



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

April 27, 2022

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on April 27, 2022 at 6 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 Jeri Robinson; Vice Chairperson Michael D. O'Neill; Stephen Alkins; Brandon Cardet-Hernandez; Rafaela Polanco Garcia; Quoc Tran; and Student Representative Xyra Mercer.

School Committee Member Absent: Lorena Lopera.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Meeting Minutes: April 6, 2022

Grants for Approval Totaling \$2,509,703

Interim Salary and Non-Personnel Payments on External Funds Memo

Renewal of Transdev Transportation Contract

2022 Revised Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Accelerated Repair Projects

2022 Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Core Projects

Mission Hill School Equity Impact Statement

Mission Hill Emergency School Quality Review Report

Mission Hill Coffey Report Redacted

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Hinckley Allen BPS Phase I Report Redacted 4 28 22

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Jeri Robinson called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. Ms. Lopera was absent. Mr. Cardet-Hernandez arrived shortly after roll call. All other members were present.

Ms. Robinson 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 in 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. Translated meeting documents were posted at www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee prior to the start of the meeting

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the April 6, 2022 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Chair Robinson announced that the Superintendent is tabling her report due to the gravity of the agenda.

REPORT

Mission Hill K-8 School Update and Recommendation for School Year 2022-2023 - Deputy Superintendent of Academics Drew Echelson provided a summary of a report commissioned by the Superintendent and undertaken by the Boston law firm Hinckley Allen that outlines systematic and pervasive accounts of student on student sexual and physical misconduct that began as far back as 2014. The report concludes these serious incidents were not addressed appropriately by school personnel and confirm multiple systematic reporting failures by school employees. Some of the cases outlined in the investigation have been reported by the press in recent years.

The Superintendent said that following an exhaustive review of the Hinckley Allen report, a School Quality Review conducted by School Works, and with careful consideration of all possible options, she is making the recommendation to the Boston School Committee that Mission Hill K-8 School permanently close at the end of this academic year. She announced that the School Committee will hold a special meeting on May 5, 2022 to vote on the recommendation.

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Elementary School Superintendent Grace Wai, who has been supporting the Mission Hill K-8 School this academic year, outlined the support that the district has provided to the school to date, as well as transitional support moving forward. BPS has put a transition team in place who will work with each family to ensure a smooth transition to a new school community for the next school year.

Ms. Robinson expressed her dismay at the report and praised the Mission Hill families for their courage in coming forward. She said that the complete, redacted report had just been shared with the Committee, who will now to fully and carefully evaluate it, along with the Superintendent's recommendation. She welcomed feedback from the Mission Hill community. Ms. Robinson assured that while the Committee will be diligent and thorough in its work to fully process the report and the recommendation, it will also move deliberately and with haste. She noted that families need certainty, the district must hold itself accountable, and the community needs healing.

The Superintendent announced that over the coming days, Mission Hill families are invited to several community meetings, where a transition team will share more about the enrollment process and help families choose a school that best meets their needs, including high-quality schools in Jamaica Plain.

Mr. Cardet-Hernandez spoke about the failure of adults through inaction and a lack of accountability. He thanked the Superintendent for addressing the issue. He spoke about the importance of rebuilding trust with families.

Dr. Alkins thanked the Superintendent for bringing these concerns to light. He noted that transitional support will be important for impacted families.

Ms. Polanco Garcia thanked the families who came forward as well as the Superintendent for initiating the investigation.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people testified in support of the grade expansion of the P.A. Shaw School:

- Boston City Councilor At-Large Julia Mejia
- Brenda Ramsey, Dorchester resident and Shaw School parent
- Tracy Curtin, Jamaica Plain resident and Shaw School teacher

The following people testified in support of the Boston Teachers Union Housing Justice Contract Demands:

- Ana Shapiro, Jamaica Plain resident and Charlestown High School teacher
- Ann Finkel, Brookline resident and McKay K-8 School teacher
- Lauren Ainsworth, not Boston resident and BPS teacher
- Madison Morley, Brookline resident and Orchard Gardens K-8 teacher
- Emoro Efetie, Roxbury resident and BPS teacher
- Daniela Petuchowski, Jamaica Plain resident and McKay K-8 School teacher

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- Ana Lanas, Fenway resident and Everett Elementary School teacher
- Shakeeda Bartee, Dorchester resident and UP Academy Boston teacher

The following people testified regarding the Superintendent's recommendation to close to the Mission Hill K-8 Pilot School at the end of the 2021-2022 School Year:

- Leila Parks, Jamaica Plain resident and Mission Hill K-8 School teacher and parent
- Andrew Iliff, Jamaica Plain resident and Mission Hill K-8 School parent
- Alison Cox, Jamaica Plain resident and Mission Hill K-8 School parent
- Michael Heichman, Dorchester resident and member of Boston Education Justice Alliance
- Heidi Lyne, Dorchester resident and Mission Hill K-8 School founding teacher
- Tim Klein, Jamaica Plain resident and Mission Hill K-8 School parent
- Asha Leray, not Boston resident, parent of former Mission Hill K-8 student
- Deborah Meier, Hillsdale, NY resident and founder of the Mission Hill School
- Emily Gasoi, not Boston resident and Mission Hill K-8 School founding teacher
- Carolyn Shadid Lewis, Jamaica Plain resident and Mission Hill K-8 School parent
- Toyoko Orimoto, Jamaica Plain resident and Mission Hill K-8 School parent

The following people testified regarding the future location of the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing:

- Martha O'Brien, West Roxbury resident and Horace Mann teacher
- Brian Gibson, Framingham resident and Horace Mann teacher

The following people testified regarding the Sumner Elementary School's 6th grade expansion:

- Elizabeth Ferrenz, Roslindale resident and Sumner Elementary School parent
- Lauren Peter, Roslindale resident and Sumner Elementary School parent

The following people testified in support of the employment of Nathan Hale Elementary School teacher Nathan Aaliyah Turner:

- Mark Schafer, Roxbury resident and Hale Elementary School parent
- Allise Montgomery, Dorchester resident and Hale Elementary School parent

Edith Bazile, Hyde Park resident and advocate, testified regarding special education.

Sharon Hinton, Hyde Park resident and advocate, testified regarding the district's memorandum of understanding with the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the superintendent search process.

Ruby Reyes, Dorchester resident and executive director of Boston Education Justice Alliance, testified regarding transparency.

Shery Keleher, Charlestown resident and BPS parent, testified regarding a number of education issues.

Kerith Conron, Roslindale resident and JP Manning School parent, testified regarding bullying concerns.

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Sharon Daura, Roslindale resident and JP Manning School parent, testified regarding special education.

Mary Lee Marra, Hyde Park resident, testified regarding the superintendent search process.

ACTION ITEMS

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved Grants for Approval Totaling \$2,509,703.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved Interim Salary and Non-Personnel Payments on External Funds for FY23.

Dr. Alkins asked how long the timeline is for the district's next bidding process for a transportation contract. Transportation Director Delavern Stanislaus agreed to follow up with more information.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a one-year contract renewal between the Boston Public Schools and transportation provider Transdev, covering the period from July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023.

Mr. Cardet-Hernandez expressed support for the proposed MSBA facilities investments. The Superintendent said that she will be releasing details about the district's capital investments in the next few weeks.

Mr. O'Neill requested clarification about the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA)'s rating criteria. Deputy Financial Officer David Bloom explained that the MSBA utilizes a priority rating system of 1-8, with each priority having a definition. He said that all of the district's MSBA Accelerated Repair Program submissions meet criteria #5 which is a replacement of building systems. He said that renovation or rebuilding of the Blackstone Elementary School is the district's most urgent priority. Mr. O'Neill said that he looks forward to learning more about the district's plans for a permanent home for the Horace Mann School.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion authorizing the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the following Statement of Interest forms dated on, or before June 1, 2022, for the following schools: Haley Pilot School; Curley K-8 School Lower Building; Burke High School; Henderson K-12 Inclusion Upper School Campus; Ohrenberger School; and English High School.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion authorizing the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated on, or before April 29, 2022 for the Blackstone School, located at 380 Shawmut Avenue, South End, MA 02118 (priority project) and the Otis School, located at 218 Marion Street, East Boston, MA 02128.

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REPORT

Superintendent Search Process Update - Dr. Pam Eddinger, co-chair of the Superintendent Search Committee, presented an update on the search process.

Job Description

The superintendent's job description was posted last week. Executive search firm JG consulting is actively recruiting for the position. The Search Committee expects to attract a diverse pool of highly qualified candidates.

Search Process Timeline

- Mid-May: Presentation of Candidates – the Search Committee will review all applicants and determine candidates for the first round of interviews.
- Early June: First Round of Interviews will be virtual. The committee will further narrow the pool and identify candidates for a second round, in person interview.
- Mid June: Second Round of Interviews and Recommendation of Finalists to the School Committee – the Search Committee will conduct second round interviews in-person. The Committee will identify two to three finalists from this round of interviews to recommend to the School Committee. The charge of the Search Committee will be fulfilled once the finalists are recommended.
- Mid-to-Late June: School Committee holds public interviews with finalists
- Late June: School Committee votes on final selection

Engagement

Survey: As part of its community engagement process, the Search Committee initiated an online superintendent search survey. The survey closed on April 15. The BPS Office of Data and Accountability and the City's Department of Innovation and Technology presented a summary of the survey results to the Search Committee on April 16. The survey, which was offered in 10 languages, was open for a little more than a month and yielded more than 500 responses. The majority of respondents, 63%, were parents and guardians of BPS students.

The survey asked the community what qualities they wanted to see in the next superintendent. More than 80% of respondents indicated that effective communication skills and demonstrated leadership in improving outcomes for all students is very important. Experience leading an urban district, a record of being visible and engaged in their community, and knowledge of Boston/BPS were the qualities that were least frequently identified as very important.

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Key themes that emerged in the open response question about what qualities or experiences are important to seek in the next Superintendent included: School Community Engagement, Provision of Quality Education, Administrative Collaboration, Understanding of Education System, and Effective Leadership.

When asked what question would you most like candidates to answer, common topics that respondents identified included: Supporting the Needs of Diverse Learners, Addressing School Community Needs, Systematic Reform, Providing Equitable Access to Education, and Improving Quality of Education.

Dr. Eddinger noted that data showed that the respondents did not reflect the racial, ethnic, neighborhood, and language diversity of the BPS population overall. Respondents were more likely to reside in Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, and West Roxbury than BPS students. Respondents were less likely to reside in East Boston, Dorchester, Hyde Park, and Roxbury than BPS students. Ninety-five percent of responses were submitted in English, while for comparison, two-thirds of BPS families prefer to receive communications in English. Also, the student response was very low, with 4% of responses coming from students. The Search Committee is examining ways to strengthen student voice in the process.

Dr. Eddinger described the survey as one piece of the puzzle when it comes to collecting feedback, in addition to listening sessions, emails, and text and video testimony. All of this feedback will collectively inform the Committee's approach for formulating interview questions and ultimately the finalists who are selected. The feedback will also be provided to the incoming superintendent to inform their planning work.

Additional Listening Sessions

The Search Committee is holding several additional small stakeholder sessions. These are being hosted and led by various stakeholder groups. In addition, the Search Committee is partnering with the Mayor's Office to hold additional small group listening sessions in five other BPS languages (Haitian Creole, Cantonese, Caboverdean Creole, Vietnamese, and Mandarin).

The Search Committee encourages groups who want to share feedback to host their own listening session, and send a summarizing memo to the Search Committee official email, or invite Search Committee members who are available to attend and listen. Continuous Feedback is welcome via email: superintendentsearch@bostonpublicschools.org or through video testimony and text submissions through the search webpage bostonpublicschools.org/supt-search.

Mr. Cardet-Hernandez expressed concern about the complexity of the timeline which Dr. Eddinger clarified. She said that public engagement has been happening throughout the process.

Dr. Alkins asked if the Committee would consider leaving the survey open. Dr. Eddinger characterized the survey as a validation instrument, and said that the Committee is looking for a fresh venue to draw more student input.

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Mr. Cardet-Hernandez asked about strategies to attract more diverse voices. Dr. Eddinger spoke about the additional five native language sessions being offered, as well as small group sessions.

Dr. Alkins spoke about the importance of being prepared to revisit the timeline if the search does not yield a strong pool of candidates. Dr. Eddinger said that the Committee will conduct an assessment of viability at each stage of review. She assured him that the Committee will not settle for anything less than a strong and diverse applicant pool.

Mr. Cardet-Hernandez suggested that the Committee plan for the possibility of appointing an interim superintendent.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Alkins spoke about the importance of transparency, follow up, and communication between the district and families. Ms. Robinson agreed that parents expect accountability and transparency. Mr. Cardet-Hernandez expressed a desire to see that issues raised during public comment are addressed by the district and subsequently reported back to the School Committee. He requested that future Superintendent Reports include regular updates on student assignments for the next school year, as well as chronic absenteeism.

ADJOURN

Approved - At approximately 9:30 p.m. the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn to the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary