



## **OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**February 26, 2014**

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on February 26, 2014 at 6 p.m. at the Edward Winter Chambers, 26 Court Street, and Boston, Massachusetts.

For more information about any of the items listed below, contact the office of the Boston School Committee: [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:feedback@bostonpublicschools.org) or 617-635-9014.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

School Committee Meeting Minutes: February 5, 2014

Grants for Approval Totaling \$111,000:

- Boston K1Ds - \$100,000
- Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant (CCE) - \$5,000
- Planning of Best Practices in Transition Assessment - \$6,000

International Travel Request: Boston Green Academy – Dominican Republic, April 5-April 12, 2014

International Travel Request: Boston Latin School – Ecuador, April 17-April 26, 2014

International Travel Request: Boston Latin School – Italy, April 18-April 26, 2014

International Travel Request: The English High School – Italy and France, April 16-April 28, 2014

International Travel Request: John D. O’Bryant School of Mathematics and Science – France and Spain, April 18-April 25, 2014

School Committee Memo: Superintendent Search Committee, February 26, 2014

Report: Updated FY15 Recommended Budget

**February 26, 2014**

## **ATTENDANCE**

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael O’Neill; Vice-Chairperson Claudio Martinez; Meg Campbell; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Rev. Gregory G. Groover; Michael Loconto; Margaret McKenna; and student representative Ayomide Olumuyiwa.

School Committee Members Absent: None

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. O’Neill called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. He announced that the meeting was being broadcast live by Boston City TV (Comcast Channel 24 and RCN Channel 13) in cooperation with BNN-TV and would be rebroadcast at a later date. A student from Emerson College also filmed the meeting.

Mr. O’Neill recognized representatives from the offices of Boston City Councilors Tito Jackson and Ayana Pressley.

## **APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

The School Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the February 5, 2014 School Committee meeting.

## **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

The Superintendent thanked his cross-functional team for addressing the budget challenges and identifying strategies to make the District more efficient and effective.

Mayor Walsh has increased the District’s target appropriation for next year by \$36 million, which represents an increase of 3.8 percent when other departments in Boston have had to take reductions. The Superintendent thanked Mayor Walsh for his commitment education.

The District must rethink its approach to service and support for schools in order to make BPS stronger.

The proposed budget would eliminate between 110 and 125 centrally-funded positions out of the approximately 800 non-school-based positions that are allocated within central budgets. Some of these positions are already vacant, some reflect anticipated retirements and normal attrition and some will also impact current employees. Restructuring services will maximize the District’s effectiveness and efficiency. In some cases, new positions will be created, and BPS employees will have opportunities to apply for those new roles. These changes will allow the District to modernize services and allow more flexibility to focus on enhancing the core work of teaching and learning in schools.

**February 26, 2014**

The Superintendent reaffirmed the District's priorities:

- Eliminating the achievement gap
- Strengthening curriculum to rise to Common Core standards
- Expanding inclusive and dual-language opportunities.

This weekend, the Office of Human Capital plans to post approximately one thousand teaching positions for the next school year - a key step in District's early hiring strategy.

Just over half of BPS schools will see a net decrease in funding; slightly less than half will see an increase. Some schools, particularly middle schools, are experiencing drops in enrollment as the District expands K-8 opportunities. Through weighted student funding, fewer students typically means fewer resources. Reductions and realignments in our central office and central services are designed to minimize the impact on schools as much possible.

The District is preparing for the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) field tests, which will begin in about 70 BPS schools this spring. There is also a public hearing on PARCC, hosted by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, on Thursday, March 13 at 5 p.m. at the Boston Teachers Union Hall in Dorchester.

The Superintendent has reminded school leaders and staff to review procedures around the MCAS, and MCAS-ALT assessments.

Last week, the Fenway High School girls basketball team defeated South Boston 49-23 in the City-League Basketball Championships. The New Mission boys basketball team defeated East Boston High School 73-54. The Superintendent congratulated the teams and wished good luck to all of the teams participating in this week's MIAA Tournaments.

I would like to close by discussing some events that have recently occurred which I hope will lead us all to reflect on the impact of our core work as a school system.

Recently, a young student at the Hennigan Elementary School and a graduate of TechBoston Academy were killed by guns in separate incidents. Mayor Walsh and the Boston Police have united with community groups, parents, and our schools to address the issue of gun violence and safety in our city. The Superintendent encouraged all BPS stakeholders to get involved.

Today, the East Boston High School hockey team presented a check for \$5,000 to the family of Alisha Savage, a young Irish girl receiving treatment in Boston for a rare form of brain cancer.

The Superintendent remarked on the generosity and resiliency of the BPS community, explaining that these challenges will ultimately make the District stronger.

**February 26, 2014**

## GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people testified regarding the Superintendent's updated FY 15 budget recommendation:

Susan Field, parent, Mendell Elementary School  
Laurie Ciardi, teacher, Curley K-8 School  
Laura Buckmaster, student, Adult Learning Center  
John Lerner, parent, Mendell Elementary School  
Olwith Eliassaint, student, Adult Learning Center  
Jenette Douglas, student, Adult Learning Center  
Marisleyda Blanco, student, Adult Learning Center  
Marie Herb, parent, Roosevelt K-8 School  
Susanne Bartlett, parent and parent council co-chair, Clap Innovation School  
Alex Porteleki, parent and parent council co-chair, Philbrick Elementary School  
Zoe Krohne, parent, Philbrick Elementary School

The following people testified regarding the Superintendent Search Committee:

Marcus Wade, member, Boston Student Advisory Council and student, Dorchester Academy  
Gary Betchtold, BPS teacher and member, Boston Truth Coalition  
Kim Janey, Massachusetts Advocates for Children

Alicia Zipp testified regarding schoolyards and gardening.

## ACTION ITEMS

***Approved*** – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval in the amount of \$111,000.

***Approved*** – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Boston Green Academy to travel to the Dominican Republic from April 5-12, 2014.

***Approved*** – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Boston Latin School to travel to Ecuador from April 17-26, 2014.

***Approved*** – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Boston Latin School to travel to Italy from April 18-26, 2014.

***Approved*** – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from The English High School to Italy and France from April 16-28, 2014.

**February 26, 2014**

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from John D. O’Bryant School of Mathematics and Science to travel to France and Spain from April 18-25, 2014.

## REPORT AND ACTION ITEM

**Superintendent Search Committee** – Mr. O’Neill presented the names, charge and timeline for a Superintendent Search Committee for the School Committee’s consideration and vote. The proposed search committee was publicly announced on February 6, 2014. The 12-person panel will be co-chaired by School Committee member Dr. Hardin Coleman, Dean of the Boston University Graduate School of Education, and Robert Gallery, President of Bank of America Massachusetts and board member of the Boston Plan for Excellence. It will be responsible for reviewing search firms, holding public hearings, drafting a job description, and narrowing the pool of candidates to three finalists who will be interviewed publicly. The Search Committee will aim to present the three final candidates between mid-May and mid-June but the timeframe will be adjusted, if necessary, to ensure that BPS has the highest level of choices available.

Mr. Olumuyiwa stated that the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) has drafted criteria for the next superintendent and requested that the search committee include a student. Mr. O’Neill explained that students and the public at-large will have numerous opportunities to provide input throughout the search process and noted as student representative, Mr. Olumuyiwa will participate in interviews with the final candidates.

**Approved** – On roll call, the School Committee unanimously approved the membership, charge and timeline for the Superintendent Search Committee.

## REPORT

**Updated Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Recommendation** – Chief Financial Officer Donald Kennedy presented a balanced budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2015 after the District identified strategies to close the \$14 million budget gap presented to the Committee on February 5<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Walsh has increased the FY15 budget allocation for schools by about \$36 million, or 3.8 percent. The proposed \$973.3 million budget provides for the expansion of K-1 seats, technology investments, a teacher diversity action plan and more extended learning time. The proposed budget also calls for central office reorganizations, consolidations and reductions in services that will save the district more than \$39 million. Transportation Director Carl Allen presented an overview of transportation-related proposals that could save the District \$11 million.

School Committee members asked numerous clarifying questions about the proposed budget-savings strategies. Ms. Campbell requested a copy of the District’s capital budget and called upon the Committee to revisit its decision to reopen the Alighieri and P.A. Shaw buildings. Dr. Coleman asked the District to track the impact that transportation cuts may have on attendance and tardiness. Ms. McKenna requested data on excess capacity. Mr. Martinez requested data on adult learners and suggested that the Committee meet with Mayor Walsh to discuss the impact of the proposed cuts to adult education. He also requested data on transportation costs for non-BPS

**February 26, 2014**

students, as well as details on where K-1 seats are being added and eliminated. Mr. Loconto requested data on round one registration for school year 2014-15. Mr. O'Neill and Rev. Groover expressed concerns about the proposed 16 percent reduction to the central office budget.

BPS will hold a series of public hearings throughout March to solicit feedback on the proposed budget. For full details, please visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org/budget](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/budget). The Committee is scheduled to vote on the Superintendent's final budget recommendation on March 26.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

Carolyn Kain, Chair, Boston Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SpedPac), testified regarding the FY 15 budget recommendation and the superintendent search.

Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent, testified regarding the FY15 budget recommendation.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

No new business was introduced.

## **ADJOURN**

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

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan  
Executive Secretary