestown High School. Per the prospectus proposal regulations, I must convene a screening committee, which includes the Superintendent or my designee, Chair of the Boston School Committee or their designee and the President of the Boston Teachers Union or their designee, within 30 days of receiving the prospectus. The screening committee is scheduled to convene next week to consider the proposal. I will inform the community and School Committee on further updates. I will also be sure that all communities impacted by any changes to Charlestown High School are consulted and engaged and that we engage also with educators, SpedPac and our EL Task Force as part of any planning for Charlestown HS.

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

December 15, 2021

Tonight we say goodbye to two School Committee members: Dr. Hardin Coleman and Ernani DeAraujo. Mr. DeAraujo has made an impact on the School Committee in the short time he's been with us. A graduate of the Boston Public Schools and a parent, Mr. DeAraujo understands first-hand the experiences of many of our students and their families. We know he will continue to advocate for children and families through his work at the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center and the many other organizations he works with.

Dr. Coleman was first appointed to the Boston School Committee in 2013. He spent his professional career as an educator, counselor, scholar and an administrator. Dr. Coleman is widely considered to be an expert in the field of education, as his work is widely respected and recognized. We are grateful for his work on the School Committee, especially with my Superintendent's evaluation. Dr. Coleman is also the chair of the School Quality working group. I appreciate his focus on data and outcomes and for making the process seamless. I am glad he will not be too far away over at Boston University. I know he will continue to be a valued thought partner and collaborator.

In other city news, today marked the last City Council meeting for four outgoing Boston City Councilors:

- At-Large City Councilor Annessa Essaibi-George
- District 4 City Councilor Andrea Campbell
- District 6 City Councilor Matt O'Malley
- And City Council President and District 7 City Councilor Kim Janey

I want to thank the Councilors for their steadfast dedication to the people of Boston. This group broke new ground, smashed a few ceilings, and brought laser-focus to some of the most important issues facing our city today. I am grateful for their collaboration during my tenure as Superintendent, especially during the challenges of the past two years. I wish them all the best as they finish out their final weeks on the City Council. I look forward to seeing what they do next. I also want to take a moment to congratulate District 1 City Councilor Lydia Edwards on her victory in yesterday's special primary election for the 1st Suffolk and Middlesex Senate seat. I wish her luck as she heads into the final election next month. And last but certainly not least, I would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season. As we approach this season of family, generosity and renewal, I hope that we do not lose sight of the safety measures that will keep each of us and our loved ones safe. Please, continue to get vaccinated; including your booster shot, wear your masks, wash your hands regularly and social distance when necessary. I also urge you to lean into this time of respite, as we look to recharge on the cusp of a new year. To those who celebrate, I wish you a Merry Christmas, a Happy Kwanzaa, and a Happy Three Kings Day. I would also like to wish our wonderful students, incredible school based staff and outstanding educators an enjoyable winter break. We can't wait to see you back in action on January 4. Thank you for everything. I will see you for the next regular School Committee meeting on January 12, 2022. Have a Happy New Year! And that is my Superintendent's Report for this evening.

Mr. DeAraujo thanked the district for investing in contact tracing and staffing.

December 15, 2021

Ms. Robinson thanked Local 1952 Union for donating toys to students. She asked about other opportunities to make holiday donations to BPS families. The Superintendent encouraged people to contact their local school or call BPS at (617) 635-9000.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent’s Report.

REPORT

Edward M. Kennedy Academy of Health Careers Charter Amendments, School Year (SY) 2018-2023: Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) A and B; and Accountability Plan -

Diane Bassett, Planning and Development Consultant, Edward M. Kennedy (EMK) Academy for Health Careers, requested the Committee’s approval to submit to the DESE Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education a request to amend EMK’s charter. The amendment request includes two elements: the EMK Accountability Plan; and the Memoranda of Understanding between EMK, BPS and BTU. Both documents govern the 2018-2023 charter term. The accountability plan outlines goals and measures connected to the key design elements of the school. It was developed by EMK leaders, staff, students, families, and trustees and has been the basis for annual reporting to DESE each year of the charter term. It has already received preliminary approval from the DESE charter school office. The MOUs detail the fiscal and programmatic relationship between EMK, BPS and BTU, and were developed using existing templates with extensive guidance and support from BPS legal counsel. They were approved and executed by all parties following the affirmative vote of the Boston School Committee in September 2018. No changes have been made to either document. The charter amendment request is the administrative mechanism to secure formal DESE approval of the documents. Submission of the charter amendment request requires action from the EMK Board of Trustees (November 2021), the Boston Teachers Union (November 2021), and the Boston School Committee.

Mr. O’Neill asked why the process was delayed. Ms. Bassett explained that there was a delay by EMK’s Board of Trustees, chaired by Elmer Freeman. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the charter requests later this evening.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Deirdre Manning, Dorchester resident, Henderson Inclusion Upper School parent, testified regarding COVID health and safety concerns.
- Andrew Iliff, Jamaica Plain resident, Mission Hill K-8 School and Boston Latin Academy parent, testified regarding the Mission Hill School’s Emergency Review.
- Eugenia Corbo, East Boston resident, BPS parent, testified in favor of expanding dual language opportunities.

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

December 15, 2021

- Michael Heichman, Dorchester resident, Boston Education Justice Alliance (BEJA) member, testified regarding collective bargaining, the Boston Student Advisory Council and COVID health and safety.
- Tom McKeever, not a Boston resident, exclusive bargaining agent testified regarding safety concerns at schools.
- Neal O'Brien, Arlington resident, exclusive bargaining agent, testified regarding safety concerns at schools.
- Mary Rice, Charlestown resident, Eliot K-8 Innovation School parent, testified regarding exam school admissions.
- Betsy Yoshimura, East Boston resident, Mario Umana Academy parent, testified in favor of adding another K1 classroom at the school.
- Shery Keleher, Charlestown resident, BPS parent, testified regarding several education-related issues.
- Lauren Peter, Roslindale resident, Sumner Elementary School parent, testified regarding the closure of the Irving Middle School.
- Marie Mercurio, Jamaica Plain resident, Boston Latin School and Curley K-8 School parent, testified regarding exam school admissions.
- Sonya Harris, Mattapan resident, BPS parent, testified regarding staffing diversity and exam schools admissions.
- Josette Teneus, Dorchester resident, Charlestown High School teacher, testified with concerns about the Charlestown Innovation and Inclusive High School prospectus.
- Cecil Carey, Jamaica Plain resident, Charlestown High School teacher, testified with concerns about the Charlestown Innovation and Inclusive High School prospectus.
- Michael Terkla, Arlington resident, BPS teacher, testified with concerns about the Charlestown Innovation and Inclusive High School prospectus.
- Sarah Grimmer, Jamaica Plain resident, Charlestown High School teachers, testified with concerns about the Charlestown Innovation and Inclusive High School prospectus.
- Ben Blanco, Jamaica Plain resident, BPS teacher, testified with concerns about the Charlestown Innovation and Inclusive High School prospectus.
- Cole Moran, Cambridge resident, Charlestown High School teachers, testified with concerns about the Charlestown Innovation and Inclusive High School prospectus.
- Kristen McCain, Brookline resident, Charlestown High School teacher, testified with concerns about the Charlestown Innovation and Inclusive High School prospectus.
- Alaa Razeq, not a Boston resident, Charlestown High School teacher, testified with concerns about the Charlestown Innovation and Inclusive High School prospectus.
- Amy Piacitelli, Medford resident, Charlestown High School teacher, testified with concerns about the Charlestown Innovation and Inclusive High School prospectus.

ACTION ITEMS

Approved - On roll call, the Boston School Committee unanimously approved Edward M. Kennedy Academy Charter Amendments, SY 2018-2023: MOUs A and B; and Accountability Plan.

December 15, 2021

Approved - On roll call, the Boston School Committee unanimously approved Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter Amendments, SY 2018-2023: MOUs A and B; and Accountability Plan.

Ms. Lopera asked about the district's preparations for expanding some high schools to grades 7-12. The Superintendent said that the district has added instructional facilitator positions at expanding high schools and is hiring an advanced placement and international baccalaureate coordinator at the district level. BPS is also adding additional resources to support the implementation of MassCore. She said that more information about her academic vision will be shared at a School Committee retreat this winter. Ms. Lopera emphasized the importance of engaging with the community to communicate the many school options that exist. She spoke about the importance of expanding high quality opportunities and suggested creating a comprehensive facilities master plan. The Superintendent affirmed her commitment to working with Mayor Wu and her team to provide students with 21st century facilities.

Dr. Coleman expressed support for grade reconfigurations as part of the district's efforts to reduce transitions.

Ms. Polanco Garcia requested clarification about the future use of the school buildings recommended for closure. The Superintendent clarified that BPS will maintain ownership and repurpose the buildings for use by other BPS school communities.

Mr. O'Neill requested clarity about the future of displaced middle school teachers. The Superintendent said that she hopes to retain them. He briefly reviewed the process by which the Committee came to its decision to phase out middle schools and transition to a district of primarily K-6/7-12 and K-8/9-12 schools in an effort to limit transitions for families. He thanked the Superintendent and her team for working successfully with elementary school communities seeking to add a 6th grade. The Superintendent confirmed that the closed buildings will remain BPS schools.

Ms. Robinson thanked the Superintendent and her team for partnering with the community to find solutions.

Approved - On roll call, the Boston School Committee approved the following school closures, effective June 2022: Washington Irving Middle School, 105 Cummins Highway, Roslindale; Jackson/Mann K-8 School, 40 Armington Street, Allston; and James P. Timilty Middle School, 205 Roxbury Street, Roxbury. Ms. Lopera and Ms. Polanco Garcia abstained. All other members voted yes.

REPORTS

Office of Equity Annual Report, School Year 2020-21 - Assistant Superintendent of Equity Becky Shuster presented the district's annual Office of Equity Report focusing on School Year 2020-21.

December 15, 2021

The Office of Equity aims to ensure BPS is an educational and working environment unimpeded by bias or discrimination, where individuals of all backgrounds and experiences are welcomed, included, encouraged, and can succeed and flourish. Its key priorities are providing a prompt, effective response to all reports of possible bias-based or sexual misconduct, and requests for disability, pregnancy, and religious accommodations; conducting training and education to ensure students and employees are aware of their rights and responsibilities; and partnering to ensure every key decision made by school and central office leaders is held to an equity lens, particularly racial equity.

In School Year 2020-21, the Office of Equity

- Conducted and administered 103 employee trainings
- Managed 24/7 Respect program to educate students how to prevent and address bias-based and sexual misconduct in person, by text, and online
- Responded to over 1,200 formal employee, student, and family concerns

Office of Equity Goals: SY 2021-22

- In partnership with Office of Opportunity Gaps and Mayor's Office on Resiliency and Racial Equity, rollout Racial Equity and Leadership Training
- Ensure sufficient capacity to support schools promptly and effectively
 - Responding to incidents and accommodation requests
 - Providing LGBTQ+ student support

Mr. O'Neill noted that the number of formal investigations has decreased and asked about the impact of remote learning on equity issues. Ms. Shuster spoke about the challenges of tracking trends and measuring progress, particularly after a period of extended remote learning and social isolation. Mr. Shuster explained the role of the office, which is to conduct investigations and make recommendations, as well as track patterns of behavior.

Ms. Lopera asked clarifying questions and asked if the Office of Equity tracks its satisfaction rate. Ms. Shuster explained that the Director of Compliance and Title IX Coordinator listens to all voices and makes objective recommendations.

Ms. Robinson asked what schools are seeing impact or not. Ms. Shuster explained that the work is not linear or cumulative. She said that schools that see the most growth over time are the schools with the lowest turnover and a consistent leader who has really made a personal commitment to continuously learn.

Dr. Grandson said that BPS plans to introduce a badging process to recognize equity champions.

Financial Update - Chief Financial Officer Nate Kuder presented an update on financial outcomes of Fiscal Year 2021, which ended June 30, 2021; an update on the financial situation of the current Fiscal Year (FY 2022) and an update on new investments reflected in the current

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

December 15, 2021

budget; and a preview of the district's Fiscal Year 2023 budget plan.

BPS ended the Fiscal Year 2021 within budget for the 31st consecutive year with a total balance on General funds of \$25,039. The main areas of difference from our adopted budget were:

- Areas of higher than originally expected costs:
 - Food Services
 - Employee Severance
 - Employee Salaries

- Areas where BPS identified operational savings and re-prioritized available funds:
 - Workers Compensation
 - Contracted Services
 - Utilities
 - Health Insurance

FY22 Budget & Investment Update

Mr. Kuder expressed confidence in the district's ability to end Fiscal Year 2022 on budget

- Areas of higher than originally expected costs:
 - Transportation - Higher costs due to operating with COVID protocols
 - Food Services - High vacancy rate forcing us to rely more on pre-plated meals than onsite preparation. Inflationary pressure on food prices.
 - Utilities - Likely due to higher than expected commodity prices, but analysis is continuing

- Areas with lower than expected costs:
 - Salaries - Due to a higher vacancy rate than in prior years
 - Health Insurance - In part due to higher vacancy rate

FY22 Investments are on track with planning. The district invested in new positions that were both aligned to the strategic plan and critical to support BPS' Return | Recover | Reimagine response to the pandemic:

- Custodians (20 FTE) - We had 90 "one-person" day-staffed buildings. Based on enrollment data and building square footage, 20 of these 90 greatly benefited from an additional full-time day position.
- Family liaisons (78.5 FTE) - 83% of new staff are Black or Latinx. They are working on efforts to decrease chronic absenteeism, increase student engagement, and support students in their transition back to in-person learning.

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

December 15, 2021

● Social workers (84 FTE) - 78% of new staff are Black or Latinx. Having a social worker at every school has:

- Strengthened its school-based crisis response teams who are mitigating crises on a daily basis.
- Provided ongoing support to families and students to address critical acute needs
- Supported school staff during a most challenging school year
- Enabled the district to better understand how to operationalize antiracism in our schools, through their work on Student Support Teams.
- Increased use of circles to advance community building and healing across school communities as partners in the Restorative Justice work, trained by our RJ Office.

FY23 Budget Plan Update

As Boston Public Schools prepares to enter the FY23 budget season, BPS is incredibly fortunate to have the leadership of Mayor Wu and her administration. This budget will be developed in the context of enrollment decline concentrated in elementary grades. We see a connection between declining enrollment and schools that serve a higher percentage of Black and Latinx youth. We will continue to support schools with declining enrollment on top of weighted student funding and will follow similar guidelines from FY22.

Schools will be asked to:

- Reduce classrooms and adjust positions (teachers and paras)
- Review specialists to determine if/when to reduce the overall FTE
- Pay for the cost of actual salary increase (applies to autonomous schools that budgets on actual salaries)
- Identify trade offs to pay for any new positions or programs schools want to create outside of District investments.

Schools are not asked to:

- Cut positions or programs outside of direct instruction positions in closed classrooms, unless it is related to an actual salary increase as listed above.

The Office of Finance will be working directly with school leaders on budget development for the next two months. The Superintendent will present her preliminary FY23 Budget Proposal to the School Committee on February 2, 2022.

Mr. DeAraujo asked what the financial implications will be when the labor force returns. Mr. Kuder said that the goal is to be fully staffed and that it would not create a financial risk. Mr. DeAraujo asked about the discrepancy between the enrollment figures used by DESE and BPS. Mr. Kuder explained that DESE reports Horace Mann charter schools separately. He said that BPS projects enrollment according to a “high watermark” - the total number of students that BPS expects to serve in any given grade program over the year. Mr. DeAraujo asked about the

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

December 15, 2021

projected increase in enrollment at some high schools. Mr. Kuder spoke about the various sizes of the cohorts moving through the system.

Dr. Coleman asked about the budget process at the school level. Deputy Chief Financial Officer David Bloom said that school leaders receive their budgets in December. Budget Director Miriam Rubin then conducts trainings with school site councils, which review and comment on the budget and vote on the discretionary portion of the budget as outlined in the BTU contract. The Superintendent said school leaders are expected to review the plans with their school-based equity round tables.

Ms. Polanco Garcia asked about parent engagement. She expressed concern about families experiencing homelessness. Mr. Kuder spoke about the district's investments in social workers and said that BPS provides additional support to schools with a significant population of students experiencing homelessness.

Mr. DeAraujo asked about the funding timeline for ESSER. Chief Accountability Office Eva Mitchell reviewed the process for the three rounds of funding. Mr. D requested a data slide on allocations by school.

Ms. Lopera requested a school-by-school status report on ESSER funding.

Ms. Robinson asked about the decline in early childhood enrollment. Mr. Kuder said that the number of school-aged children is declining across all sectors. In order to regain total enrollment, BPS would have to regain its capture rate, which is impacted by immigration and housing costs. The Superintendent said that she has heard clearly from families that they need more pre-k programs and before and after school programs.

Ms. Lopera expressed concern about the projected notable enrollment shifts.

Ms. Luo spoke about the challenges related to the lack of preschool programs. Mr. Kuder spoke about the complications of perceptions of access.

Ms. Robinson spoke about the challenges of providing families with choice and offering high quality options.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting
Zoom**

December 15, 2021

Mr. DeAraujo proposed that the Committee create a policy on native language instruction. Ms. Robinson expressed support for the proposal, adding that in recent years the district has added dual language programs in Haitian Creole and Vietnamese.

ADJOURN

At approximately 10 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary