



## **OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE FY20 BUDGET HEARING AND BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**March 20, 2019**

The Boston School Committee held an FY20 budget hearing and School Committee meeting on March 20, 2019 at 5 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](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org), email [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:feedback@bostonpublicschools.org) or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

### **ATTENDANCE**

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael Loconto; Vice Chairperson Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Michael O’Neill; Dr. Lorna Rivera; Jeri Robinson; Quoc Tran; and student representative Evelyn Reyes.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Agenda

Boston School Committee Meeting Minutes: February 27, 2019

Memo from Interim Superintendent Laura Perille to School Committee Members re: FY20 Budget, March 20, 2019

Boston Public Schools Recommended FY2020 Budget Updated March 20, 2019 (Budget Tables)

International Travel Request: Boston Latin School – Dominican Republic - April 11-18, 2019

International Travel Request: Boston Latin School – China - April 10-21, 2019

International Travel Request: Community Academy of Science and Health and Jeremiah E. Burke High School - Senegal with BuildON, April 8-19, 2019

International Travel Request: McCormack Middle School – Costa Rica - April 10-18, 2019

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International Travel Request: Donald McKay K-8 School – England, France, and Italy - April 14-22, 2019

Grants for Approval Totaling \$843,382:

<b>Amount</b>	<b>FY</b>	<b>Grant Name</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Sites</b>
\$8,034	2019	Emergency Impact and Assistance Aid for Homeless Children and Youth	Increase	Districtwide
\$3,200	2019	Humane Society of Massachusetts CPR and AED Grant	New	East Boston High School, Charlestown
\$15,000	2019	MCIEA Performance Assessment Support	Increase	EMK, Lyon High School, Frederick
\$421,668	2019	Mass Life Sciences Center Equipment Grant	New	~9 sites districtwide
\$91,080	2019	School Nutrition Equipment Assistance Grant For High Needs Districts	New	Districtwide
\$226,291	2019	Students Displaced by Hurricanes Maria and Irma	New	Districtwide
\$48,336	2019	Title I	Increase	Districtwide
\$29,773	2019	Title II-A	Increase	Districtwide

Memo from Chairperson Loconto to Boston School Committee re: English Language Learners Task Force Co-Chair Nomination: Dr. Lorna Rivera, February 27, 2019

Boston Public Schools Office of Internal Audit: Recommendations of the Internal Audit Task Force PowerPoint

State Education Finance Reform PowerPoint

Letter from Mayor Martin J. Walsh re: state education finance reform, March 18, 2019

21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Fund Surplus Furniture PowerPoint

Furniture Surplus Discussion Equity Impact Statement

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Loconto called the FY20 budget hearing to order.

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**INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT’S FINAL FY20 BUDGET PROPOSAL**

Boston Public Schools (BPS) Chief Financial Officer Eleanor Laurans and Deputy Chief Financial Officer Nate Kuder presented the Interim Superintendent’s Final Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) budget recommendation of \$1,138,507,032.

In total, school budgets have increased by \$3,193,821 since the preliminary recommendation was presented on February 6<sup>th</sup>. Twenty-four schools received a total of \$1.3 million in reserves for soft landings. \$1.3 million has been allocated to support students impacted by the closure of West Roxbury Academy and Urban Science Academy. Starting next schools year, all 7-12 BPS, charter, private-parochial students living in Boston and attending school in Boston will receive free M7 passes, allowing them to ride the T for free seven days a week.

Committee members thanked the entire BPS budget team for their hard work preparing the FY20 budget proposal.

Ms. Robinson suggested that the district explore whether the Weighted Student Funding formula should be adjusted to better support schools with declining enrollment.

Mr. O’Neill asked about for more details about the Blackstone Elementary School’s soft landing allocation. He encouraged the district to examine its waitlist practices and enrollment projection process in lights of concerns recently raised by the Nathan Hale Elementary School community. He praised the Boston Student Advisory Council for its long-time advocacy for the distribution of free M7 passes.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked all students who advocated for M7s. She echoed Mr. O’Neill’s comments about the importance of accurate enrollment projections. She invited all BPS stakeholders to attend a public hearing on the state’s education funding formula on Friday March 22<sup>nd</sup> at the MA State House.

Mr. Loconto also encouraged people to attend Friday’s hearing, and to call or email their state legislators to advocate for meaningful changes to the state’s education funding formula.

Mr. O’Neill noted that Ms. Laurans and her team are being recognized for their outstanding performance at the national level.

**PUBLIC COMMENT AT FY20 BUDGET HEARING**

Caleb Thompson, student, Boston Teachers Union K-8 Pilot School, testified regarding staffing concerns.

Sylvie Hove, student, Boston Teachers Union K-8 Pilot School testified regarding staffing concerns.

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Shandira Soto, student, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding the need for more guidance counselors.

James Lines, student, Urban Science Academy, testified in favor of additional arts funding.

Niven Williams, student, John D. O'Bryant School of Math and Science, testified in favor of additional arts funding.

Laura Lopez Finet, student, Boston Arts Academy, testified in favor of additional arts funding.

Xavier Thompson, student, Boston Community Leadership Academy, testified in favor of additional arts funding.

Ella Cascino, student, Snowden International School at Copley, testified in favor of additional arts funding.

Dan Goldsbury, school counselor, UP Academy Boston, testified in favor of additional funding for mental health professionals in schools.

Paul Shoaf Kozak, member, Mario Umana Academy School Site Council, testified in favor of additional funding for the school's dual language program.

Kristin Johnson, member, Boston Coalition for Education Equity, testified regarding budget concerns.

Paul Friedman, parent, Sumner Elementary School, testified regarding budget concerns.

Lauren Peter, parent, Sumner Elementary School, testified regarding budget concerns.

Patricia Shevlin, parent, Winship Elementary School, testified in favor of funding for City Connects.

Jessica Tang, president, Boston Teachers Union, testified in favor of reaching a collective bargaining agreement with the district.

**FY20 BUDGET HEARING ADJOURNMENT**

**Approved** – The Committee unanimously approved, by roll call, a motion to adjourn the FY20 budget hearing.

Mr. Loconto announced that the Committee would proceed with the School Committee Meeting.

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**INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

*\*As prepared for delivery.*

Good evening. Some of you may have noticed that it was a little more crowded than usual getting into tonight's meeting. I want to begin by thanking everyone for coming out tonight and expressing your thoughts and concerns about the budget. We appreciate the voices of our union teachers and partners from the Boston Teachers Union in this important dialogue. A few moments ago, we held a hearing with the School Committee to add nearly \$3.2 million to the budgets of 53 schools in FY20. This is on top of our original budget proposal that was made last month. Another step forward was the recent announcement by Mayor Walsh and the City of Boston that we're providing free MBTA passes to students in grades 7-12 for next year. This is an investment the students have been asking about for years. The distribution of M7 passes allows all of our students to not only get to and from school, but it increases their opportunities to attend internships, dual-enrollment classes at area colleges, and career technical training, jobs, and more.

I'd like to thank the BPS Budget Office for its prudent fiscal planning, and for helping us to find funding in reserves to provide additional supports for our schools with declining enrollment, along with special education supports. Again, these funds are being allocated on top of what our original budget proposal was last month. I'd like to again thank Mayor Walsh and the City of Boston for stepping up to the plate to make additional investments for our students, making up for what the state aid has lagged behind. As many of you know, the budget process is truly a process. It's an ongoing public dialogue that involves input from the students, parents, teachers, staff members, and community members that we work so hard to serve. I'd like to thank all of you, as well as members of the School Committee and our elected officials, for continuing to ask pointed questions that make us think deeper and more strategically about how to best serve our students with the resources we have. We are particularly grateful to the Hyde Square Task Force BosTeenArts Initiative for a constructive discourse, which has developed in recent weeks, to establish a plan for further dialogue to advance the district's ongoing efforts to expand arts opportunities for students. Everyone in this room has a desire to see the students of the Boston Public Schools be successful. I'm thankful for all of you who are here tonight as we work to provide the best possible use of our resources for our students.

In regard to ongoing contract negotiations, the Boston Public Schools (BPS) is actively engaged in the collective bargaining process with the Boston Teachers Union (BTU). We remain committed to engaging in a constructive dialogue with our labor partners. In order to ensure the continuation of productive conversations, the district will refrain from commenting on specific issues that are being discussed at the bargaining table. Finalizing an agreement that puts student interests first and is fiscally sustainable is an important priority to which BPS is fully committed. Reviewing and expanding a range of social-emotional supports for our students continues to be an ongoing priority for the district. This includes counseling and health and wellness services.

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This year, BPS added 10 nurses to its staffing level and secured at least a half-time nurse in every school. Additionally, this month, we announced the formation of six working groups, including one focused specifically on enhancing school guidance counseling supports. BPS is committed to this ongoing work.

Let's start with some thrilling news from the world of high school sports. I'd like to give a huge congratulations to the TechBoston Academy Bears boys basketball team for winning the Division 2 state championship for the second year in a row! The Bears won 69-54 against Taconic High School from Western Mass. in a riveting game on Saturday in Worcester. I was there cheering loudly from the stands as I have been to a number of recent games. There were four TechBoston players who scored in double figures while the team picked up nine offensive rebounds and forced 22 Taconic turnovers. ([According to the Boston Herald.](#)) Great job by all the players, and kudos to coach Johnny Williams for bringing us some hometown pride. I'm paraphrasing Johnny's quote in the Boston Globe, but I think it's worth repeating... He says, *"This means everything for our kids; it means everything to the city of Boston. It is not just for us. It is for every kid that comes up in an urban environment. We make it so they can look at our guys and they can believe. . . Now, these kids in the city can definitely look up to these guys."*

A great example of using the arts to tie in history and cultural identity lessons took place over the last few weeks at the Haley School in Roslindale, where students performed in a "Hip-Hopera," which, if you couldn't tell, is a combination of hip-hop and opera. While the performances happened this month, the school used the opportunity to continue the lessons of Black History Month to demonstrate that diversity and heritage should be celebrated year-round. Thanks to Theater Director Jason Wise and Music Director Dan Dehart for using art to bring these important lessons to life.

I also enjoyed stopping by the Roosevelt School's production of the Lion King at Riverside Theater last weekend. In addition to an amazing performance, my hat's off to the staff, students and families who created some amazing costumes and set design. We have a terrific staff at the Roosevelt, and I'd like to thank everyone who put together this wonderful performance.

Mr. Loconto said that earlier this week he and Mr. O'Neill attended the Council of Great City Schools' annual legislative policy conference in Washington D.C. where they met with several representatives about issues facing BPS students.

Mr. O'Neill thanked Representative Pressley's office for meeting with him and Mr. Loconto. He also met with US Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos regarding the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). He passed along a message from Secretary DeVos asking the Committee to think creatively and boldly to generate solutions to problems that have traditionally stymied school boards.

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

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### **STUDENT REPRESENT'S REPORT**

*\*As prepared for delivery.*

Good evening, everyone. Last month, the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) hosted a town hall on the PROMISE Act. We had over 100 young people in attendance and students discussed the necessity of such legislation and our views for a fully funded future.

We were happy to have these conversations with youth from the following organizations:

1. Youth Justice Power Union
2. Sociedad Latina
3. The City School
4. MassCosh
5. I Have a Future
6. Mayor's Youth Council
7. Teen Empowerment
8. Hyde Square Task Force
9. Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción
10. Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center

As a follow up to this discourse, BSAC students will be testifying and advocating for the PROMISE Act at the legislative hearing later this week. We encourage community members to attend if possible, and certainly to spread the word about the PROMISE Act.

Last Friday, BSAC students participated in the global climate change strike. Members of our Environmental Justice and Sustainability subcommittee shared powerful words at the rally and later attended the town hall to listen to legislators. They were also strong in their efforts to have legislators sign the "No Fossil Fuel" pledge.

Within the last week, students have also been meeting with Boston City Councilors to discuss our priorities as well as signing the "No Fossil Fuel" and student vote pledges. Councilors Edwards, Garrison, and Flynn have signed on to the student vote pledge specifically. We look forward to meeting with more city councilors soon.

In the same vein, later this week we are sending students to the State House for the spring series of legislative drops. At the legislative drops, we will also ask lawmakers to support us by signing the student vote pledge.

Lastly, in terms of outreach, the BSAC staff has sent out an election toolkit to help schools elect their student officials before the end of next year and we are following up with phone calls to schools, prioritizing those schools that have been historically not represented on BSAC. We are also facilitating training on student rights and BSAC's work across the district to increase student interest. Thank you.

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Ms. Robinson asked what the student response has been to the recent announcement that free M7 passes will be given to 7-12 students starting next school year. Ms. Reyes said that the response from students has been overwhelming positive.

Mr. O'Neill praised former student representatives to the School Committee who advocated for free M7 passes.

### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Boston City Councilor At-Large Annissa Essaibi-George testified regarding the FY20 budget proposal and her education priorities. She noted that she has already signed the "No Fossil Fuel" pledge discussed earlier by Ms. Reyes.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

Ms. Robinson asked for more details about the School Nutrition Equipment Assistance Grant for High Needs Districts. Deputy Director of Food and Nutrition Services Deb Ventricelli explained that the funding will support schools with satellite kitchens.

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$843,382.

**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 the Dominican Republic from April 11-18, 2019.

**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 China from April 10-21, 2019.

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**Approved** – The Committee unanimously approved, by roll call, the nomination of School Committee member Dr. Lorna Rivera to serve as co-chair of the Committee’s English Language Learners Task Force.

## **REPORTS**

***Boston Public Schools Office of Internal Audit: Recommendations of the Internal Audit Task Force*** – Internal Audit Task Force Co-Chairs Scott Baranowski and Judith Gonsalves presented the culmination of the group’s work. The School Committee established the Internal Audit Task Force in December 2017 to improve operations, provide transparency, and improve trust that district funds are being employed honestly and effectively. The Task Force, comprised of experts in the field of internal audit, have been meeting regularly over the past several months to propose an Internal Audit policy for the Boston School Committee and draft a job description for the newly created position of director of Internal Audit for Boston Public Schools.

The Internal Audit Task Force presented for the Committee’s consideration an internal audit policy proposal, as well as a draft job description and reporting lines for the position of Chief Audit Executive (CAE). The Task Force concluded that the CAE should be given the authority and space to create an initial audit plan. The Task Force did, however, devise specific measures of success to serve as a guide for the Office of Internal Audit.

Mr. Loconto thanked Mr. O’Neill for leading the charge to establish the Internal Audit Task Force and for serving as a valuable member.

Mr. O’Neill emphasized the value of internal audit. Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked the Task Force for its work. Mr. Loconto noted that the IA Task Force will continue to serve as a monitoring body after the School Committee takes action and a Chief Audit Executive is hired.

The School Committee is scheduled to vote on the recommendations of the Internal Audit Task Force on March 27<sup>th</sup>.

***State Education Finance Reform*** – City of Boston Budget Director Justin Sterritt provided an overview of the state education finance reform efforts that are ongoing on Beacon Hill. Mayor Walsh, Interim Superintendent Laura Perille and other city and state leaders, including Senator Sonia Chang Diaz, support the Education PROMISE Act, which aims to provide more equitable state funding to school districts in Massachusetts. The current state funding model does not fully take this into account the needs of districts like Boston which serve a significantly high percentage of high needs students. This, combined with under-funding of the charter school reimbursement, is leaving Boston Public Schools woefully short-changed. The City of Boston has had to make-up for the financial gap by providing \$200 million since Mayor Walsh took office, a practice that is unsustainable, Mr. Sterritt explained.

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Ms. Reyes asked what the City of Boston hopes to gain from the proposal as well as the anticipated timeline. Mr. Sterritt explained that the City would like for 17.5 percent of its education funding to come from the state over the next 5-10 years.

Dr. Coleman asked about the City's plan to build widespread support for the legislation. Mr. Sterritt explained that city and state leaders are working hard to galvanize collective support during state budget process.

Ms. Jeri Robinson asked about the history of state education funding since the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. Mr. Sterritt explained that state funding to gateway cities like Boston has significantly eroded over time as Boston's tax base has increased. BPS serves an increasingly high percentage of high needs students, while the charter school reimbursement has not been fully funded by the state.

Mr. O'Neill asked about the projected cost of PROMISE ACT and the arguments against it. He asked Mr. Sterritt to provide the Committee with a list of legislators who have not yet expressed support for the PROMISE Act so that the Committee can advocate on behalf of BPS.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila encouraged Mr. Sterritt to communicate the complex funding issue into language that can be easily shared with the BPS families. She suggested that the Mayor's neighborhood services liaisons share the information in multiple languages at the neighborhood level.

Mr. Loconto suggested that BPS partner with education advocates such as the Boston Coalition for Education Equity. He encouraged all BPS stakeholder to call or write to their legislators to advocate for the PROMISE Act.

***21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Fund Surplus Furniture*** – School Building Coordinator Bernie Lynch and Director of Implementation for Capital and Facilities Management Sue McCann explained that over the past year, the district has purchased 54,000 pieces of classroom furniture for all BPS schools through the BuildBPS 21st Century Fund. To make way for the new furniture, each school identified 60,000 items of surplus furniture to be removed and placed in storage. In order to properly dispose of the surplus furniture, the School Committee is required by state law to find that this furniture has exceeded its usefulness, and must authorize the district to make this furniture available for other interested parties, which includes non-profit/charitable organizations.

Ms. Robinson asked about the possibility of donating the furniture to BPS families. Ms. Perille explained the transfer could be made to local agencies, which could then distribute the furniture to families in need.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked for more details about the competitive bidding process for the new furniture, which yielded six vendors. The planning committee included teachers. Ms. Oliver-

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Davila shared feedback from some recipients who are not pleased with the new furniture, and suggested that the district gather feedback from teachers and school leaders prior to purchasing any additional furniture. Ms. McCann said that the district plans to conduct a satisfaction survey.

Mr. O'Neill asked about the possibility of keeping some furniture in reserve for possible use in future swing space. Ms. McCann said that the furniture is no longer useful. Mr. O'Neill requested a detailed accounting of the newly purchased furniture, as well as the pieces that are being recommended for surplus, which the presenters agreed to provide. He suggested that the district explore donating surplus furniture to Cape Verde, noting that many BPS students hail from Cape Verde or are of Cape Verdean heritage. The Committee is scheduled to take action on the furniture surplus proposal on March 27<sup>th</sup>.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

No speakers.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Oliver-Dávila requested an update on students who entered BPS following Hurricane Maria. Ms. Perille agreed to follow up.

**ADJOURN**

At approximately 8:34 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.  
Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan  
Executive Secretary