



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

December 9, 2015

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on December 9, 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; Michael Loconto; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; Dr. Miren Uriarte; and student representative Savina Tapia.

School Committee Members Absent: Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman and Meg Campbell.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

School Committee Meeting Minutes: November 18, 2015

Grants for Approval Totaling \$477,929:

- School Nutrition Equipment Assistance for High Need Districts (Fund Code 722) - \$52,655
- Strategic Support to Specific Underperforming Schools (Fund Code 323-T) – 425,274

Build BPS: Boston Public Schools 10-Year Educational and Facilities Master Plan

Fiscal Years 2015 and 2016 Budget Update

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O'Neill led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order. Mr. O'Neill introduced Dr. Russell Johnston, senior associate commissioner, Center for Accountability, Partnerships and Targeted Assistance, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

December 9, 2015

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the November 18, 2015 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Today the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released accountability results for public schools across the state, including the majority of BPS schools. These results are both a cause for celebration, and an opportunity for growth.

The Superintendent congratulated three BPS schools that made major gains that led to improvements in their accountability level: the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science in Roxbury; the Samuel Adams Elementary School in East Boston; and Another Course to College Pilot High School in Brighton. The O'Bryant rose from Level 2 to Level 1, and the Adams went from Level 3 to Level 1, placing them among our highest-performing schools. Another Course to College went from Level 3 to Level 2.

There were five schools whose accountability levels declined. Most significantly, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School was placed into Level 4 status, placing it into underperforming status. (Also seeing declines, but not placed into Level 4 status, were Fenway High School, New Mission High School, Boston International School and Boston Leadership Academy. The Superintendent said that he is proud of the work that has already begun at Madison Park under the new leadership of Executive Director Kevin McCaskill and Headmaster Shawn Shackelford. They are working closely with district leaders on the High School Redesign Plan, creating a bolder and broader vision for Madison Park.

The Superintendent said that he has heard from some parents that BPS can do a better job communicating about School Preview events. He agreed, saying that staff from the offices of Communications, Engagement and Technology offices are working together to develop a strategy to better promote these types of events moving forward. Information about BPS School Preview Time events are now available on BPS's front webpage.

Today, the U.S. Senate approved the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) by a 85-12 vote – a significant win for the Boston Public Schools and other Great City School systems in that the legislation contains no formula changes or portability provisions that would have cost the city tens of millions of dollars over several years.

ESEA eliminates:

- Federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets
- 20 percent set-aside of Title I funds for supplemental education services (SES) and school choice and transportation sanctions
- Federal definition of "highly qualified teachers"

December 9, 2015

ESSA does the following:

- o Maintains annual testing requirement for reading and math in grades 3-8 and once in high school, and grade-span testing in science
- o Maintains subgroup reporting and 95 percent testing requirement (states allowing opt-outs must still meet this requirement without excluding these students)
- o Directs states to develop differentiated accountability system for all schools and subgroups
- o Requires states to set standardized statewide entrance and exit criteria and procedures for ELLs in Title III

Thanks to an anonymous donor, the Boston Foundation facilitated two \$50,000 gifts to the Otis Elementary School in East Boston and the Perry K-8 School in South Boston. The donations are intended to fund playgrounds that would allow children of all abilities to play and have fun.

The Superintendent congratulated BPS Executive Director of the Arts Myran Parker-Brass for being recognized as one of *Education Week's* "Leaders to Learn From" which highlights forward-thinking school district leaders from across the nation.

This week BPS is participating in Hour of Code, a worldwide event in which schools dedicate one hour during the week to teach students about coding. At the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, students got to work with robots that communicated in American Sign Language. At the Tynan School tomorrow, Education Chief Rahn Dorsey and will join the Superintendent as students use coding to learn how to make video game characters move on the screen. BPS has worked closely with Code.org, which recently gave the Tynan a \$10,000 award to help with education around coding. BPS is also working with MassTLC, MassCan, PDF Filler, and Microsoft. Nearly \$50,000 in prizes have been awarded to BPS schools from these organizations. The Superintendent thanked them for their generosity.

BPS recently participated in Operation Warm Coat Drive, in which 8,200 new winter jackets were donated to BPS students and families. Operation Warm, a national charity, facilitated these donations with funding from BNY Mellon, Vertex Pharmaceuticals, People's United Community Foundation, the TD Charitable Foundation, and an anonymous Boston-area philanthropist. With this coat drive, BPS is making sure that all students will have a warm jacket this winter.

The Murphy K-8 School in Dorchester was recently honored by the New England Sports Museum in its 14th annual award show titled, "The Tradition," at the TD Boston Garden. The school was honored for their anti-bullying programs, which include prevention classes and students signing a "Boston vs. Bullies" banner. The students got to meet some sports greats, including Roger Clemens.

Many BPS Central Office staff joined students in taking part in the Mayor's Enchanted Trolley Tour and the Tree Lighting outside the Bolling Building last weekend.

Mr. Loconto congratulated the Ohrenberger Owls for winning the BPS Middle School Football Championship on Thanksgiving Day.

December 9, 2015

DESE Senior Associate Commissioner Dr. Russell answered questions from the Committee regarding the recently released BPS accountability results. Dr. Johnston explained that schools with a Level 3 designation represent the lowest 20 percent of lowest performing schools. The Commissioner has discretion to designate schools as Level 4 or 5 based on several criteria. The Commission's decision to move Madison Park Technical Vocational High School to Level 4 was based on several factors, such as the school's inconsistent performance over the past several years, a steady decline in math and declining graduation rate.

Nicole Wagner Lam said she would will follow up with additional data on schools that were designated Level 3 because of low performing sub-groups.

Dr. Johnston said he hopes that Madison Park will use its turnaround designation as an opportunity to bring about rapid improvement, similar to the Jeremiah E. Burke High School. In 2014, the Burke became the first high school in the state to exit turnaround status.

Dr. Johnston explained that despite making incredible progress, The English High School will remain at Level 4 because it needs to demonstrate more than one year's worth of progress before it can exit turnaround status.

Mr. O'Neill thanked the Council of Great City Schools for its intense lobbying efforts on ESSA, which threatened to cut Title 1 funding in districts such as BPS.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Michele Brooks, citizen, proposed changes to the School Committee structure.

Collin Walter, Northeastern University student, testified regarding sexual harassment and resources for comprehensive health education.

Michael Keegan, technology vendor, testified regarding technology procurement.

Heshan Berents-Weeramuni, co-chair, Citywide Parents Council, requested that the district administratively assign K-1 seats.

Mary Jo Hetzel, Coalition for Equal Quality Education, testified regarding the Boston Compact.

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding an education event at the Federal Reserve on December 7th, and requested an analysis of equity by the district.

Deborah O'Shea, teacher, Gardner Pilot Academy, testified regarding high school options for students with special needs.

December 9, 2015

ACTION ITEM

Central Turnaround and Transformation Director Liza Veto explained that the district is evaluating the effectiveness of its professional development.

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$477,929.

REPORTS

Build BPS: Boston Public Schools 10-Year Educational and Facilities Master Plan - Ramon Soto, director of external relations, Mayor's Education Cabinet, and Margaret Wood, project manager, Pinck & Co., presented an update on Build BPS, the district's 10-year educational and facilities master plan. Build BPS is a collaboration among the City of Boston, BPS, architectural and engineering firm SSMA and Pinck & Co.

Build BPS uses the guiding principles of equity, innovation and coherence. Mr. Soto clarified that the School Committee is responsible for determining grade configuration. The Build BPS team recently conducted a pilot study of three schools: the Henderson K-12 Inclusion School, which sits on two campuses, the Umana K-8 and the Burke High School. The team then developed a draft assessment template. A public meeting on Build BPS is scheduled for January 20, 2016. Mr. Soto encouraged the public to learn more about the initiative by visiting www.bostonpublicschools.org/buildbps and clicking the resources tab to open a Google Drive folder of information that will be updated throughout process.

The Boston Student Advisory Council will have a representative on the educational planning and community engagement sub-committees of Build BPS.

Dr. Uriarte stated that some people have expressed concerns about possible privatization of public property. Mr. Soto explained that there is no intention to privatize schools or school property. He also clarified that Build BPS is separate from the unified enrollment conversations being held by the Boston Compact. Mr. O'Neill explained that the School Committee determines building use and grade configuration.

Ms. Jeri Robinson emphasized the need for equitable access to quality facilities that meet students' needs.

Build BPS is using data available from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, among other sources. Mr. Loconto will serve as the School Committee liaison to this project.

Fiscal Years 2015 and 2016 Budget Update – Executive Director of School Finance Eleanor Laurans, together with Deputy Executive Director of School Finance Nathan Kuder, presented an update on the Fiscal Year 2015 and 2016 budgets. In FY15, BPS ended the year within budget for the 25th consecutive year. The current fiscal year, FY16, includes many important investments, such as extended learning time, additional K-1 seats, and more resources going

December 9, 2015

directly to schools through Weighted Student Funding. While the district is currently projecting a deficit of \$5.5 million, Ms. Laurans said she is confident that the district will close FY16 within budget. She explained that the deficit is caused by several factors, including a higher than projected budget for the BPS early hiring initiative and transportation savings that were not fully realized.

School Committee members asked questions, about transportation and custodian costs, all of which were answered by the presenters. Ms. Regina Robinson said that adjustments to school start times have caused concern for parents of some high school students. Mr. O'Neill noted that the Committee has asked the district to examine school start times and the school calendar. The Superintendent said he hopes to bring forward a three-year calendar to the Committee in the near future.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding excess capacity as it relates to the BPS Facilities Master Plan. He also requested an update on the status of the McKinsey audit.

Heshan Berents-Weeramuni, co-chair, Citywide Parents Council, testified that he is glad to hear that Build BPS is for BPS and not related to the Boston Compact.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

At approximately 8:42 p.m., the Committee unanimously approved a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary