



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

March 27, 2019

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on March 27, 2019 at 5:15 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 Loconto; Vice Chairperson Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Michael O’Neill; Dr. Lorna Rivera; Jeri Robinson; Quoc Tran.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Boston School Committee Meeting Minutes: March 20, 2019

International Travel Request: The English High School – Italy – April 13-23, 2019

International Travel Request: Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers – France – April 14-22, 2019

International Travel Request: John D. O’Bryant School of Math and Science – China – April 10-21, 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)

BuildBPS Phase II Update PowerPoint

Build BPS Update Equity Impact Statement

21st Century Schools Fund Surplus Furniture PowerPoint

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Furniture Surplus Discussion Equity Impact Statement

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

Force PowerPoint

Grants for Approval Totaling \$171,608

Amount	FY	Grant Name	Status	Sites
\$1,000	2019	Arts Opportunity Fund	Increase	Districtwide
\$126,470	2019	IDEA	Increase	Districtwide
\$2,500	2019	Financial Literacy Fund – Boston Latin Academy	New	Boston Latin Academy
\$2,500	2019	Financial Literacy Fund – Greater Egleston	New	Greater Egleston
\$20,000	2019	Leading Educational Access Program	New	Dever, Orchard Gardens, CASH, Irving
\$7,500	2019	Mass Grad Promising Practices – BATA	Increase	BATA
\$10,000	2019	Mass Grad Promising Practices – Charlestown	Increase	Charlestown
\$1,608	2019	Special Education Early Childhood Grant	Increase	Districtwide
\$30	2019	Title I	Increase	Districtwide

BPS Transportation Operator Contract PowerPoint

Transdev Extension Equity Impact Statement

Boston Green Academy PowerPoint

Boston Green Academy Charter Amendment Requests Equity Impact Statement

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Loconto led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Approved – The Committee unanimously approved, by roll call, a motion to adjourn to executive session to conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with the Boston Teachers Union.

The Committee returned to public session at 6:20 p.m.

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

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Good evening everyone. Thank you for joining us tonight. Later this evening, the School Committee will vote on the proposed Fiscal Year 2020 BPS budget. As I mentioned last week, the budget process is an ongoing conversation between Central Office and school communities that involves a great deal of problem solving. We work very closely with individual schools to help them to meet the needs of the students we serve, and these discussions can result in additional supports for schools. Chief Financial Officer Eleanor Laurans will provide more details later this evening, but it is important to note that since February 6th, 53 schools have received additional funding through this ongoing process to help narrow budget gaps based on student need and school context.

I'd also like to highlight some key investments from this year's proposal:

BPS is investing \$375,000 to ensure equitable access to Next Generation Standards-aligned science instruction in the elementary grades. The funding will also support professional development for teachers. This comes as BPS aims to improve the percentage of students scoring advanced or proficient in science on state assessments, and as the state accountability system begins putting the increased weight on science.

Starting next fall, all sixth-grade students will take the test for entrance into the district's exam schools, the Independent Student Entrance Exam (ISEE), in their home schools during the school day. Testing is traditionally held early in the morning on a Saturday in November at certain locations, which has posed a barrier to access for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. We are hopeful this investment will make the prospect of taking the exam more appealing to more of our students and in turn make the student populations of our exam schools more reflective of the entire district's demographics.

The recent announcement that all students in grades 7-12 will receive M7 passes next year. This will undoubtedly aid our students in their commutes to and from school, but it also eases access to a wealth of opportunities: internships, dual-enrollment classes at area colleges, career technical training, jobs, and more. This investment is not yet fully reflected in the FY20 budget. Later, CFO Eleanor Laurans and I will provide more information on the funds allocated since the initial proposal.

BPS was notified yesterday that the district will undergo a District Accountability Review in the 2019 - 2020 school year...meaning this will not commence until next year. The Office of District Reviews and Monitoring (ODRM) at the Mass. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) conducts district reviews across the Commonwealth. This is part of a statutory requirement that DESE must fulfill each year, the review provides an assessment of district systems, enabling district leaders to reflect on progress, identify systemic challenges, and strengthen performance.

All Massachusetts districts are intended to be periodically subjected to this analysis and DESE selects up to 20 districts for review each year. The Boston Public Schools was last reviewed in

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this manner in 2009. Springfield was reviewed last school year, and Worcester was reviewed the year before, so this coming school year will be Boston's turn. We look forward to working with DESE and learning more about this process and its implications in order to strengthen our accountability and better serve students. We just received notice of this yesterday, so we will have additional updates for the School Committee after we have worked with DESE to develop a plan for this review process in the Fall of 2019.

I'm sure many of you have read or seen reports of last week's vandalism of a World War II Memorial in South Boston. This is in addition to the defacing of Boston Police memorial in Mattapan. Last Tuesday, Perry K-8 teacher Judy Nee took her K1 class on a field trip to the memorial, not too far from their school in Southie, for a mini civics lesson for the young scholars. While there, news cameras captured the class reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Footage of the students at the memorial was widely shared and led to US Army Sergeant Ray Regan reaching out to Principal Geoff Rose and the Perry community to come meet with the students. Sgt. Ryan was impressed with these young students demonstrating fidelity to their country and their community. Whether it's these Perry students showing the vandals that they can't break a community's spirit, or the Guild School opening its doors to citizens evacuated from their homes due to the casket factory fire, when something happens in the City of Boston, it will undoubtedly have an effect on many of our BPS community members. How we respond is very important, and these students -- some of our youngest -- are leading the way.

Cover Art Contest for 19-20 Guide to BPS

For the second straight year, we are seeking student art submissions to be considered for the cover of the Guide to BPS for Students and Families. Two years ago we featured student artwork on the cover for the first time. The response was so overwhelmingly positive that last year, we actively sought submissions from young BPS artists. Our selection committee picked the top entries and opened voting to the BPS community. "Going in Circles" received the most votes and currently serves as the cover art for the 18-19 guide. We're always looking to display the talented work of our students, so please visit bostonpublicschools.org to submit student art. You'll see a button for the entry form right on our home page. The deadline to submit is April 30th.

Mr. Loconto invited BPS high school students to submit original artwork to the Congressional Art Competition before the April 17th deadline.

Ms. Reyes asked for more details about DESE review planned for this fall. Ms. Perille clarified that the review is separate from the district's accountability system, involves observational site visits, and covers the following six standards of effective district practice: leadership and governance; assessment; curriculum and instruction; human resources and professional development, student support, financial and asset management.

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

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GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people testified with concerns regarding the Interim Superintendent's FY20 budget proposal:

- Boston City Councilor Andrea Campbell
- Boston City Councilor Kim Janey
- Angel Castillo Pinera, student East Boston High School
- Rebecca Kabeya, student, Blackstone Elementary School
- Madylin Abel, student, Blackstone Elementary School
- Jazmyn Cuello, student, Blackstone Elementary School
- Soleika Soto, parent, Blackstone Elementary School
- Mike Heichman, former BPS parent and education advocate
- Nina Gaeta, family center coordinator, East Boston High School
- Bobby Jenkins, volunteer and advocate, also testified in favor of establishing an admissions policy for Madison Park Technical Vocational High School
- Lisa Ronga, teacher, Blackstone Elementary School
- Susana Cruces, parent, East Boston High School
- Domingos DaRosa, community member

ACTION ITEMS

Ms. Oliver Dávila asked for more information about the financial literacy grant for Boston Latin Academy and Greater Egleston. Director of Grants and External Funding Anu Jayanth said that the schools applied for these competitive grants by writing their own grant applications. Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked the direct to share information about such opportunities with other schools.

Mr. O'Neill said he was pleased to see schools participating in international travel that have not typically done so in the past. Ms. Perille said that the position of Global Education Director is currently vacant but the work continues at the school level.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$171,608.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from The English High School to travel to Italy from April 13-23, 2019.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Heath Careers to travel to France from April 14-22, 2019.

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Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from the John D. O’Bryant School of Math and Science to travel to China from April 10-21, 2019.

Chief Financial Officer Eleanor Laurans and Budget Director David Bloom presented the Interim Superintendent’s Final Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) budget recommendation in the amount of \$1,138,507,032, a 2.4 percent increase over FY19. Ms. Laurans noted that the budget presented does not include funding for any costs associated with district’s next collective bargaining agreement with the Boston Teachers Union. 89 percent of the budget funds central office; 5.4 percent funds central office; and 5.3 percent funds services for non-BPS students. The budget proposal includes \$1.3 million in soft landings for schools experiencing significant enrollment declines. \$5.7 million is being held in reserves to be distributed to schools later this year following enrollment reconciliations.

Ms. Laurans introduced her entire budget team; Committee members praised the budget team for their hard work.

Mr. Loconto requested that the Committee receive a budget update from the district in late fall. He clarified for the Committee that yes vote would approve Interim Superintendent’s final FY20 budget recommendation; a no vote would allow the district to proceed with its preliminary FY20 budget recommendation as presented to the Committee on February 6.

Mr. O’Neill expressed concern about federal and state funding projections. Ms. Laurans said that if the district receives more funding than projected, it will plan for additional spending. Mr. O’Neill encouraged BPS stakeholders to advocate for the PROMISE Act, which could significantly increase state aid to BPS.

Ms. Robinson asked encouraged the district to provide all schools with baseline budgets and to explore ways to mitigate the impact of declining enrollment on schools. Mr. Loconto said that the district has come a long way since introducing Weighted Student Funding, and will continue to refine its practices by adjusting weights and engaging in long-term financial planning.

Dr. Coleman expressed confidence in the budget process, saying that the district has taken a good approach to address complex and difficult problems. He encouraged district leaders to reflect on the bright spots and challenges of this year’s budget process, and to continue seeking additional funding from the state.

Ms. Reyes said that she would not vote in favor of the final FY20 budget recommendation if she had the opportunity to do.

Dr. Rivera said that she has mixed feelings about the budget recommendation. The Sumner Elementary School, which her son’s attends, is proposed to receive a budget reduction. She expressed concern about the impact of gentrification, need for more affordable housing, and

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expansion of charter schools. She said she is heartened that 53 schools are slated to receive additional funding and that the district is making new investments to support English Learners and students with disabilities. She called on state leaders to pass the Promise Act to correct these imbalances.

Mr. Tran said that proposed budget reflects the district's commitment to equity and focus on children.

Mr. O'Neill said that the Committee learns by listening. He thanked everyone who testified during the budget process, particularly the students. He asked district leaders to follow up on serious issues that were raised during the budget process, such as wait list issues at the Hale Elementary School, ELL programming issues at the Guild Elementary School, safety concerns and sub-separate programs at the Blackstone Elementary School, and grade configurations in East Boston. He expressed support for Weighted Student Funding, adding that he is concerned about the impact of declining enrollment on core services. Mr. O'Neill pledged to continue advocating for more funds at the federal and state levels. He described the FY20 budget proposal as prudent budget and the budget process fair process.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked everyone who participated in budget process. She praised Mayor Walsh's pledge to provide M7 MBTA passes for middle and high school students, calling it a game changer for many families. She also praised the distribution of soft landings. Ms. Oliver-Davila echoed Mr. O'Neill's request for the district to examine its enrollment projections process and wait list process, as well as the impact of catchment areas under the current home based student assignment system. She called for a citywide strategy to increase affordable housing. She also requested regular updates about the district's efforts to clean up discarded needles on or near school property. She encouraged people to continue to advocate for the PROMISE Act.

Ms. Perille thanked everyone who participated in the budget process, reviewing the evolution of the budget process since last year. She described how the district is partnering with the City to clean up needles at Orchard Gardens and the Mason School, adding kiosks, new lighting, and conducting more frequent custodial sweeps. Ms. Perille announced that BPS has identified \$5 million in the capital budget to address safety concerns at the Blackstone Elementary School by adding walls and doors at the open-concept school.

Chairperson Loconto thanked the students, parents, teachers and others who testified during the budget process, saying that the Interim Superintendent's final budget proposal reflects much of their feedback. He praised the district's new online budgeting tool for its transparency. He also lauded the many investments represented in the budget, such as expanded access to exam school admission, support for low performing schools, and enhanced science instruction. He requested a report from the district on the enrollment projections process.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Interim Superintendent's Fiscal Year 2020 general fund budget in the amount of \$1,138,507,032.

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Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved an Office of Internal Audit Policy and Office of Internal Audit Chief Audit Executive Job Description, as recommended by the Committee’s Internal Audit Task Force.

Mr. Loconto read aloud the motion for the surplus of 15 Everett Street, Hyde Park. Mr. O’Neill thanked Chairperson Loconto for adding language to the motion about restrictions on future use. Mr. Tran and Chairperson Loconto discussed the language in the motion before agreeing to move forward as presented.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion to declare surplus and no longer needed for school purposes the land and building of the William Barton Rogers School, 15 Everett Street, Hyde Park, MA 02136, which school parcel is currently known as Ward 18, Parcel 1808963000. The property is not currently in use by nor viable for immediate future use by the Boston Public Schools and the School Department transfers the care, custody, management, and control to the Boston Public Facilities Commission to help meet the needs of other City of Boston priorities. Such transfer is subject to the understanding that the property shall not be used for future non-BPS educational purposes, including but not limited to charter, parochial, or private school use. If the City of Boston later determines that educational purposes are the highest and best use of the parcel in question, the property may be returned to the care, custody, management and control of the Boston Public Schools.

The Committee thanked School Building Coordinator Bernie Lynch and Director of Implementation for Capital and Facilities Management Sue McCann for providing responses to questions raised following their presentation on March 20th.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion to declare surplus the furniture, fixtures and equipment removed from schools as part of the 21st Century Schools Fund initiative surplus as they are no longer useful for the Boston Public Schools but have resale or salvage value, and therefore, makes these items available for other interested parties.

REPORTS

BPS Transportation Operator Contract – Assistant Director of Transportation Ed Pesce and Chief of Operations John Hanlon presented the Interim Superintendent’s recommendation that the district exercise a one-year extension option for its contract with transportation operator Transdev. The presenters explained that putting the contract up for bid would likely result in a significantly more costly contract, given that there are a limited number of companies nationwide that can provide the service that Boston requires. This would be the second of five optional one-year extensions built into the current contract. The extension would be for the period July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the contract extension on April 10th.

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Boston Green Academy Amendment Requests – Boston Green Academy (BGA) Headmaster Matt Holzer and BGA Governing Board Chair Alex Chiu presented three charter amendment requests for consideration by the Committee. The three amendments are:

- Memorandum of Understanding: BGA’s original MOU from 2011 has remained in effect since then as a successor agreement was negotiated for a second charter term.
- Enrollment Policy: BGA is required to have an approved enrollment policy, and the policy must be updated in accordance with BGA’s new Chapter 74 (vocational) Environmental Science Career Technical Education program.
- Accountability Plan: The accountability plan will outline the ways in which BGA can be assessed outside of the state’s established accountability system.

Mr. Holzer discussed BGA’s history as an in-district Horace Mann Charter School and the progress it has made.

Ms. Robinson praised BGA for reducing its suspension rate by 67 percent over two years, which Mr. Holzer contributed to relationship-building.

Mr. O’Neill encouraged BGA to add language to its MOU formalizing the school’s adherence to the BPS Code of Conduct. He requested a legal opinion on what language is statutorily required in an MOU for a Horace Mann In-District Charter School, which the district agreed to provide. He also asked if BGA follows Mass Core. Mr. Holzer explained that BGA provides many but not all Mass Core requirements.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila echoed Mr. O’Neill’s suggestion that BGA consider adding language committing to follow the BPS Code of Conduct. She requested clarification around the language in the MOU about facilities, asking if it was standard or potentially precedent setting. BPS Legal Advisor Catherine Lizotte said that BPS is adding facilities language to all of its MOUs in light of the Build BPS process. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the BGA amendment requests on April 10th.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

At approximately 9:56 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

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Attest:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Sullivan".

Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary