



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

December 17, 2015

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on December 17, 2015 at 5:30 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; Meg Campbell; Michael Loconto; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; and student representative Savina Tapia.

School Committee Members Absent: Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman and Dr. Miren Uriarte.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

School Committee Meeting Minutes: December 9, 2015

Grant for Approval: Early Childhood Special Education Entitlement Grant 262 - \$483,697

International Travel Request: Boston Latin School: Germany, Poland, and Czech Republic, April 13-24, 2016

BPS Financial Context and FY17 Planning

Behavioral Emergency: Update of Physical Restraint Policy

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O'Neill led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. O'Neill announced that the Committee would adjourn to executive session to discuss collective bargaining strategy related to the Boston Teachers Union. He explained that having the discussion in an open meeting could have a detrimental effect on the Committee's bargaining position. He added the Committee would return to public session at approximately 6 p.m.

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Approved – By roll call, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to executive session.

The Committee returned to public session at 6:10 p.m.

CITATIONS

The Committee presented Erika Giampietro, special assistant to the Superintendent, with a citation from the Council of Great City Schools in recognition of her completion of the Council's Urban School Executives Program.

The Committee also presented a citation to Ms. Campbell, who is ending her four-year term and will not seek reappointment. Mr. O'Neill thanked Ms. Campbell for her leadership on the External Advisory Committee on School Choice and the School Quality Working Group, as well as her valuable expertise on facilities matters. Ms. Campbell received a standing ovation from the audience and thanked the late Mayor Menino for her appointment.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the December 9, 2015 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

There were several electronic messages of a threatening nature made to several school districts across the country this week. On Tuesday, Mayor Walsh, Police Commissioner Evans, and the Superintendent reassured the public that there were no credible threats against the Boston Public Schools. BPS leaders are working cross-functionally with the Boston Police Department, Mayor's public safety team, and Boston School Police on pro-active steps to make sure all students are safe.

Yesterday, the Superintendent had the honor of helping represent Boston at the White House to discuss the issue of chronic absenteeism as part of President Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative. Boston was one of 10 cities that participated in the event. The initiative is a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to providing high-need students with additional supports to help with high school and post-secondary success. BPS officials studied this issue as it related to student achievement overall, incorporating the latest research and best practices. They participated in inter-city teams, and collaborated on work that needs to happen locally and nationally. A particular focus was around evidence-based mentoring to address issues of school failure, discipline issues, and drop-outs. The Superintendent thanked school leaders Craig Martin (Perkins Elementary School), Lindsa McIntyre (Jeremiah E. Burke High School), and Ligia Noriega (The English High School), for joining the Boston delegation.

Approximately 30 BPS schools participated in the second annual BPS Race to Recycle competition, which was a great way to motivate students and staff to recycle more, and trash less! Many schools used this as an opportunity to kick-start their recycling programs, form

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student “Green Teams,” and engage in friendly competition with the goal of being a *Recycling Rockstar* of the district. The winner of this year’s *Ultimate BPS Rockstar Recycler* prize was the Carter Development Center. Schools that won in other categories are: Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers, the Rafael Hernandez K-8 School, John F. Kennedy Elementary School, and Baldwin Early Learning Pilot Academy.

The Superintendent thanked the Wallace Foundation, which generously provided the Boston Public Schools with a \$1.5 million grant to support arts education. These funds will support the BPS Arts Expansion Initiative, and is an excellent model of a true public/private partnership that is benefiting students. The grant will allow EdVestors and BPS to implement new approaches to arts instruction, curriculum and professional development for teachers, partnership coordination, and student and family engagement.

The Superintendent also thanked Skanska U.S.A. for making a \$10,000 donation yesterday to Boston Arts Academy (BAA). Mayor Walsh attended the event, along with Senior Deputy Superintendent Barbara Deane-Williams, BAA Headmaster Anne Clark; Emerson College President and BAA Trustees Chair Lee Pelton.

In January, Superintendent Chang will present an update on his 100-Day Plan to the School Committee.

Ms. Jeri Robinson praised Countdown to Kindergarten for publishing its new brochure in eight languages, calling it a helpful resource for families.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Carolyn Kain, chair, Boston Special Parent Advisory Council (SpedPac), said that SpedPac looks forward to reviewing and providing feedback on the district’s physical restraint policy proposal. She also expressed concern about budget projections for the Henderson Inclusion K-12 School.

John Mudd, advocate, thanked Ms. Campbell for her service.

ACTION ITEM

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent a grant for approval in the amount of \$483,697.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Boston Latin School to travel to Germany, Poland, and Czech Republic from April 13-24, 2016.

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REPORTS

BPS Financial Context and FY17 Planning – Executive Director of School Finance Eleanor Laurans, together with Deputy Executive Director of School Finance Nathan Kuder, presented an update on the district’s current financial situation and set the stage for the fiscal year 2017 budget recommendation, which the Superintendent will formally present to the Committee on February 3, 2016.

Ms. Laurans explained that BPS has structural deficit, stemming from stagnant state funding and the rising cost of doing business. She noted that the City has increased its contribution to the district by an average of 7.6 percent each year. Superintendent Chang has launched a long-term financial planning team to identify bold solutions and poise the district to be well prepared for FY18.

In order to balance the FY17 budget, the district is considering cutting back or discontinuing some central services and reducing school budgets by \$10 million. These actions would leave the district with a remaining gap of \$5 million. Ms. Laurans noted that these figures exclude potential future contract costs (i.e. collective bargaining). School budgets, which were released on December 14, include a change in high school staffing assumptions and changes to weights for special education students under the weighted student funding formula. The district is also considering placing parameters on the costs of the early hiring initiative. Ms. Laurans stated that difficult trade-offs will be necessary but noted that the district is still early in the budget process.

School Committee members asked questions about the proposed changes to high school staffing assumptions, special education weights and long-term financial planning, all of which were answered by the presenters.

Ms. Regina Robinson encouraged the district to engage with parents about the possibility of earlier transitions for students with special needs.

Ms. Campbell suggested that the district establish a standing finance committee that includes School Committee members and outside financial experts. She also requested that the School Committee receive the district’s capital budget. She also questioned whether BPS is underfunded by the private sector. Finally, she asked the district’s long-term financial planning team to take minutes and share them with the School Committee.

Mr. O’Neill expressed concern about the enrollment projection questions raised during general public comment, stressing that the district must be as accurate as possible in its projections in order to receive buy-in from school communities. He also requested data on how many non-BPS students the district is transporting and how many other cities are required to pay for transportation of non district students.

Behavioral Emergency: Update of Physical Restraint Policy – Amalio Nieves, assistant superintendent of Social Emotional Learning and Wellness, and Andria Amador, assistant director of Behavioral Health Services presented recommended revisions to the district’s

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physical restraint policy as required by state law. BPS is seeking to comply with these changes and expand its focus on prevention of behavioral emergencies. State law requires that all school-based staff be trained in prevention and a smaller group receives specialized training. The presenters emphasize that the use of restraint is an option of last resort, to be used only if a student is a danger to him/herself or others. All restraints must be reported to state. The district will collect this information, monitor issues, and provide targeted support for schools.

School Committee members asked questions about social emotion learning, parent engagement and the proposed timeline for future actions, all of which were answered by the presenters.

Ms. Regina Robinson requested that the proposed policy include language specific to student with disabilities. The Superintendent agreed to revisit the language return to the Committee with any changes. Ms. Amador also agreed to provide data on students who are restrained disaggregated by grade level.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the budget presentation, requesting greater detail on budgeting by program and calling for adequate funding for the district's early hiring initiative.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. O'Neill thanked Ms. Campbell for her insightful questions and said she will be missed.

He then announced that the School Committee will hold its annual organizational meeting on January 4, 2016, followed by professional development training on January 8, 2016. The next regular meeting of the School Committee will take place on January 13, 2016.

ADJOURN

At approximately 8:33 p.m., the Committee unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary