



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

February 1, 2017

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on February 1, 2017 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 D. O'Neill; Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman; Michael Loconto; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Jeri Robinson; Dr. Miren Uriarte; and student representative Keondre McClay.

School Committee Member Absent: Regina Robinson.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Grants for Approval Totaling \$483,106:

- Early Childhood Special Education Program Improvement - District-wide - \$5,150
- School Nutrition Equipment Assistance for High Needs Districts - William Ohrenberger, Joseph Tynan, UP Academy Boston, Washington Irving - \$31,080
- Supporting Early Learning from Preschool Through Early Elementary School Grades - District-wide - \$446,876

International Travel Request: BPS Department of Visual and Performing Arts, and Global Education to Cuba – February 18-25, 2017

International Travel Request: Margarita Muñoz Academy to Cuba – February 17-26, 2017

International Travel Request: Madison Park Technical Vocational High School to Dominican Republic – June 15-22, 2017

Update on Long Term Financial Planning and FY18 Budget Proposal

February 1, 2017

CALL TO ORDER

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

MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the January 25, 2017 Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

Good evening. The safety and wellbeing of our students and staff is our first priority in the Boston Public Schools (BPS). As you may have heard, this morning there was a serious incident involving two teenagers and a gun that took place inside the Bolling Municipal Building, where BPS Central Office is located. We are extremely relieved that no injuries occurred. However, the incident was traumatic for those involved.

Due to the heroic actions of witnesses, the situation was quickly contained. Boston Police responded immediately; and our emergency protocols were followed. When this incident occurred, the Bolling Building was placed into safe mode, and our crisis response team was activated with members of the BPS Department of Behavioral Health and the BPS Office of Safety Services.

Crisis support was available today, will be available tomorrow, and provided on an as-needed basis for Bolling Building staff. Additionally, BPS is working with the Boston Public Health Commission to coordinate crisis response services for community members who may have been impacted by this incident. Community members seeking support may call the Justice Resource Institute at 617-431-0125.

When BPS moved into this building, we moved here to Roxbury be closer to more of our families and schools. Our building is a public place where we have shops and restaurants below us. We have a Welcome Center for families to register their students for school. We can see a number of schools from the top of our building. We are part of our community and will continue to create a safe and welcoming environment for all of our students, families, staff and the public.

We will remain a place of support for our students, families, and employees. We will get through this together as a "Culture of We" as one Boston Public Schools family. Thank you.

Now, I would like to share some updates on the work we do as a system every day to support students. I would like to recognize our teachers for supporting our young people inside of the classrooms and doing all that they can to reassure and affirm that our students' identities add value to our community.

February 1, 2017

On Monday, I was able to join Attorney General Maura Healey at the Martin Luther King Junior K-8 School to announce a new innovative partnership between the 3Point Foundation and UMass Boston. This program will focus on preventing and reducing youth gun violence, and will be piloted at:

- The Sarah Greenwood K-8 School
- Martin Luther King Jr K-8 School
- Lee K-8 School

At this event, students asked Healey, “What are you doing to make us feel like we too are Americans?” It was a very powerful and emotional moment, as this followed the president’s order to halt all refugees from coming to the United States and prevent citizens of seven majority Muslim countries from entering the U.S. for 90 days. We want all of our families and staff to know that we will continue to stand up for all of our students and families, regardless of their immigration status. We will welcome and teach every single student who enters our classrooms. Diversity and inclusion are at the core of our values as a school system and as a city. We are a “Culture of We,” and we are one BPS family.

I would also like to share an update on our efforts to increase Mattahunt student registration. A team of BPS staff went out into our various neighborhoods to make house-calls to help parents complete the enrollment process. We are now up to 88% of families who have selected schools for the upcoming school year. 83 students remain to be processed. Overall families were surprised and grateful that BPS came to them and many made choices on the spot. Others were able to discuss their choices with staff and then this week have been coming to the Mattahunt Transition Office and the Welcome Centers to finish the process. This week there are meetings at the school to provide families with additional information about the new school for K0-1st grade students and to provide another opportunity to complete the school choice process. Friday, February 3 is the last day of Round 1. Any students who have not made choices by Friday will be administratively assigned according to the priorities and promises made by the superintendent.

As you know, both Brighton High and Excel High were named Level 4 schools this past fall. I have heard recommendations from Local Stakeholders Group from both school communities and at that point, we began a series of steps to meet State requirements for turnaround schools. One of those steps outlined for all turnaround schools gives school districts the right to require all teachers to re-apply for their positions. All of Boston's Level 4 schools to date have gone through this excessing process, to allow the superintendent and the school leader to select staff who are a good fit with the future work of the school. In the fall, we initially informed teachers at these two schools that they would likely be excessed. This Friday, teachers at Brighton and Excel will be officially notified that they will be excessed from their positions. We welcome every teacher to re-apply for a position at their school or at another school beginning March 1 when jobs are posted in BPS. I have personally seen the commitment that teachers have to their school communities and it is in our students’ best interest to have the most committed and most effective educators at these two schools. Regarding the plan, we will continue gathering feedback from stakeholders to inform the final plan that our team is writing. This effort is led by Instructional Superintendents Christine Landry of Excel and Jonathan Landman of Brighton.

February 1, 2017

After I release the initial version of each school's plan, I will be meeting with each of the LSGs in a public meeting to share the plan and hear their proposals for modifications before the plan is finalized. Commissioner Chester and the school committee will also have opportunities to propose modifications to each school's plan.

I would like to commend the students and faculty at Boston Arts Academy for putting on a stellar performance of *The Wiz* last weekend. The Strand Theatre was packed for Friday night's opening performance. It was so gratifying to have our students' talent on display for such a large audience. I thank the City of Boston for facilitating this arrangement between BAA and the Strand. As many of you know, BAA does not have an auditorium in its building; and this performance space is paramount in providing an enriching experience for students.

The Boston Student Advisory Council held a meeting with Mayor Walsh to discuss their various initiatives, which focus a great deal on informing students of their rights and creating safe and welcoming school environments for all students.

City Year hosted STEM night at the Sarah Greenwood K-8 School. Thank you, City Year! Our students enjoyed participating in interactive, hands-on activities.

BPS elementary and middle school students collectively created over 1,000 Valentine's Day cards for the City of Boston's Elderly Commission. The Mayor's Office and the Elderly Commission called on the entire city to create Valentine's Day cards that will be delivered to our city's seniors on the holiday.

Lastly, in recognition of mentoring month, which is coming to a close, Boston Partners in Education showcased 50 stories of mentors taking time to come into our schools and read with our students during their lunch period. Please visit: bostonpartners.org to view this compelling reasons for mentorship based relationships. You can also sign up to become a mentor at that website.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked the district for providing safe and welcoming schools.

Mr. Loconto expressed a sense of hopefulness seeing people challenging executive power. He thanked Mayor Walsh for his leadership and encouraged people to call 311 to connect with immigration resources.

Dr. Uriarte thanked Mayor Walsh for supporting immigrants.

Mr. O'Neill thanked the public safety officials and two BPS employees who intervened in the incident at the Bolling building earlier that day. He also thanked Mayor Walsh and the Superintendent for speaking out on immigration issues. He reiterated that BPS does not check immigration status and provides an education for all students. He suggested that the district created a Frequently Asked Questions page on the BPS website to make that clear. He also thanked the Superintendent for committing to personally meet with the Local Stakeholder Groups at Brighton and Excel high schools.

February 1, 2017

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson testified regarding the FY18 budget proposal, M-7 bus passes, computer science instruction, sanctuary schools, and the closure of the Mattahunt Elementary School.

Erica Pastor, teacher, Orchard Gardens K-8 School, invited the Committee to attend a robotics class.

Suzie McGlone, teacher, Orchard Gardens K-8 School, testified in support of strengthening family and student engagement.

Kim Janey, Roxbury resident, urged BPS to maintain a welcoming environment at the Bolling building as district leaders work to improve building security.

Peggy Wiesenberg, Access to Justice Fellow, testified regarding the reassignment of students at the Mattahunt Elementary School and the home-based student assignment plan.

ACTION ITEMS

In response to an inquiry from Ms. Jeri Robinson, Brian Gold, school readiness manager, Department of Early Childhood, provided the Committee with additional information about the early learning grant.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$483,106.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent annual membership dues to the Massachusetts Association of School Committees in the amount of \$7,475.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international field trip request for students and chaperones selected by the BPS Department of Visual and Performing Arts, and BPS Global Education to travel to Cuba from February 18-25, 2017.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international field trip request for students and chaperones from the Margarita Muñiz Academy to travel to Cuba from February 17-26, 2017.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international field trip request for students and chaperones from Madison Park Technical Vocational High School to travel to the Dominican Republic from June 15-22, 2017.

February 1, 2017

REPORT

Update on Long Term Financial Planning and FY18 Budget Proposal – Special Assistant to the Superintendent Erika Giampietro spent a few minutes reviewing the BPS long term financial planning process, which was designed to examine the bold, multi-year strategies that could help the district avoid reductions in the future and also free up funds to reinvest directly in classrooms. That effort has yielded a number of operational efficiencies reflected in tonight’s proposal, and it has also helped establish important financial principles that will guide the district’s work going forward – in particular the importance of multi-year stability for school planning, and new ideas of how to use resources to close opportunity and achievement gaps.

BPS Chief Financial Officer Eleanor Laurans then presented the School Committee with a proposal for a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) in the amount of \$1.061 billion, with an additional 20 million held in reserve for collective bargaining. The City increased its appropriation to BPS by \$40 million. Ms. Laurans said the proposal advances the district’s priority of closing opportunity and achievement gaps for students, and reflects the values of equity, coherence, and innovation. BPS continues to invest in the strongest research-based strategies to best support students and address challenges, such as early education, more high-quality learning time, and teacher quality.

Because of Mayor Martin Walsh’s commitment to fund a major investment in Extended Learning Time (ELT), along with advancements in long-term financial planning effort, BPS will add 100 additional Pre-Kindergarten seats, maintain its Early Hiring Initiative, and at the same time, expand ELT to an additional 39 schools for next year, while also protecting school budgets and the current Weighted Student Funding.

The cornerstone of the Superintendent’s proposal for next year is a major investment in Extended Learning Time. Next year will represent the completion of the rollout of “Schedule A,” and by next year, ELT will have expanded to a total of 57 schools, serving 23,445 students, in three years. Research indicates a positive relationship between longer school days and academic outcomes. Schools without ELT have 126 fewer hours than the typical U.S. student, which is equivalent to almost an entire month of school.

Other significant investments include \$1 million directed to schools to support the more than three thousand students facing homelessness in BPS and an additional \$1.3M in resources for schools for vocational programming.

Ms. Laurans clarified that the FY18 budget vote in March will not include any of the big ideas generated in the long-term financial plan. She explained that only central administration will see funding reductions, while some schools may see a decline due to projected changes in enrollment.

She also proposed the creation of a Long Term Financial Planning sub-committee with the English Language Learners Task Force and Opportunity and Achievement Gap Task Force.

February 1, 2017

Mr. McClay asked how student voice is being incorporated into the development of the FY18 budget. Budget Director David Bloom said the budget team has already met with the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) and will hold a student forum on March 15.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila requested the notes from the youth budget meetings held to date. She also expressed concerned about central office staff reductions and emphasized the need for families to receive data transparently. She also suggested that the district engage in creative problem solving to support schools facing budget reductions.

Mr. Loconto asked that the Committee schedule a separate time to have a broader discussion about the aims and outcomes of the Excellence for All initiative. The Superintendent pledged to provide a comprehensive update. Mr. Loconto also requested more information on exploring adjustments to school start times.

Ms. Jeri Robinson inquired about funding for early learning centers and early education centers, which will be held harmless for FY18. She also asked about the equity of district- provided MBTA passes. Ms. Laurans said it would cost the district more than \$3 million to provide universal T passes.

Dr. Uriarte thanked budget team for the transparency of the information and the equity analysis. She expressed concerned about the underrepresentation of blacks in some ELT cohorts and the underrepresentation of student with disabilities and English Language Learners in vocational education. She encouraged the district to study the ELL and Sped overlays of the home-base student assignment plan. She also expressed concerned about parents having enough information to make informed choices. The Superintendent said he's committed to bringing the Committee a full equity analysis of home base system.

Mr. O'Neill thanked Mayor Walsh for increasing the city's investment in schools, adding that he was also extremely pleased by quality of the presentation and the district's prompt posting of budget documents on the BPS website. He also suggested increasing funding for residency enforcement and asked the district to provide more information on money recouped by people found to be in violation of the district's residency policy. He also asked the Superintendent to consider piloting a few high schools to move to later start times. Chief of Operations John Hanlon explained that the issue is extremely complex. Mr. O'Neill said he was also heartened by the equity analysis. He asked the BPS budget team to meet with the Opportunity and Achievement Gap and English Language Learners Task Forces regarding the FY18 budget proposal. He requested that in a future presentation, the budget team specifically address the maintenance budget, Suitable Professional Capacity and reserves.

Mr. McClay asked how the district is measuring student success as it relates to effective instruction. The Superintendent said that teacher evaluations and instructional rounds address this issue.

School Committee Meeting
Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
School Committee Chamber

February 1, 2017

Tonight's presentation marks the start of a two-month public process to review the FY18 proposal, during which time the School Committee will hold three public hearings. For more information, please visit <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/Page/6356>.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Peggy Wiesenberg, Access to Justice Fellow, requested paper copies of all the budget documents and asked about transportation costs.

John Mudd, advocate, suggested that the BPS budget team provide a budget book by program code, similar to one the district produced in the past.


NEW BUSINESS

Mr. O'Neill announced that the Committee will hold a training session on the best practices of highly effective school boards, followed by an open session, on Saturday, February 11, 2017.

ADJOURN

At approximately 9:36 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary