



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REMOTE
BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

February 24, 2021

The Boston School Committee held a remote meeting on February 24, 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 Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Vice Chairperson Michael O’Neill; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Ernani DeAraujo; Jeri Robinson; Quoc Tran; and student representative Khymani James.

School Committee Member Absent: Dr. Lorna Rivera.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Boston School Committee Meeting Minutes: February 3, 2021 Meeting; and February 11, 2021 FY22 Budget Hearing

Update on Remote/Hybrid Learning and Reopening PowerPoint

Grant for Approval: \$25,000:

Amount	FY	Grant Name	Status	Fund Manager	Representative Title	Representative Relationship to Grant	Focus Area(s)	Sites
\$25,000	2021	MCIEA Mini Grant	New	Sarah Jay	Director of Assessment for Learning and Strategic Action	Project Manager	Achievement Gap	Districtwide

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Memo from Superintendent Brenda Cassellius to Boston School Committee re: Information Sharing Policy Working Group Members, February 23, 2021

Early Literacy Update PowerPoint

Early Literacy Update Equity Impact Statement

Memo from Academics to Superintendent re: Equitable Early (K2-2) Literacy Instruction, February 24, 2021

Early Literacy Update Supplemental Data, February 24, 2021

Update on Boston School Committee Priority Setting: Goals and Guardrails PowerPoint

Goals and Guardrails Overview

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Oliver-Dávila called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

Ms. Sullivan called the roll. All members were present with the exception of Dr. Rivera. Ms. Oliver-Dávila 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 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. Meeting documents were translated into all of the official BPS languages and publicly posted at www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee prior to the start of the meeting.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila welcomed Ernani DeAraujo to his first meeting as a member of the Boston School Committee. Mr. DeAraujo is a lifelong resident of East Boston and serves as the Vice President of Regulatory Affairs and General Counsel at the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center. He is a graduate of Boston Public Schools including Bradley Elementary, Umana Academy, and Boston Latin School. Mr. DeAraujo was sworn in on February 4th. His term will expire on January 3, 2022.

CITATIONS

Ms. Oliver-Dávila recognized the following BPS teachers who recently earned or renewed their certification with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards:

- Kristen Cacciatore, East Boston High School, earned National Board Certification in Science/Adolescence and Young Adulthood
- Laura Gersch, Margarita Muniz Academy, earned National Board Certification in English as a New Language/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

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- Amber Kalaclar, Winthrop Elementary School, earned National Board Certification in Generalist/Early Childhood
- Ellen Latham, John D. O’Bryant School of Math and Science, renewed National Board Certification in Mathematics/Early Adolescence
- Noah Patel, Roosevelt K-8 School, renewed National Board Certification in Mathematics/Early Adolescence
- Ingrid Roche, Boston Latin Academy, earned National Board Certification in Career and Technical Education/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood
- Katherine Sullivan, Murphy K-8 School, renewed National Board Certification in Generalist/Early Childhood

Superintendent Cassellius and Boston Teachers Union President Jessica Tang extended their congratulations to the honorees.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Approved – On roll call, the Committee approved the minutes of the February 3, 2021 meeting and February 11, 2021 FY22 budget hearing. Mr. DeAraujo abstained, noting that he was not a member of the Committee at the time of the February 3rd meeting. All other members voted yes.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

As prepared for delivery.

Thank you, Madame Chair. As mentioned, I had a minor eye surgery/procedure performed last week, so I will be off-camera this evening. Luckily, we have recently revamped the Superintendent’s Report to be a bit more engaging, so you shouldn’t miss me too much. I want to start off by providing an update on our transportation performance this school year. BPS yellow buses have been transporting BPS students all year, any time that BPS schools have been open for in-person learning. Social distancing, mask wearing, and other new health and safety protocols are in place at all times. Our primary metric for success is bus on-time performance, which is a measure of the percentage of buses that arrive on-time to their schools. Our target is to be at or above 95% on time every day. BPS also operates a Transportation Hotline for families to call with any transportation questions or bus issues they need assistance with. We strive to keep the wait time to talk to a Customer Service Rep under 2 minutes, while ensuring we provide every family with the support they need. This table shows average monthly on-time performance and average monthly Hotline Wait Times throughout the 2020-2021 school year. I’d like to note the comparison of October to February (the two months this school year when all BPS schools have been open)

October had 87% average On-time performance and 3:45 average Hotline Wait Time, while so far in February we've had a 92% average on-time performance and 2:40 average Hotline Wait Time. As BPS has adjusted to changing public health conditions, we've had 3 "school start" days this year when significant numbers of new students came into buildings, requiring yellow bus transportation (October 1st, December 14th, and February 4th). Most recently, Feb 4 was a "record" school start day for transportation - with 90% OTP and hotline wait times under 2 minutes. For reference on-time performance for the first day of school in 2019 was 43%. And

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recent daily on-time performance numbers, Monday our OTP was 91%, and performance improved to 95% yesterday. We continue working to build on this improved performance as we look ahead to more students riding our buses in the coming weeks. I want to thank the entire Transportation team for their commitment to improvement and to safely transporting our children every single day.

On February 9, I had the pleasure of reading to Ms. Whitten's K2 class at the Higginson K-2, or the "Baby Higginson" as we like to call it. Though it ended up being a remote learning day due to the weather, I traveled to the school anyways to read to the students learning at home from their classroom. I read *I Am Enough* by Grace Byers, a fantastic book for our little ones about loving who you are, respecting others, and being kind to one another. I want to thank Principal Karla Jenkins for inviting me to visit with Ms. Whitten's class. I cannot wait to visit with more of our youngest students next week!

Yesterday we held a "topping off ceremony" at the construction site for the new Boston Arts Academy complex in the Fenway. Mayor Walsh, Chair Oliver-Dávila, BAA Head of School Anne Clark, former Executive Director for the Arts Myran Parker-Brass, and other local officials attended to celebrate the raising of the final steel beam into place to complete the structure of the new, state-of-the-art \$125 million facility. Before the beam was lifted yesterday, it was decorated and beautified by our incredibly talented BAA students. I was disappointed I was unable to attend the event, but I was able to visit BAA's temporary campus in Dorchester a couple weeks ago to sign the beam. Also, last month I went on a sunrise tour of the new facility with City of Boston Chief of Operations Pat Brophy. The state-of-the-art facility will feature new and greatly enhanced performance and rehearsal spaces, including a premier 500-seat theater featuring a proscenium stage, a black box theatre, dance studios, music practice rooms, and fashion technology studios and workspaces. Construction will be completed next spring, and the building will open to students in the fall of 2022. I know our incredibly talented BAA students (and staff) are so excited for their new school to open in 2022. We're hopeful that we can host some events in the new facility next spring. This amazing building is an example of the facilities needed across our city so that *all our children* have the opportunity to thrive in joyful learning environments.

Yesterday was a big day for our high schools, as Boston Green Academy was also notified of a significant accomplishment! The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted unanimously to renew BGA's charter for another five years and to remove the school from probation. In their charter renewal application, BGA highlighted their successful second charter term, marked by their completed expansion into a full 6-12 school, significant and sustained academic improvement, creation of a pioneering career technical education program, and national recognition as a model Green School by the state and federal government.

DESE will continue to monitor academic progress through a condition placed on the school's charter. BGA is also excited about the new Freight Farm which was recently delivered to the school. Freight farms are self-contained hydroponic farms made from old shipping containers that make growing food anywhere, in any climate, possible. The freight farm will help teach students about sustainability and will provide them with additional hands-on, experiential learning opportunities this spring. I am so proud of the work of Head of School Matt Holzer, and all the staff and students at BGA.

We continue to celebrate Black History Month, and promote and lift up Black excellence throughout the year. Tomorrow, February 25th, at 7:00 pm, our partner City Year Boston is hosting a virtual roundtable discussion with Black educators and mentors about the power of representation in education and mentorship and its impact on students and young people. Earlier this year we reported that BPS hired the highest percentage of candidates of color in the last seven years, with Black educators comprising 31% of all teacher and guidance counselor new hires. We have made significant progress, but we know there is more work to be done. Our own Chief Equity & Strategy Officer, Dr. Charles Grandson, will participate in the discussion with other local educators, including BPS special education teacher Isabel da Rosa. Register for the event at cityyear.org/boston/events.

We are in the middle of school registration season in the Boston Public Schools. From now through Friday, January 29th, families can register students entering grades K0, K1, 6, 7, and 9 for the 2021-22 school year. From February 8th through April 5th, families of students entering grades K2, 1 through 5, 8, and 10 through 12 can register students for the 2021-22 school year. Our Welcome Services team is hosting an additional information sessions on all things school registration this Saturday, February 27th. This info session will feature interpretation services in Spanish and Haitian Creole. Recordings from our previous info sessions and additional details on the school registration process are available at bostonpublicschools.org/register. In addition, beginning next Monday, March 1st, the Dorchester, East Boston and Roslindale Welcome Centers will reopen for the first time since last March, by appointment only. I am so proud of our Welcome Services team for quickly pivoting last spring to begin providing registration services by phone and online. Our Roxbury Welcome Center is not opening at this time, but we will have staff there on hand to schedule appointments for any families who may show up seeking registration services.

There are now 3 ways to register your student for Boston Public Schools for the 2021-2022 school year:

- Online - Pre-register your student online and schedule an appointment to complete the process over the phone.
- By phone - Call (617) 635-9046 to speak with a registration specialist.
- In person - Schedule an appointment at the Dorchester, East Boston, or Roslindale Welcome Center. To make an appointment, call (617) 635-9046 or use the online appointment system.

The BPS Registration Checklist is also available in 10 languages on our site, so families can be sure they have all the necessary documents to register. Again, all of this information is available online at bostonpublicschools.org/register.

Vaccines have been a hot topic in the news, and I want to provide a quick update on our planning for employee vaccinations. All BPS staff, and others in K-12 education, will be included in the

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third group of the current phase of COVID-19 vaccine distribution. Currently, only the first and second groups in Phase 2 are eligible to receive the vaccine. In partnership with the BPHC, we are hosting virtual information sessions this week exclusively for BPS staff to provide initial information on the vaccination rollout plan and pertinent safety information from our medical partners. We hosted an info session yesterday afternoon and have another session scheduled for tomorrow evening. I encourage BPS staff to check their emails and text messages from earlier in the week to RSVP for tomorrow's session. We anticipate that we will offer a variety of ways for our employees to receive a vaccine, including working with the BPHC to provide dedicated clinics for BPS staff and other workers. Each of these opportunities is dependent on vaccine availability from the State. As we have previously mentioned, about 4% of our employees, including Health Services and Safety Services staff, have already received vaccinations. This will be an incredibly important step in our work to mitigate potential spread of the virus in our larger community, as we continue working to ensure the health and safety of our students, staff and families. We have created a website that will launch next week with all the Frequently Asked Questions, information about the vaccines, and when it's available, direct links for employees to sign up for appointments. We are also mindful of reaching our employees who don't have easy access to a computer or the internet. We will be staffing Kiosks at our bus yards to schedule our bus drivers and monitors and if an employee needs assistance scheduling an appointment we have provided a phone number they can call for assistance.

As you may have heard, the Center for Disease Control or the CDC, recently released new school reopening guidance. Also, yesterday, Commissioner Riley joined Governor Baker and state officials to recommend that all elementary students attend school in-person for five days a week in April. I want to assure you that my team and I continue to review all public health guidance from state and federal officials. As we have throughout our reopening planning, we are also working closely with the BPHC and implementing their guidance, following health and safety protocols, fulfilling our agreements with the BTU, and honoring the learning model choices that families have made for their students. We will continue to follow the reopening timeline announced in January, and we are so excited to welcome back our youngest learners on a hybrid-learning schedule next week! We will continue to prioritize the health and safety of our students, educators, staff and community at large, and you will learn more about our preparations in the reopening update later this evening. Also the Commissioner has continued to communicate that MCAS will be required this year. The Commissioner asked to open up a window for review and comment and BPS provided comment to the Commissioner. Specifically we commented that the MCAS should be cancelled this year. If in fact he does not cancel the test, we affirmed his decision not to use the results for accountability purposes. We also suggested that he consider adjusting participation rates given families who have chosen remote and do not feel comfortable bringing their children to school solely to take a standardized test.

We also supported the shortening of the test length. We further provided options of doing a random sampling of students as another means to get similar results. Finally, we thank the Commissioner for the waiver on MCAS for high school seniors last year and this year who were unable to take the high stakes test for graduation. We support the new process for competency determination, however, we believe that the Class of 2022 and 2023 should also have this opportunity as the pandemic continues to interfere with our students' education. I know you have been asked to pass a resolution but we provided this feedback on January 29th and I have spoken

to the Commissioner multiple times regarding our position. And that is my Superintendent's Report for this evening.

Ms. Robinson asked about the district's transportation performance. The Superintendent said that BPS is following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations by seating one student per row.

Mr. James said that he does not believe that the state should administer MCAS this year and asked the Committee to pass a resolution to that end. Ms. Oliver-Dávila said that the Superintendent's earlier comments addressed his concerns and the Committee would not be passing a resolution.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila congratulated Boston Green Academy on its charter renewal. She said that she enjoyed participating in the topping off ceremony for Boston Arts Academy (BAA)'s new facility yesterday and offered her congratulations to the BAA community.

REPORT

Update on Remote/Hybrid Learning and Reopening - The Superintendent and her senior team presented an update on remote and hybrid learning and the district's reopening plans. Co-presenters included Mary Dillman, BPS Chief of Staff; Rita Nieves, Interim Executive Director, Boston Public Health Commission; Corey Harris, BPS Chief Accountability Officer; Djenny Lobo Lopes, BPS Senior Director of Health Services; Sam DePina, BPS Chief of Operations; Delavern Stanislaus, BPS Transportation Director; Avery Esdaile, BPS Director of Athletics; and Andrea Zayas, BPS Chief Academic Officer.

Revised timeline for returning to in-person learning:*

- Week of Feb. 1 Students with high in-person priority
- Week of March 1 Grades K0 - 3
- Week of March 15 Grades 4 - 8
- Week of March 29 Grades 9 - 12

*If necessary, each of these phases may be postponed by 1–2 weeks based on the public health environment.

The CDC revised its guidance on school reopening on February 12th. While risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 in a school may be lower when indicators of community spread are lower, this risk is also dependent upon the implementation of school and community mitigation strategies. The CDC endorses three feet of distance; vaccination is not necessary for return to in person working and learning.

During January 2021, families were able to request a change between remote and hybrid learning models or between groups A and B. 5,537 changes were accommodated. 2,074 requests to move from remote to hybrid. 2,360 requests to move from hybrid to remote. 1,103 requests to change between cohort A and B. The percentage of students requesting a change was higher in lower

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grade levels (14% in grades 1 and lower, compared to 9% grades 10 and higher.). Younger grades were more likely to switch to hybrid (10-12% in K2-4) and between cohorts (10-11% in K1-2), and older grades were more likely to switch to remote (8-11% in grades 7-12).

BPS is participating in a program with Mass DESE to provide COVID pool testing to all students who wish to test. All staff working in-person in open schools have the opportunity to get tested on a weekly basis. BPS has recorded 192 positive COVID cases to date (31 students and 161 staff).

Phase two of window repairs and replacement is on track for completion by the end of February. In-door air quality testing is ongoing with an independent contractor. As of February 18th, 58 tests are completed. BPS has established a coordinated centralized PPE request and delivery process. Each school has a PPE Coordinator. The district has a stockpile on hand of frequently used PPE items to last through the school year.

Bus routes are in place for all 8,500 bus-eligible BPS students scheduled for in-person hybrid learning in March and assignments were sent to families this week. The district averaged 93% on-time performance since the February 1st start of the revised timeline for returning to in-person learning. BPS submitted 33 new bus monitors for hire and is working to hire additional monitors in preparation for the March phase-in.

The “Fall 2” athletics season began on February 22nd.

Out of School Time Hubs:

- BPS is currently matching high needs students to 9 OST Hubs with partner organizations
- Approximately 4500 BPS students are served across (non-high needs) OST HUBS
- 10 additional OST Hubs are scheduled to open by March
- Expected total Investment \$1.46M

Summer 2021 Planning:

- Summer Learning Academies (K0-12)
- English Learner Summer Learning Academies (K0-12)
- Extended School Year Summer Academies (K0-12)
- Secondary Credit Recovery
- Boston After school and Beyond Partnership activities

Vacation Week Acceleration Academies:

- February 16-19
 - 12 sites
 - Served 645 students
 - 24 hours of additional instruction
 - Literacy Focus: using high interest, culturally relevant texts and project-based learning

- April 20-23
 - 10 sites
 - 490 students
 - Math Focus

Ms. Robinson asked about the quality of the in-person experience for students and teachers. The Superintendent spoke about the district's use of creative scheduling and acknowledged that the in-person experience will feel different due to health and safety restrictions. She will provide a fuller response at a future meeting, adding that she expects the district will offer a mix of blended learning opportunities in the future.

Mr. DeAraujo said that the city of Boston and BPS are fortunate to have public health experts develop metrics that are specific to our population. He added that he looks forward to monitoring the data.

Dr. Coleman encouraged the Superintendent to track the outcomes of this work.

Mr. O'Neill asked the Superintendent if she was concerned about the possibility of COVID positivity rates rising again. The Superintendent spoke about the district's strict mitigation efforts and expressed confidence that BPS is ready for a phased-in reopening. Mr. O'Neill asked the Superintendent about the state's directive for school district's to return to in-person learning five days per week starting in April. The Superintendent said that BPS has capacity limitations and may need to apply for a waiver. Mr. O'Neill clarified that students can participate in COVID pool testing, while teachers receive individual testing. He encouraged the district to maintain strong communication with families that have chosen to stay remote.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila encouraged the district to consider lessons learned from the pandemic to reimagine the school experience and plan for summer learning opportunities, adding that she is pleased that every student will have a summer plan.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Ashley Long, student, Boston Arts Academy, testified regarding student mental health.
- Tiffany Luo, student, Boston Latin School, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Graciela Berman Reinhardt, student, Boston Latin School, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Jada Saint Louis, student, Boston Arts Academy, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Keishon Weekes, student, Boston Arts Academy, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Kelsie Rizzo, student, Boston Arts Academy, testified regarding more support for the Class of 2021.
- Cady Malkemes, student, Boston Arts Academy, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Grace Malkemes, student, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding mental health support for students.

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- Thanh Bui, student, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Anya Edwards, student, Boston Arts Academy, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Damian Durgin, student, Martin Luther King K-8 School, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Lorenzo Bartoloni, student, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Shanti Deen, student, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Simon Chernow, student, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Camarah Oates, student, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding mental health support for students.
- Charlie Adames, BPS student, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Sofia Liang, BPS student, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Henry Stengal, student, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding sexual health education.
- Katio Barbosa, student, Burke High School, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Amiri Sulker, student, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding student voting rights.
- Charlie Kim, parent, Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, testified regarding the future of the Horace Mann School.
- Ruby Reyes, executive director, Boston Education Justice Alliance, testified regarding the budget.
- Edith Bazile, advocate, testified regarding the draft goals and guardrails and school policing.
- Emma Winger, BPS parent, and member, Voices for BPS Families, testified regarding in-person learning in the fall.
- John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding the draft goals and guardrails.
- Jody Fink, parent, Eliot K-8 Innovation School, testified regarding school reopening.
- Brittany Hampton, parent, Eliot K-8 Innovation School, testified regarding in-person learning in the fall.
- J.J. Gilmartin, member, Voices for BPS Families, testified regarding school reopening.
- Mike Heichman, member, Boston Education Justice Alliance, testified regarding several education-related issues.
- Sara Lodi, BPS parent, testified regarding school reopening and snow days.
- Alyssa Anderson, BPS parent, testified regarding school reopening.
- Marcy Axelrad, parent, Eliot K-8 Innovation School and Boston Latin School, testified regarding in-person learning in the fall.
- Sean Barrett, parent, Perry K-8 School, testified regarding Advanced Work Class and Excellence for All.
- Danial Osmani, member, Boston Education Justice Alliance, testified regarding the district's Panorama data dashboard.
- Megan Castro, BPS parent, testified regarding school reopening.

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- Suzie McGlone, BPS teacher, testified regarding community involvement
- Josefina Burgos, parent, Russell Elementary School, testified regarding the Superintendent's FY22 budget recommendation.
- Sonia Maldonado, parent, Blackstone Elementary School, testified regarding the Superintendent's FY22 budget recommendation.
- Paula Ortiz, parent, Fenway High School, testified regarding the Superintendent's FY22 budget recommendation.
- Dolca Francisco, parent, Young Achievers School of Math and Science, testified regarding school cleanliness.
- Argentina Villar, parent, East Boston High School, testified regarding the Superintendent's FY22 budget recommendation.
- Sumeiry Garcia, parent, Hernandez K-8 School, testified regarding the Superintendent's FY22 budget recommendation.
- Alfonso Rubio, parent, Blackstone Elementary School, testified regarding the Superintendent's FY22 budget recommendation.
- Marioska Medina, parent, Orchard Gardens K-8 School, testified regarding the Superintendent's FY22 budget recommendation.
- Claritza Rodriguez, parent, Condon K-8 School, testified regarding the Superintendent's FY22 budget recommendation.
- Dorys Gonzales, parent, Blackstone Elementary School, testified regarding the conditions at the school and the Superintendent's FY22 budget recommendation.
- Glenda Torres, Blackstone Elementary School, testified regarding the Superintendent's FY22 budget recommendation.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked everyone who testified. She affirmed that the School Committee supports student voice and said that the Committee will discuss student voting rights and the stipend issue at a future meeting. She clarified that it is state law, not the School Committee, which currently prohibits the student representative from receiving voting rights and a stipend.

ACTION ITEMS

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a MCIEA Mini Grant in the amount of \$25,000.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the following appointees to serve as members of the School Safety Working Group: Angelica Martinez, youth coordinator, East Boston Ecumenical Community Council; Georgina Orellana, student, East Boston High School; and Javier Flores, managing partner, Dinsmore Boston.

REPORTS

Early Literacy Update - BPS Chief Academic Officer Andrea Zayas and Director of Early Childhood Education Jason Sachs presented an update on K-2nd equitable early literacy

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instruction. Co-presenters included Christine Landry, BPS Assistant Superintendent, Office of Academics and Professional Learning; Brooke Childs, Early Literacy Program Director, BPS Department of Early Childhood; Mayanna Suslavich, Transformation Coach, Blackstone Elementary School; Dwayne Nuñez, Early Childhood Program Developer; Unicia Young, Literacy Coach, BPS Department of Early Childhood; and Jacqueline Elias, K1 SEI Teacher, Blackstone Elementary School.

The district aims to decrease variability in the quality of instruction district-wide by implementing an articulated academic strategy. To reach this goal, BPS is adopting high quality, culturally relevant instructional materials, investing in adoption, coaching and supports, adopting high quality instructional materials for ESL, SLIFE and dual language programs, and investing in a learning management system for curation.

The Department of Early Childhood, part of the Office of Academics and Professional Learning, created the Focus on Early Learning K0/K1 curriculum in 2014. The curriculum was designed to be child centered, interdisciplinary, and play-based. Each year the department has added a grade to the curriculum all early childhood grades (K0-2) are now represented. Since 2018, the Department, as part of the BPS Academic Division strategy regarding Equitable Literacy Instruction, has incorporated research on the science of reading to explicitly teach Foundational Skills by aligning our materials, improving accessibility and strengthening instruction. Advancing Equitable Literacy Instruction is a racial equity strategy aimed to radically improve literacy. For the next five years, the department/district will double its efforts to work with central office departments, school leaders and teachers to implement the Science of Reading approach to early literacy in all classrooms. Currently Focus is the early childhood curriculum in about 60% of the 1st and 2nd grade classrooms. In addition to the curriculum and related materials, schools will receive specific coaching on reading and writing and the district will design strategies to work with struggling readers (tier 2). BPS will continue to partner with community-based programs that serve Pre-k and out of school time and also Fifth Quarter partners who provide summer school literacy opportunities for students. BPS will use a combination of its own budget, federal, state, and private dollars to fund this work over the next five years.

Ms. Robinson expressed concern about students who are not performing at grade level in critical areas. She asked if the district would consider asking autonomous schools to use the same materials. The Superintendent spoke about how the central office works with autonomous schools that can choose their own curriculum.

Dr. Coleman requested disaggregated data. Ms. Zayas said that the information is forthcoming. He encouraged the district to adjust its strategies if the data does not improve.

Mr. O'Neill said that the presentation highlights the importance of the School Committee's early literacy goal as strategy for closing gaps.

Ms. Robinson spoke about the importance of working with partners to support early literacy work with 0-3 year-olds.

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Dr. Coleman spoke about the challenge of implementing the literacy curriculum with fidelity when the district has several autonomous schools. The Superintendent said that school autonomy is a policy matter and that Chief of Accountability Corey Harris is working with school leaders on implementation.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila expressed concern about the impact of autonomy. She said that she supports the creation of a children's cabinet and encouraged the district to partner with families.

Mr. Tran encouraged the Committee to revisit the issue of school autonomy.

Mr. O'Neill explained that BPS has three types of autonomous schools, including innovation, pilot and in-district charters. Innovation and pilot schools have agreements with the Boston Teachers Union. Innovation schools typically need to reapply for a charter renewal every three or five years. In-district schools have agreements with the state. He said that the Committee would have the opportunity to have conversations with autonomous schools when they apply for a charter renewal. Ms. Oliver-Dávila said that the issue of school autonomy is a larger conversation that the Committee may want to discuss in the future.

Mr. O'Neill requested that the Committee receive data on school performance by school type.

Update on Boston School Committee Priority Setting: Goals and Guardrails - Ms. Robinson provided an update on the work the Committee is doing to strengthen its focus on student outcomes. Based on the conversations during recent retreats, the Committee has identified a set of goals and guardrails from the Superintendent's Strategic Plan.

Goals represent what students should know and be able to do. The Committee selected goals that focus on:

1. Early Literacy
2. Achievement for English Learners
3. Achievement for Students with Disabilities
4. Critical Thinking with Math, Science, and Literacy, and
5. Career & College Readiness.

Guardrails represent the community's values and are non-negotiable expectations that must be honored in all of the school system's work. The Committee selected guardrails that focus on:

1. Student Voice & Family Engagement
2. Community Partnerships
3. Equity & Opportunity Gaps
4. Diverse & Effective Staffing, and
5. Social, Emotional, & Physical Supports.

When these guardrails are honored, they help create the conditions for student success system-wide.

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Earlier this month, the Committee held a series of community stakeholder listening sessions to receive input from the community on the draft goals and guardrails. Each session was co-facilitated by two Committee members and interpretation was provided.

Ms. Robinson shared the major themes that emerged from the listening sessions.

Overarching Themes:

- Closing opportunity and achievement gaps must still be the district's primary goal.
- More explicit language is needed about Black and Latinx students.
- Students place high value on anti-racist, culturally relevant studies and representation.

Goals Themes:

- The community placed high value on college and career readiness and critical thinking skills.
- It was suggested that the goals for special education students should be made clearer and more measurable.

Guardrails Themes:

- The community placed high value on student voice and family engagement and diverse and effective staffing.
- Students placed high value on social, emotional, and physical supports.

Commitment:

- The community expressed its commitment to working collaboratively with the district and to holding the district accountable.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked the Committee to share reflections on the listening sessions.

Mr. O'Neill reaffirmed that the Committee's primary goal is closing gaps. He suggested adding an opening statement that articulates that commitment. He thanked the Boston Student Advisory Council for co-hosting a listening session and thanked the students who participated. College and career readiness and the need for more guidance support were themes at the student-centered session. Dr. Coleman echoed the importance of college and career readiness.

Ms. Robinson said that the Committee had hoped for more participation. She said that in retrospect, the Committee should have co-hosted sessions with task forces and existing parent groups. Ms. Oliver-Dávila agreed. She said that students also placed high value on social-emotional support.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila closed the discussion by outlining next steps. On March 17th, the Committee will present an update with revisions that incorporate community feedback as well as metrics developed in collaboration with the Office of Data and Accountability. The Committee will vote on the final goals and guardrails on March 24th.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

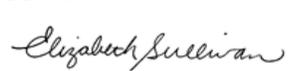
NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

At approximately 10:49 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary