



## **OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE SUPERINTENDENT CANDIDATE INTERVIEW: OSCAR SANTOS**

**April 24, 2019**

The Boston School Committee held a public interview with Dr. Oscar Santos, a candidate for the position of Boston Public Schools (BPS) Superintendent, on April 22, 2019 at 1 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**

None.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Loconto led the pledge of allegiance and announced that interpretation services were available in Spanish. He welcomed and introduced Dr. Santos, a former Randolph Public Schools superintendent who currently serves as head of school at Cathedral 7-12 School in Boston. Mr. Loconto also thanked the Superintendent Search Committee and public interview panelists for their hard work.

Dr. Santos made an opening statement, highlighting his familiarity with Boston as a former BPS student, teacher, and school leader.

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION**

Ms. Reyes asked Dr. Santos how he would be supportive of student voice and how he would balance the Mayor’s priorities with community’s priorities if they should differ. Dr. Santos

**Boston School Committee Superintendent Candidate Public Interview: Oscar Santos**

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building  
2300 Washington Street  
School Committee Chamber  
Roxbury, MA 02119

**April 24, 2019**

lauded the students' rights app developed by the Boston Student Advisory Council. He described himself as being very supportive of student advocacy, and said that he would engage with students and be accessible.

Dr. Rivera asked Dr. Santos about the challenges facing English Language Learners. Dr. Santos discussed the importance of proper identification, aligning the curriculum the Massachusetts Framework and providing dual enrollment and internship opportunities. He said that the LOOK Act will help connect students and provide more academic opportunities for kids. Dr. Rivera asked Dr. Santos how he plans to recruit and retain teachers of color. He discussed how as the headmaster of Boston International High School, he used open posting to attract diverse, qualified teachers.

Mr. Tran asked Dr. Santos what equity what equity means to him. Dr. Santos discussed the importance of providing students with resources and access. Mr. Tran asked Dr. Santos about his approach to handling difficult situations. Dr. Santos responded that kids need to feel safe in school and respected.

Ms. Robinson asked Dr. Santos about his experience with early childhood education expansion. He recalled how he extended the school day in as Superintendent in Randolph to offer full day kindergarten. She asked about lessons learned since leaving BPS. Dr. Santos said he has learned about the critical importance of operational excellence, as well as fundraising and supporting programs.

Dr. Coleman asked Dr. Santos how the city can bring resources to bear to close achievement gaps. Dr. Santos praised the district's use of the opportunity index and said that he would strengthen the district's relationships with community partners and health centers. Dr. Coleman asked Dr. Santos what he hopes to be known for. Dr. Santos said he wants to lead the district in making incredible gains and eliminating gaps.

Mr. O'Neill asked Dr. Santos how he would approach putting together a budget in light of declining federal and state funding. Dr. Santos discussed how he would create efficiencies and reallocate resources. Mr. O'Neill asked Dr. Santos to discuss three lessons he learned as superintendent in Randolph. Dr. Santos discussed how he aligned the K-12 curriculum, expanded inclusion, and build alliances for problem solving. He also discussed the importance of central office bring responsive to schools.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked Dr. Santos his thoughts about right sizing district. Dr. Santos discussed the need for MassCore and high school redesign. Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked Dr. Santos about his approach to working through challenges with the community. He cited as an example his experience in Randolph moving 6<sup>th</sup> graders to middle schools. He spoke about the importance of delivering bad news in a way that people can understand.

**Boston School Committee Superintendent Candidate Public Interview: Oscar Santos**

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building  
2300 Washington Street  
School Committee Chamber  
Roxbury, MA 02119

**April 24, 2019**

Mr. Loconto asked Dr. Santos about his approach to union negotiations. Dr. Santos described his approach as collaborative, constructive, and strategic. Mr. Loconto asked Dr. Santos about his experience with special education. Dr. Santos said he believes in the least restrictive environment and said that proper identification is critical.

Ms. Robinson asked Dr. Santos how he would manage autonomous schools to close opportunity and achievement gaps. Dr. Santos responded that he would use the Massachusetts framework and the Wallace framework to drive districtwide change. He said that he would take central office leaders on learning walks at schools to promote the sharing of best practices.

Dr. Coleman asked Dr. Santos if racial and economic integration is still a relevant strategy for closing the achievement gap. Dr. Santos discussed how public schools can bridge racial and cultural divides.

Ms. Reyes asked Dr. Santos about his experience with the school-to-prison pipeline. He said that he would bring Cathedral's planning center approach to BPS and examine the root causes of attendance issues.

Dr. Rivera asked Dr. Santos about his experience as a teacher. He discussed the serious challenges that students face outside of school and the need to maintain high expectations.

Mr. O'Neill asked Dr. Santos about his support of Mass Core and challenges to districtwide implementation within BPS. Dr. Santos said that with so many autonomous schools in BPS, Mass Core should not be a mandate but should be a discussion. Mr. O'Neill asked Dr. Santos about lessons learned from working with Randolph School Committee. Dr. Santos said he learned the importance of listening and working together.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked Dr. Santos how he will know if the Boston School Committee is doing a good job. He talked about the School Committee holding the superintendent accountable, working as thought-partners and being forthright challenges and solutions. She asked what exciting educational trend he would bring to bring to BPS. Dr. Santos said he would want to bring more experiential learning, citing Cathedral's partnership with Northeastern University.

Dr. Rivera asked Dr. Santos about lessons learned from past mistakes. Dr. Santos said that as Randolph Superintendent, he should have pushed back harder at state mandates.

Ms. Robinson asked Dr. Santos how he would provide a seamless K-5<sup>th</sup> experience. Dr. Santos said that he would take a K-12 approach.

Mr. O'Neill asked Dr. Santos about ensuring parental and community involvement in the BuildBPS process. Dr. Santos discussed importance of engaging in honest conversations with proper messaging and support. He also discussed the development of an engagement index.

**Boston School Committee Superintendent Candidate Public Interview: Oscar Santos**

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building  
2300 Washington Street  
School Committee Chamber  
Roxbury, MA 02119

**April 24, 2019**

Dr. Santos provided a closing statement, again highlighting his familiarity with the district as a former BPS student, teacher, and school leader.

Mr. Loconto invited BPS stakeholders to learn more about the candidates and view the public interview schedule at [bostonpublicschools.org/superintendentsearch](http://bostonpublicschools.org/superintendentsearch). He encouraged people to complete the online surveys, which will remain open until midnight on Sunday, April 28. Feedback can also be provided via email at [superintendentsearch@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:superintendentsearch@bostonpublicschools.org). The School Committee is tentatively scheduled to vote on the selection of a superintendent on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

**ADJOURN**

At approximately 3 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan  
Executive Secretary