



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MA SCHOOL CHOICE
HEARING AND BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

May 26, 2021

The Boston School Committee held a remote meeting on May 26, 2021 at 4:30 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 Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Vice Chairperson Michael O’Neill; Dr. Hardin Coleman (departed following action items); Ernani DeAraujo; Dr. Lorna Rivera; Jeri Robinson; Quoc Tran; Student Representative Xyra Mercer.

School Committee Member Absent: None.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Minutes: May 12, 2021 School Committee Meeting

Grants for Approval Totaling \$582,000

Amount	FY	Grant Name	Status	Fund Manager	Representative Title	Focus Area(s)	Sites
\$42,000	2021	DLCS Professional Development and Devices	New	Anita Lavakumar	Program Director for Computer Science	Educator Effectiveness	Districtwide
\$540,000	2022	InnovATe Project Grant	New	Avery Esdaile	Senior Director-Athletics	Health and Wellness	12 Sites

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Memo from Nathan Kuder, Chief Finance Officer to Boston School Committee re: Massachusetts School Building Authority Statements of Interest and Carter School Grade Reconfiguration, May 21, 2021

Memo from Superintendent Cassellius to Boston School Committee re: School Choice, School Year (SY) 2021-2022, May 26, 2021

George Cox Memorial Library at Nathan Hale Elementary School

Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPAC) Annual Update |

Equitable Grading PowerPoint

Grading Policy Update Equity Impact Statement

Memo from Dr. Silvia Romero-Johnson to Boston School Committee re: 5/26/2021 Grading School Committee Presentation

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Oliver-Dávila called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. All members were present.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Approved - On roll call, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to an executive session for the purpose of conducting a strategy session related to pending litigation: *Boston Parent Coalition for Academic Excellence Corp. v. School Committee of the City of Boston, et al.* She announced that the Committee would return to public session at 5 p.m.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

The Committee returned to public session at approximately 5:05 p.m. Ms. Oliver-Dávila explained that the Committee had just returned from an executive session for the purpose of conducting a strategy session related to pending litigation: *Boston Parent Coalition for Academic Excellence Corp. v. School Committee of the City of Boston, et al.*

Ms. Oliver-Dávila 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 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. Meeting documents were translated into all of the official BPS languages and publicly posted at www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee prior to the start of the meeting.

MA SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM HEARING: SCHOOL YEAR 2021-2022

The School Committee held a public hearing on whether the Boston Public Schools should participate in the Massachusetts School Choice Program in School Year 2021-2022. There were no speakers.

Adjourn - On roll call, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the MA School Choice Program hearing for SY 2021-22.

CITATIONS

The School Committee and Superintendent presented citations to the following Boston Public Schools (BPS) Employees who earned doctoral degrees in 2020 and 2021:

- Dr. Tasheena Burnett, Data Inquiry Facilitator, Office of Data and Accountability, EdD in Higher Education Leadership, Regis College
- Dr. Joanne Centeio DaSilva, 4th grade teacher, Josiah Quincy Elementary School, Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy, UMass Dartmouth
- Dr. Anita Lavakumar, Program Director for Computer Science, Office of Technology, EdD in Higher Education Leadership, Regis College
- Dr. Kristina Kelleher-Bianchi, 11th Grade Academy Leader, Jeremiah E. Burke High School, PhD in Urban Education, Leadership, & Policy Studies, UMass Boston
- Dr. Isabel Lopez Hurtado, External Research Manager, Office of Data and Accountability, received a doctorate from the University of Minnesota.
- Dr. Geoffrey Rose, Principal on Assignment, Division of Accountability, Boston College
- Dr. Regina Terry-Green, Guidance Advisor, McKinley Schools, PhD in Advanced Studies in Human Behavior, Capella University
- Dr. Annie Tran, Inclusive Practices Support Specialist, Office of Special Education, Doctor of Education, Northeastern University
- Dr. Tommy Welch, Elementary School Superintendent, Region 1, Doctor of Education, Boston College

The employees shared the topics of their dissertations. Ms. Robinson and Dr. Coleman requested that the Committee receive copies of the dissertation abstracts and that they be posted on the BPS website.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the May 12, 2021 meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

As prepared for delivery.

Thank you, Madame Chair, and thank you committee members. As always, I'd like to start off by taking a look at some data snapshots, this week around student attendance. Last week we entered our final phase of reopening this school year, as high school students began attending school in-person 5 days a week. Throughout the year we've provided updates on attendance, learning model choices, online participation, and more on our data dashboard, available in multiple languages at bostonpublicschools.org/dashboard.

Looking deeper at the last few weeks with the return to 5 days of in person learning, we have seen a steady increase in the proportion of in-person attendance days. This slide shows the overall attendance rate by month, and you can see the dark orange portion of the bar increasing over the year. For example, in the month of April, the average attendance rate was 88.5%, with 20.5% of days attended in person. By comparison, in February, only 2.9% of days were attended in person. We also wanted to share a little more detail on attendance following the return to 5 days of in-person learning. On April 26, we transitioned to 5 days of in-person learning for students in grades K-8 and students in our special education day schools. You can see the attendance for students in an in-person learning model, the blue bars, was slightly higher than for students in a remote learning model, the orange bars. On May 17, we welcomed our grades 9-12 students back for 5 days of in-person learning. You see two additional bars for grades 9-12, where the attendance rate for students in a remote model was higher than for students in an in-person model. The mode of attendance on a given day may need to shift from the student's overall learning model based on individual student needs, meaning a student in an in-person model may have attended 1 or more days remotely.

The attendance rates below include both in-person as well as remote participation. We additionally looked at this attendance data by race and grade span for last week, where very similar patterns are present. One difference to note is that for our Asian students in all grade levels, there is a higher attendance rate for students in a remote model. The lowest attendance rate for last week was our Latinx students in grades 9-12 in an in-person learning model. Our Supervisors of Attendance, family liaisons and family engagement staff continue to make outreach to students with low attendance. As we've discussed during previous meetings, the Office of Data and Accountability launched new data tools for BPS staff last fall, including Panorama Student Success for school staff to access real-time, actionable and holistic student data and work together to log support notes and design and monitor Student Success Plans. Again, more information on attendance and student engagement is available at bostonpublicschools.org/dashboard.

It's been so wonderful seeing so many more students back in our school buildings over the last several weeks! We are finishing the year off by returning strong, and I am so grateful for

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everyone on Team BPS and our many partners for all their hard work to get us to where we are now. Last week, for the full-time return of our high school students, I started off the week with a visit to our neighboring schools in Brighton -- Boston Green Academy and Brighton High. At Boston Green Academy, I was so excited to see their new Freight Farm. Freight farms are self-contained hydroponic farms made from old shipping containers that make growing food anywhere, in any climate, possible. At Brighton High, I was led on a tour by Head of School Andrew Bott, and met with students and staff as many of them started their first full week back in school in over a year. Later in the week, I also stopped by Snowden International to meet with Head of School Gene Roundtree and his amazing students. I stopped by some classrooms to chat with students and teachers and also got to hang out with Pepper the Robot! Finally, last Friday I was joined by Mayor Janey for a visit to Madison Park. We spent some time visiting with students learning various vocations, from cosmetology, to automotive. We also stopped by the kitchen and were treated to some fresh baked cookies!

The COVID-19 community positivity rate has been several weeks now and the Boston Public Health Commission announced earlier today that it is currently 1.6% There aren't any neighborhoods in the City of Boston above a 4% positivity rate, or 3% for that matter, as 2 zip codes in Dorchester are right at 3%. In addition, 6 neighborhoods are now below 1%. This is very promising data as the City and state lift COVID restrictions beginning this Saturday, May 29. Earlier today I shared a letter with families and staff with updates around our procedures in light of recent changes in public health guidance. BPS is keeping current social distancing and mask wearing guidelines in place, meaning that students and staff must wear face coverings for both indoor and outdoor activities, including recess and athletics. Our students aged 12+ are starting to receive their vaccinations, but we want to keep current measures in place for the final weeks of the school year to ensure the safety of our community. We still encourage families to complete consent forms to allow their children to be tested in school. The forms are included in every Weekly Update newsletter and are also available on the BPS reopening webpage. As we approach the end of the year, we are also working with our families to discuss promotion and retention of students. This has been a challenging year, and I want to be clear that it is always a parents' choice to retain their student.

We understand that the period of extended hybrid and/or remote learning presents many challenges for students and families. Last week we clarified to school leaders that students should not be retained in kindergarten. We also outlined parameters for school leaders and teachers that require them to provide interventions, communicate regularly with parents as to the progress of their child, and provide evidence if a child is recommended to be retained. Educators and school leaders will continue working to ensure all students are prepared for their next year of school and will discuss potential retention of students with parents and caregivers. Retention must be grounded in evidence that the student is unable to demonstrate an ability to meet or exceed the essential standards. The National Association of School Psychologists says that holding a child back is "*unlikely to address the problems a child is facing*" and promoting a student "*without additional support is not likely to be an effective solution either.*" On the whole, studies have shown that children who are retained do not do better over time and this is especially true of older students. We are committed to supporting all of our students in every way as we come out of this pandemic stronger, and we will continue working with parents to make the right choice for their child with their teacher and school leader. We are working with students around academic acceleration, competency determinations, and summer learning as

promotion strategies instead of retaining children.

We are so excited to celebrate the BPS Class of 2021 at in-person graduation ceremonies in the next few weeks! We recently announced that thanks to our continued partnership with the Boston Red Sox, Fenway Park will be the site for many graduations next month. Some of our other high schools opted to host their ceremonies at other locations. We are still finalizing the details for some schools, but a list of dates and times for BPS graduation ceremonies is available at bostonpublicschools.org/graduations. All of our ceremonies will be held outdoors, and we are asking all guests to mask up and socially distance when feasible. I will definitely be attending as many ceremonies as I can, and I know that our School Committee members are also signing up to attend graduations. The Class of 2021 has been through two consecutive challenging school years, and we should all be in awe of all that they have accomplished.

As we near the end of the school year, we are working to make sure every student has a plan for the summer. This summer we are providing so many exciting opportunities for students, from academics, to enrichment, to employment. You can find information about all things summer, including summer camps, day activities, jobs for teens, and much more at bostonpublicschools.org/summer. BPS is operating many summer learning academies, plus Boston After School & Beyond is providing all sorts of opportunities, and 44 of our BPS schools are hosting their own summer learning programs. Some of you may have seen our summer learning billboards in multiple languages across the city. We're also sending text messages and will have a robocall going out shortly to encourage families to sign up. We continue our school-based and targeted district-level outreach to make sure all of our students stay engaged this summer. Families can find more information about all of these learning opportunities by visiting bostonpublicschools.org/summerlearning. You can register at summer.bostonpublicschools.org. Be sure to sign up as soon as possible! As I mentioned during our last meeting, we are also looking for educators and nurses for our summer programs. If you're interested or know someone who could be a fit, please visit our website bostonpublicschools.org/OHC then click on "Find a Job" and search "Summer."

We continue to engage with the BPS community as we discuss how we plan to allocate the federal relief funding. Over the last couple weeks, we've met with the English Learner Task Force, the District English Learner Advisory Committee (or DELAC), the Secondary Schools Executive Cabinet, and earlier today the District Wellness Task Force. Next week we will host a Parent Group Meeting, including Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpEdPAC), DELAC, and the City Wide Parent Council (CPC). This meeting is open to parents, caregivers and all community members.

Also next week, we will discuss federal relief funding during our Community Equity Roundtable. That meeting is Friday, June 4, at 11:00 am. Meeting information is available at bostonpublicschools.org/calendar. We are also continuing our meetings with the ESSER Commission, with our next meeting scheduled for tomorrow, May 27, at 5:00pm. If you are unable to attend, we will post the recording of the meeting and the presentation on our website - bostonpublicschools.org/FederalReliefFunds21. You can find the recording from our May 13 meeting there, as well as a list of all the upcoming community meetings and ESSER Commission meetings on the site as well. Again, that is bostonpublicschools.org/FederalReliefFunds21.

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My team and I have been actively engaged in efforts to elevate student voice and create opportunities for students to contribute to district-wide conversations, and to participate in planning. I regularly meet with the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) and also created a youth cabinet, modeled on a partnership I created while I was Commissioner of Education in Minnesota. As many of you know, BPS received complaints from BSAC members alleging their voices were being stifled by the staff leadership of BSAC in March. BPS met with the members of BSAC to hear their concerns and plan for next steps. Seven members of BSAC resigned and shared additional allegations. BPS launched an investigation and announced a pause in our relationship with Youth on Board, pending the outcome of the investigation. We hired an independent investigator with experience in education and working with youth. The investigator conducted 23 interviews with BSAC leadership, current students and alumni, and BPS administrative staff. The investigator also reviewed video of previous meetings, documents, records and materials, and correspondence (email, text, and letters) between BSAC staff and students.

The investigator found that all students and alumni interviewed were committed to the success of BSAC and that many students and alumni reported positive experiences with the program. Further findings indicated that students felt excluded from the planning and management of BSAC and were often told they had to change or edit their thoughts, ideas, and questions. Findings also concluded that staff felt pushed to work with students on specific projects that were tied to funding for Youth on Board. All students and staff expressed concerns about the leadership of Jenny Sazama and how she communicated with students, set or edited agendas for meetings, and managed financial resources. Most troubling was that the investigator found concern and discomfort with the counseling aspects of the program conducted by Youth on Board, noting that students felt they had to express their emotions, were offered incentives to participate, and that information they shared was then used against them in future interactions.

Upon conclusion of the review, the investigator recommended that BPS:

1. Discontinue the relationship with Youth on Board
2. Partner with current BSAC students to agree on a new strategy for managing operations and meetings
3. Increase communication between students in BSAC and BSAC staff with a more predictable cadence of interactions
4. Annually review the effectiveness of BSAC
5. Solidify and share a clear and easy to understand process for how and when students receive payment for their work with BSAC
6. Ensure all counseling that is provided is done so through a partnership with licensed counselors
7. Review BSAC staffing levels and BPS management of the program

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In order to successfully implement the initiatives in the Strategic Plan, I had already identified the need to more closely align positions and resources to lift up student voice and ensure students were able to access additional support to be successful. With the release of the new organizational chart in April, the next steps in that process were outlined with the announcement of a new cabinet-level Chief of Student Support, Sam DePina. The work of BSAC and other youth leadership was already planned to shift under this new position.

With review of the investigator's report and in light of the intent to better support BSAC and all students, BPS is taking the following actions:

- We are ending the working relationship with Youth on Board, meaning the organization and its staff will no longer work with BPS students.
- We are making it clear that the practice of reevaluation counseling must be discontinued in all forms
- We will soon issue a Request for Proposals for an entity to co-manage BSAC with BPS
- As mentioned, we are shifting the reporting of BSAC to the office of the Chief of Student Support, in line with strategic planning outlined above
- We look forward to continued partnership with the current members of BSAC to redefine the relationship, increase student equity in decision-making, and establish shared bylaws that govern how BSAC students and staff work together. This work has been underway since March.
- We are also accelerating the work to annually review all programming offered by partners through the Division of Family and Community Advancement, which will expand its partnerships work to include review and support for district level partnerships.
- These measures we are taking now are meant to ensure nothing like this ever happens again. In speaking with students and parents myself, I want them to know that we acknowledge how difficult it was and that we took their concerns seriously and responded swiftly to investigate and respond.

That is my Superintendent's Report for this evening.

Ms. Mercer asked if BPS will release evidence collected as part of the BSAC investigation. The Superintendent said that such evidence may contain private student information, adding that the district publicly released the final report. Ms. Mercer asked if BPS will take accountability for what happened. The Superintendent said that she took the allegations seriously and took accountability by following the recommendations of the independent investigator.

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Mr. DeAraujo requested an update on family choices for summer learning. The Superintendent agreed to follow up with more information at the next meeting.

Dr. Rivera asked about vaccinating BPS students. The Superintendent said that BPS has held some clinics at high schools and is mainly focused on sharing information with families about access to the vaccine. Dr. Rivera requested an update on summer learning trends at the next Committee meeting. The Superintendent confirmed that BPS will offer both in-person and remote summer learning options. Dr. Rivera asked when the School Committee will resume in-person meetings. The Chair said that issue will be the subject of discussion by the Committee.

The Superintendent confirmed for Ms. Robinson that summer learning opportunities are free and that transportation will be provided where needed. Ms. Robinson asked what summer learning and enrichment opportunities will be offered beyond academics. The Superintendent said that Boston After School & Beyond offered a number of playful and enriching programs. BPS is also partnering with camp providers. She reaffirmed her commitment to meeting the social and emotional needs of students. Ms. Robinson asked if the remote experience during the pandemic impacted BSAC's concerns. The Superintendent said that concerns were never reported to her in her frequent meetings with BSAC. Ms. Mercer said that the pandemic gave students the time to think and reflect on their experiences.

Dr. Coleman praised the Superintendent for her transparency and her calm, consistent, and systems changing approach.

Mr. O'Neill praised the courage of BSAC students who spoke up. He thanked the Superintendent for her approach and for implementing all of the investigator's recommendations. He suggested that BSAC students receive leadership development, adding that he is glad that counseling will be provided to students by licensed counselors if needed. He said that the Council of Great City Schools is issuing guidance on how districts should approach federal funding. He asked about the social-emotional impact of retention. The Superintendent said that retention should be a family's choice, adding that she worries about the stigma of being held back and students losing their connection with their peers. She urged parents to think about the social emotional impact of retention.

Ms. Robinson expressed concerns about students being penalized for learning loss during the pandemic. The Superintendent said that master teachers know how to differentiate their teaching practices. She emphasized the importance of summer learning and enrichment opportunities.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked the Superintendent for her swift actions in response to concerns raised by current and former BSAC students. She apologized to the students and families for the trauma they experienced and thanked them for their courage. She praised the students who are reorganizing BSAC. She reaffirmed the Committee's support for BSAC and commitment to student voice, adding that the newly created Chief of Student Support position is critical. She encouraged every school to track a summer plan for every student. She congratulated the Class of 2021 and praised graduating students for their grace and resilience.

REPORTS

George Cox Memorial Library at Nathan Hale Elementary School - Karen Loughran, Interim Principal, Nathan Hale Elementary School, presented a proposal to dedicate the library at the Nathan Hale Elementary School in honor of former BPS employee and volunteer George Cox. Ms. Loughran outlined how the school had followed the Committee's School Naming Policy and described the impact that Mr. Cox had the Hale School community and the BPS community at-large.

Ms. Robinson, who attended Nathan Hale Elementary School when the school had no library, praised Mr. Cox and said she looks forward to visiting the library. Mr. O'Neil praised Mr. Cox for his quiet determination and his commitment to the youth of the city. Ms. Oliver-Dávila recalled Mr. Cox's steady presence at meetings of the School Committee and Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force.

Massachusetts School Building Authority 2021 Projects - Chief Finance Officer Nate Kuder presented proposals for School Committee approval of the following projects for the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA):

1. 2021 MSBA Statements of Interest project submission for Accelerated Repair Projects (ARP)
2. 2021 MSBA Statements of Interest project submission for Core project
3. Carter School Grade Reconfiguration

Accelerated Repair Program (ARP) projects address the repair or replacement of roofs, windows/doors, and boilers in an otherwise structurally sound facility. The MSBA requirements for submission of projects are that boilers and windows be minimum of 35 years old, and roofs be a minimum of 30 years old. The following buildings fall within the guidelines for ARP. To date, the BPS and PFD have partnered with the MSBA to complete 27 projects. There are currently three projects in construction and another two that are in the beginning stages of design.

Boiler Projects:

- Russell Elementary in Dorchester
- Henderson Upper (Wilson Building) in Dorchester

Windows & Doors Projects

- Hernandez K8* in Jamaica Plain
- Boston Day & Evening Academy (Wheatley Building)* in Roxbury

**previously submitted to MSBA in 2020*

Core Program projects address extensive repairs, renovations, addition/renovations, and new school construction. The Core project is in alignment with BuildBPS planning to build a new state-of-the-art building to meet the specialized programmatic needs of the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This school is presently housed in the Jackson Mann Building in Allston which has been identified for closure at the end of SY21-22.

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Each year districts are required to submit one project as their priority. This year, the BPS has indicated that the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will be the priority for 2021.

All MSBA Statements of Interest (SOIs) are required to be presented to and voted on by both the City Council and the Boston School Committee. The City Council's Ways & Means Committee held a hearing on Friday, May 21, 2021 and the Council approved the SOIs at the Council's weekly meeting on May 26th.

The Carter School is in the design phase of a core project with the MSBA. The Carter School provides educational services to students within the Boston Public Schools community who have substantial cognitive, communication, and physical disabilities in grades 7-12. The MSBA-approved educational program and new building design will provide a cohesive pathway for students in grades PreK-12 in alignment with peer Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Approved Public Day Schools. This planned expansion will allow BPS to better serve students by implementing a developmentally appropriate curriculum through a consistent interdisciplinary educational team approach. The educational team will focus on increasing each student's ability to communicate as a means to access their educational curriculum while targeting developmental milestones critical for communication development. This early childhood work will be built upon as our students progress through the program, and transition to a focus on functional skills to better support achievement and success in the home, community, and adult services. Early identification and immersion into a rich school-wide augmentative communication environment will allow younger students to accelerate their learning through the modeling of communication systems by older peers, and early immersion into this environment will lead to greater academic gains, as students' communication systems are a vital access skill for accessing the curriculum and assessing learning. The Superintendent is requesting the Committee's approval for the Carter School to expand to serve students in Pre-K to 12 (ages 3-22) starting in the fall of the 2024-2025 school year.

Dr. Coleman suggested that BPS should track the equity distribution of resources. He requested a heat map or graph comparing facilities investments with school performance level.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Patrick Lyons, staff, State Representative Aaron Michlewitz, testified in favor of the MSBA Core Project: Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Pam Mullaney, staff, Boston City Councilor Liz Breadon, testified in favor of the MSBA Core Project: Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Tiffany Luo, student, Boston Latin School, testified regarding the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC).
- Tanya Nixon-Silberg, parent, and member, SchoolFacts Boston, testified regarding Social-Emotional Learning.
- Charlie Kim, parent, Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, testified in favor of the MSBA Core Project: Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Kaleigh Connolly, parent, Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, testified in favor of the MSBA Core Project: Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

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- Mei Li Xiao, parent, Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, testified in favor of the MSBA Core Project: Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Martha O'Brien, teacher, Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, testified in favor of the MSBA Core Project: Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Martiza Ciliberto, principal, Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, testified in favor of the MSBA Core Project: Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Carla Kim, parent, Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, testified in favor of the MSBA Core Project: Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Michael Heichman, member, Boston Education Justice Alliance (BEJA), testified regarding student voice and school police.
- Maria Melchionda, MA Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, testified regarding health education licensure/certification.
- Ruby Reyes, executive director, BEJA, testified regarding school police.
- Edith Bazile, BPS grandparent, Manning Elementary School, testified regarding special education and school police.
- John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding Disaggregation of opportunity and achievement data, MassCore and other issues.
- Ebunoluwa Osinubi community advocate, Youth on Board, testified regarding the BSAC investigation.
- Ahria Ilyas, community advocate, testified regarding the BSAC investigation.
- Harneen Chernow, BPS parent, testified regarding the BSAC investigation.

Responding to some of the concerns raised by speakers during general public comment, the Superintendent spoke about the complexity of Youth on Board employment positions. She is working with the Office of the Legal Advisor to explore options. She said that she is meeting with BSAC tomorrow, May 27th, and encouraged anyone who did not sign up in time to testify at tonight's Committee meeting to sign up to speak at the next Committee meeting on June 9th.

ACTION ITEMS

Approved - On roll call, the Boston School Committee unanimously approved grants for approval totaling \$582,000.

Chief of Staff Mary Dillman provided the Superintendent's recommendation for BPS to withdraw from the MA School Choice program for SY 2021-22 based upon (1) student assignment issues, (2) space limitations, (3) cost implications, and (4) the decisions of school committees in neighboring communities.

Mr. DeAraujo said that participating in the MA School Choice program may have the potential to benefit marginalized families living in the areas of East Boston, Winthrop, Chelsea and Revere.

Approved - On roll call, the Boston School Committee approved the Superintendent's recommendation for the Boston Public Schools to withdraw from the MA School Choice

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program for School Year 2021-22 by a vote of 6-1. Mr. DeAraujo voted no. All other members voted yes.

Mr. O'Neill thanked Ms. Dillman for the comprehensive presentation.

Approved - On roll call, the Boston School Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent's recommendation to name the library at the Nathan Hale Elementary School the George Cox Memorial Library.

Committee members expressed enthusiastic support for the Horace Mann School project. Mr. O'Neill praised the Carter School and Horace Mann School communities for their patience during the multi-step MSBA process.

Approved - On roll call, the Boston School Committee unanimously voted to authorize Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Accelerated Repair Program Statements of Interest for the William E. Russell Elementary School (boilers), Dr. William W. Henderson Inclusion Upper School (boilers), Rafael Hernandez K-8 Elementary School (windows and doors), and Boson Day and Evening Academy (windows and doors).

Approved - On roll call, the Boston School Committee unanimously voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the MSBA the Core Project Statement of Interest Form dated on, or before June 25, 2021, for The Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, located at 40 Armington Street, Boston, MA.

Approved - On roll call, the Boston School Committee unanimously approved, in accordance with the educational program and design of the MSBA Core project, the proposal for the Carter School to expand to serve students in Pre-K to 12 (ages 3-22) starting in the fall of the 2024-2025 school year.

REPORTS

Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council Annual Update - Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpEdPAC) President Roxi Harvey and Treasurer Charlie Kim presented SpEdPAC's annual report to the Committee.

MA General Law Title XII, Chapter 71B, Section 3 calls for Boston SpEdPAC to advise the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; meet regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the district's special education programs; and connect families with external resources.

Boston SpEdPAC Represents

- 10,441 students on Individualized Education Programs (IEP)
 - 3,473 special education students who are also English Language Learners (ELL)
- 1,313 students on 504 plans
- 268 service only students
- 139 students with Education Surrogates

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2020-2021 SpEdPAC Goals for the BPS Office of Special Education (OSE)

- Parent Choice, Options, Parent Voice
- Expand Inclusion & Inclusionary opportunities
- Increase Coordinators of Special Education (COSE) training
- Broaden the mindset and culture of SpEd in BPS
- Regular BPS SpEd bulletins to all families
- SpEdPAC, CPC & DELAC contact information shared at IEP meetings
- Program descriptions for families & COSE publicly available online
- BPS OSE Policy Handbook publicly available online

Goals Achieved

- Building rapport with SpEdPAC Executive Board
- Return, Recover, Reimage, Joint Special Education Task Force
- Joint BPS/BTU/Parent Task Force for reopening schools for high in person priority students (HIPP)
- Initiated SpEd specific communication to families
- English Learner Student w/ Disabilities (ELSWD) IEP checklist for access to heritage language for academics

Unmet Goals

- Publishing SpEd Family Handbook
- Publishing SpEd Policies Handbook
- Fix communication gaps to service only students, out of district parents, education surrogates | Aspen, EdPlan
- Covid Compensatory Services meetings | 30% complete
- Student Assessments completed within 45 days
- Expansion of SpEd seats for 3 year old early learners

Areas for Improvement and Growth

- Accountability
- Communication & Transparency
- Follow-through
- Family Voice at Initiation
- SpEd culture in BPS

SpEdPAC Balance and Lessons Learned

- Amicus Curiae for SpEd and HIPP Families (BTU v BPS)
- Reopening Task Force (BTU, BPS)
- English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force
- SC Goals and Guardrails/Value

SpEdPAC's Outreach to Families

- Pre-Pandemic in-person meetings ~50 attendees, 1 interpreter
- Zoom opened access and advocacy
 - Average 207 participants, with 300+ participants
 - 11 languages + American Sign Language (ASL)

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- SpEdPAC volunteers run Zoom | no tech support

2022-2027 SpEdPAC Goals for OSE

- Continued Growth and Outreach with OSE support
- Clear Definitions and Policy Roadmap for:
 - “Needs Based” vs. Weighted Student Funding
 - Inclusion and Inclusive programming
 - Day School designation as strength vs. stigma
- ESSR funding accountability to SpEd
- School Committee Sponsored Special Education Task Force
- OSE as an Executive Cabinet Position

Ms. Robinson spoke about her experience as a former special education parent. She asked what the district will do differently post-pandemic to ensure that all students are successful. The Superintendent spoke about the district’s response to the March 2020 report by the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, which includes restructuring the Office of Special Education. The district is now working to provide special education students with compensatory services.

Dr. Rivera asked about the English Learner Students w/ Disabilities (ELSWD) IEP checklist for access to heritage language for academics. Ms. Harvey said that she has seen a change for the better as more students have access to their heritage language. Mr. Kim spoke about the importance of data collection and thanked the ELL Task Force for its work and advocacy.

The Superintendent praised the presenters for their passion and conviction.

Mr. O’Neill described the presentation as outstanding and spoke about the importance of BPS having a customer service mentality.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked the presenters and encouraged the district to assist SpEdPAC with technology support. She thanked SpEdPAC for providing feedback to the Committee during the goals and values process. She suggested utilizing some ESSER funding for the creation of a family survey and investments in customer service. She said that the Committee will examine its Task Forces this summer. The Superintendent confirmed that BPS will provide SpEdPAC with tech support.

Equitable Grading - Christine Landry, BPS Assistant Superintendent, Office of Academics and Professional Learning; Gene Roundtree, Head of School, Snowden International School; Pauline Lugira-White, Principal, Frederick Pilot Middle School; and Lee Franty, 6th grade teacher, Murphy K-8 School presented an report on the work done to-date on developing a new grading policy as well as outline the timeline for the policy proposal and implementation.

The desired outcomes for this policy are to implement grading practices across the district that will:

1. decrease variability and bias

2. increase accuracy and actionable feedback
3. Decrease gaps in student performance on grades by race, English Learner (EL), and students with disabilities (SWD) status

The Superintendent's Grading Task Force has drafted a mission, vision and values, and discussed key operational and implementation challenges and opportunities of a new policy. The Task Force developed short-term recommendations for practices to encourage for the 2021-22 school year while it spent the year developing a comprehensive, permanent grading policy for BPS.

Proposed Changes to the K-5 Report Card

- Realignment to MA Framework standards
- Re-evaluation of behavioral indicators
- Comprehensive guidance on best practices for providing standards-aligned grades

The grading policy will be guided by the following practices:

- The elimination of penalties for late work.
- Consistent minimum grading across the district (entering failing grades as a "50" rather than a "0" to maximize the opportunity for improvement).
- Consistent, agreed-upon number of assignments per marking term to generate each grade given per marking term.
- Consistent timeframe for updating grades in Aspen so that students and families have accurate and up-to-date information on progress.
- A requirement to provide students with informal feedback on their progress prior to a formal assessment.

Ms. Mercer asked for clarity on the impact of this more equitable grading system on students.

Ms. Landry clarified that the district is first looking to make changes to report cards at the elementary school level in the short-term, then revise the grading policy, eventually impacting students in grades K-12. Ms. Mercer asked for more clarity regarding the elimination of penalties for late work. Ms. Landry explained that district leaders will work closely with teacher groups, parent groups, and student groups to work out the details, adding that the goal is to focus on student mastery of the content rather than behavior.

Mr. DeAraujo spoke about the value of separating behavior from learning. Ms. Landry said that BPS is starting its focus on equity in the grading process with changes to elementary report cards to demonstrate mastery.

Dr. Rivera spoke about the value of competency-based assessments and asked if there is a long-term plan to use competency-based rubrics. Ms. Landry said that district leaders are having conversations about the issue.

Ms. Robinson spoke about how this work requires a shift in thinking for both educators and parents. Mr. Roundtree explained how the district is taking a collaborative approach with families and school communities to refocus on demonstrating mastery.

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Ms. Oliver-Dávila expressed support for the work, calling it a game changer. She noted that students must still be prepared to meet deadlines in order to be college, career and life ready. She expressed concern about the disparity in the amount of homework that is assigned and said that homework needs to be meaningful.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

At approximately 10 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary