



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

May 1, 2019

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on May 1, 2019 at 6 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; student representative Evelyn Reyes.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Grants for Approval Totaling \$40,275,634:

Amount	FY	Grant Name	Status	Sites
\$596,163	2020	Adult Education Family Literacy	New	Madison Park
\$43,620	2020	Development and Expansion of High Quality Summer Learning	New	~6 sites districtwide
\$20,000	2019	High Quality Instruction – Summer Planning Grant Path 2	New	Districtwide
\$10,000	2019	High Quality Instruction – Summer Planning Grant Path 3	New	Districtwide
\$40,000	2019	Massachusetts 21 st Century Community Learning Centers – Summer Enhancement	New	Gardner, Edison
\$38,000,000	2020	National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program	New	Districtwide
\$9,300	2019	OpenSciEd Materials	New	~13 sites districtwide
\$1,200,000	2020	Summer Food Services Program	New	Districtwide
\$356,551	2019	Teacher Diversification Pilot Program	New	Districtwide

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Memo from Interim Superintendent Laura Perille to Boston School Committee Re: Interim Salary and Non-Personnel Payments on External Funds, April 10, 2019

Boston School Committee Meeting Minutes: April 10, 2019; April 22, 2019; April 23, 2019; April 24, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

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

CITATIONS

The School Committee and Interim Superintendent Laura Perille presented citations of recognition to the following Boston Public Schools (BPS) employees:

Aaron Noll, librarian, Winship Elementary School
Recipient of the Massachusetts School Library Association's 2019 Super Librarian Award

Akosua Osei-Bobie, principal, P.A. Shaw Elementary School
Recipient of the Massachusetts School Library Association's 2019 Administrator Advocate Award

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

Good evening everyone. Thank you for joining us tonight. Also, Happy School Principals' Day. I am grateful every day to our principals and headmasters for their strong leadership and unwavering commitment to the students and families of the Boston Public Schools. I hope our school leaders and all BPS community members were able to enjoy some rest and relaxation during the spring recess. Now that we are in the month of May, we're entering the home stretch of the 2018-19 school year.

Later this evening the Boston School Committee will make an incredibly important decision as to who will be the next leader of this great school district. I look forward to working with the incoming superintendent to make this transition as smooth as possible. I have been humbled and honored to have served in this role since July, drawing on two decades of professional and personal commitment to BPS improvement, and a passionate commitment to the power of public education. As I said from the beginning, my focus during this interim year has been to keep the district moving forward because our students cannot afford to wait; to strengthen central office capacity to solve problems while supporting our school communities; and to work with the team to position the district for its next leadership. That will remain our focus. While we may be entering the home stretch, there is still important work to do, so now to some updates on district work.

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In March, I announced the formation of six working groups charged with developing concrete implementation strategies to address distinct but interrelated challenges facing BPS schools. Simply put, BPS must improve the educational opportunities enjoyed by all our high school students.

Across all six High School Improvement Work Groups, the goals are to:

1. Address the Needs of Off-Track Youth;
2. Advance Academic Rigor for All; and
3. Strengthen College, Career & Life Readiness (CCLR) Preparation and Supports for All Students

These groups are composed of internal stakeholders who know our work well, including headmasters and central office leaders, and will continue convening frequently over the next couple months to make specific recommendations on how best to improve the BPS system of high schools. Their charge is to synthesize recommendations from many reports, align with best practices, and infuse with school-based and central office expertise and knowledge of the BPS landscape. Prior to July 2019, these groups will contribute to a public articulation of both the short and long term implementation plans for BPS high schools, all of which will be tied to our unflinching commitment to ensuring college, career, and life readiness for each BPS student. The charge to these groups will be to articulate clearly, publicly, and with specificity what BPS must do in order to improve opportunities for students through the lens of the respective issues they are addressing. If changes to policy are necessary, such changes will be proposed and recommended to the Boston School Committee. If changes in practices are necessary, they will be implemented. If strengths are identified, they will be scaled up or replicated as appropriate.

As part of the agenda for next week's meeting, we will revisit the district's Age 22 policy, following the waiver we requested allowing students past the age of 22 to complete this academic year, while we refined our proposal. We will present a long-term, equitable solution to this issue. This topic is deeply complex and affects some of our more vulnerable students. We've aimed to approach this delicately and with consideration of all potential factors. We are, as always, working to meet the best interests of our students.

The district continues moving forward with the BuildBPS facilities and educational master plan. As detailed in the BuildBPS Phase II Report, BPS will be composed primarily (but not exclusively) of K-6 & 7-12 pathways and K-8 & 9-12 pathways. Reducing the number of grade configurations will provide greater stability and continuity for students and families, optimizing learning environments while maximizing the financial and facility resources of the district, and ensuring that we keep the needs of our most vulnerable learners in the forefront of our planning. In the coming weeks we will provide updates on the grade configuration strategy for the initiative, particularly as it relates to K-6 expansion, which we see as 3 separate but related conversations, all giving offering important opportunities for a number of our schools. On May 8th, during next week's meeting, we will discuss the overall grade configuration strategy for the district, with a focus on supporting a transition to two predominant pathways of

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K-8/9-12 and K-6/7-12. During the May 22nd meeting we will provide an update and proposed plan for the McCormack Middle School. The merger of the McCormack with one of our current high schools will also necessitate some changes in the configurations of the K-5 elementary “feeder” schools for the McCormack which have been developed in close collaboration with the schools involved. The third discussion, also on May 22nd, will cover other proposed K-6 expansions, independent from the McCormack project, based on interest from a number of schools citywide. These discussions will enable some of the early implementation moves of BuildBPS.

As you may have heard, the Boston Public Health Commission confirmed late last week that a BPS student tested positive for the mumps. Mumps can only be transmitted from one person to another through close contact. Common symptoms include swelling in the glands around the cheek, below the ear, and under the jaw. Working in close collaboration with public health and medical officials from the Boston Public Health Commission and our own Health Services team, we believe the case at the Otis is isolated and there is low risk for the illness to spread to other students. On Friday, we identified a very small number of students at the Otis who only had partial immunization records on file, or did not have any at all. We were in contact with those students’ families over the weekend and are continuing to work with them to ensure compliance and safety for all students.

Currently, vaccination rates for BPS students for MMR, which protects against Measles, Mumps & Rubella, is over 94%. This is important, as we continue to monitor national health situations in NY and CA related to the measles, which is more easily transmitted. As every medical professional reminds us, vaccination is the best protection for our children. The BPS Health Services Department, working with the BPHC, is focused on obtaining and verifying immunization records and making outreach at schools with relatively low MMR vaccine compliance. We are also exploring the feasibility of holding vaccination clinics to make vaccinations more accessible for families. We will continue to provide updates to school leaders, nurses, staff and families as needed. I want to emphasize, however, that there is no current public health threat in Boston, we just want to be proactive to ensure everyone remains protected. I want to thank the BPHC, our Health Services department, and especially our school nurses and health paraprofessionals who have been helping with this effort.

We had more than 200 students traveling domestically and internationally during the month of April. BPS has done an amazing job expanding our global and domestic educational travel opportunities for students over the past several years, with more students than ever using the world as a classroom. A group of 8th graders from the McKay K-8 in East Boston had the opportunity of a lifetime -- traveling to London, Paris, Florence, and Rome over a 10-day period in April. Highlights for the students were sightseeing trips to the London Eye, the Eiffel Tower and the Trevi Fountain. Madison Park students from the Carpentry, Facilities Management, and Radio & TV Production CTE programs did a community service learning project in Wilmington, North Carolina to assist in repairing homes damaged by Hurricane Florence. Students performed flooring, framing, cleaning, and painting tasks and chronicled the project using their photography

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and videography skills, as evident from these beautiful photos. Other destinations visited by students last month include: Senegal, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, additional European trips, and 3 separate journeys to China. These students are already more well-traveled than many adults. It's wonderful to see so many of our students - and teachers - receiving a global education in the Boston Public Schools.

This past Saturday, we held a showcase of science fair projects at Madison Park Vocational Technical High School. These projects were to be presented at the annual BPS Science Fair on March 2nd at Northeastern University, which was canceled due to winter weather. Students in grades 6-12 exhibited more than 60 projects and participated in coaching conversations to prepare for several statewide science fairs. We wish all of our students the best of luck in those competitions, which really help make learning about STEM more engaging and connected to the world around us.

We are in the midst of BPS We Dream Together Week of Action, hosted by our Office of English Learners. This week is to support immigrant and undocumented students and their families, and to raise awareness of the resources available to them. On Monday OEL set up a photo booth in the Bolling lobby for staff to show their support by holding up signs identifying themselves as "Unafraid Educators." Yesterday we held a Know Your Rights workshop in this room, educating staff about current immigration policy, legal resources, healthcare options, higher ed options, and the rights of our immigrant and undocumented families, particularly when encountered by law enforcement or immigration officials. On Friday, we will unveil some new features to our website with resources for immigrant families, www.bpswedreamtogether.org.

More than 250 BPS students in grades 6-12 participated in the 3rd Annual LGBTQ+ Student Summit, held last Thursday, April 25th, at the BTU Hall in Dorchester. We had even more students come out for the event this year, which featured workshops and discussions for LGBTQ+ students and allies on how to develop a more inclusive climate for all.

That concludes my report for this evening.

Mr. Loconto recognized several people who were in the audience, including former BPS headmaster Al Holland, former School Committee members Alfreda Harris and Marchelle Raynor, and Superintendent Search Committee members Pastor Sam Acevedo, Elvis Henriquez, and Jessica Tang.

Ms. Robinson encouraged the district to share the many positive stories happening in BPS, such as the international travel by students.

Ms. Reyes requested more information on the High School Working Groups. Ms. Perille explained that the groups will address the issues of:

1. MassCore Alignment and Graduation Requirements:

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- This work will include developing policy recommendations on how to align BPS graduation requirements with the MassCore recommended program of study in an appropriate and timely manner.
2. School Guidance Counseling and Post-Secondary Support:
 - This group will examine what is working and what is not within our guidance system. We must ensure all BPS students experience a thoughtful, intentional, and personalized path toward graduation. One of the panelists, Mandy Savitz-Romer of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, has agreed to contribute to serve as an expert resource for this particular group.
 3. Career Education and Pathways:
 - This group will explore strategies to strengthen career education opportunities in our schools, including pathway programs, work-based learning and internship opportunities.
 4. Alternative Education Design:
 - This group will examine the strengths and the needs of our alternative education programming. It will also explore redesign possibilities, including a close look at where our programs are located in schools across the district.
 5. Early Warning Indicators:
 - This work will inform the design and expansion of a district-wide Early Warning Indicator (EWI) system, but also identify strategies not only to recognize when students are in danger of falling “off track,” but also to keep them on track in the first place.
 6. Grade 7 – 12 School Design:
 - Related to the ongoing work of BuildBPS, Boston’s long-term facilities planning process made possible by Mayor Walsh’s commitment to improving our infrastructure, this group will examine lessons learned and best practices from other 6-12 and 7-12 models in Boston and elsewhere. We know these lessons can inform the design of more schools serving grades 7-12 in Boston.

Dr. Coleman asked for more details about what type of information high school working groups will produce. Ms. Perille explained that the groups will produce a set of memos with recommended action steps - some short-term and some-long term.

Committee members thanked Ms. Perille for her leadership and service as Interim Superintendent.

Mr. O’Neill thanked Ms. Perille for her leadership guiding the McCormack Middle School transition. He also recognized Elvis Rodriguez, the first student to serve on a superintendent search committee.

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Ms. Oliver-Dávila discussed the important of sharing information and resources with out-of-school providers as during the high school redesign process.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Jessica Tang, president, Boston Teachers Union, testified regarding ongoing contract negotiations the between the district and the Boston Teachers Union.

Jennifer Boyd Herlihy, BPS parent, testified regarding K1 wait lists and available seats.

Gloria West and Jen Rose-Wood, representatives, Citywide Parents Council, testified regarding the superintendent search process and endorsed Dr. Brenda Cassellius for superintendent.

Mike Heichman, member, Boston Educational Justice Alliance, testified regarding the superintendent search and endorsed Dr. Brenda Cassellius for superintendent.

Monty Neill, Jamaica Plain resident, testified regarding the superintendent search and standardized testing.

Ruby Reyes, executive director, Boston Education Justice Alliance, testified regarding the superintendent search and endorsed Dr. Brenda Cassellius for superintendent. She encouraged the Committee to consider passing a resolution supporting the PROMISE and CHERISH Acts. She also invited the Committee to participate in the Fund our Future Day of Action at the State House on May 16.

Lisa Green, member, Boston Coalition for Education Equity, testified regarding the superintendent search and endorsed Dr. Brenda Cassellius for superintendent.

Jamie Staraitis, English Language director, East Boston High School, testified regarding the superintendent search and expressed support for Dr. Oscar Santos for superintendent.

Elvis Henriquez, principal, McCormack Middle School, expressed support for Dr. Oscar Santos for superintendent.

Ismael Valenzuela, teacher, McCormack Middle School, expressed support for Dr. Oscar Santos for superintendent.

Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent, expressed support for Dr. Brenda Cassellius for superintendent.

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Doug Hurley, Dorchester resident, expressed support for Dr. Oscar Santos for superintendent.

ACTION ITEMS

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$40,275,634.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved Interim Salary and Non-Personnel Payments for External Funds for FY20.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion to enter into discussions regarding the selection of BPS superintendent.

Chairperson Loconto invited the members to share their reflections on the final three candidates before stating their preferred candidate, noting that Ms. Sullivan would tally the votes.

Ms. Reyes thanked the Committee for appointing the first-ever student member of a BPS superintendent search committee and for including students on the public interview panels. She said that following much deliberation, the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) endorses **Dr. Brenda Cassellius** for superintendent. She extended BSAC's appreciation to the other two candidates.

Ms. Robinson explained her decision-making process, listening to the public interview panels, doing her own research, and read comments from the public. She praised Ms. Izquierdo for her work closing achievement gaps in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and encouraged BPS to learn from her work. Ms. Robinson expressed her support for **Dr. Cassellius**, saying the district needs to promote healing and build trust with the community.

Dr. Coleman said that he understands some people's frustration with search process, explaining that the School Committee strived to balance the public's desire for transparency with applicants' desire for confidentiality. He praised the Superintendent Search Committee for recommending three strong candidates. He discussed the critical need for additional state funding and the desire to unify the BPS community. Dr. Coleman praised Ms. Izquierdo for her inspirational work closing opportunity and achievement gaps before stating his support for **Dr. Cassellius**. He said that if he were to rank the candidates, he would select Dr. Cassellius, followed by Ms. Izquierdo, followed by current Interim Superintendent Laura Perille (who is not a candidate for the position).

Dr. Rivera spoke about her personal and professional experience as a BPS parent and partner. She said that she supports **Ms. Izquierdo** for superintendent, citing Ms. Izquierdo's experience working with immigrant students, building trust with the community and closing opportunity and achievement gaps. She expressed confidence in Ms. Izquierdo's potential to address serious

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issues facing the district, including structural racism, high school redesign, supporting English learners with disabilities, and hiring and retaining teachers of color.

Mr. Tran thanked the Superintendent Search Committee for its work, describing the search process as fair and open. He described the three candidates as very qualified. After listening to feedback from teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders, Mr. Tran said he decided to support **Dr. Cassellius**, citing her focus on equity.

Mr. O'Neill thanked all those who testified. He thanked the Search Committee, recognizing members Pastor Sam Acevedo, Elvis Henriquez, and Jessica Tang, who were in the audience. He praised search firm Isaacson Miller and Chairperson Loconto for their work on the search. He also thanked people who watched the public interviews, submitted surveys and offered feedback. Finally, he thanked all three candidates for their willingness to participate in the process. After explaining that is torn between Ms. Izquierdo and Dr. Cassellius, he expressed his support for **Dr. Cassellius**, saying that she is the leader that BPS needs at this time.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked the Search Committee members, listing them individually. She also thanked Isaacson Miller, as well as the parents, teachers, students and other stakeholders who participated in the search process over the past eight months. Saying that BPS needs to take a new approach to address persistent problems, she expressed support for **Ms. Izquierdo**. She cited Ms. Izquierdo's proven track records of closing opportunity and achievement gaps, her experience supporting immigrant populations, and her reputation as a strong collaborator. Ms. Oliver-Dávila said that BPS should seize this opportunity to select a highly qualified Latina leader. She thanked all three candidates for participating in the process, calling them all strong.

Chairperson Loconto thanked Ms. Perille for working to rebuild trust, advance BuildBPS, and moving the district forward. He offered thanks to central office and school staff, the search committee co-chairs and members and the public interview panelists. He summarized the search process. Since October, the Search Committee has met for more than 70 hours, including six citywide six listening sessions, 8 public meetings, and 40 hours of confidential interviews and deliberations that have yielded robust, thoughtful conversation between a diverse set of highly qualified candidates and committee members. The position has attracted interest from a diverse and talented pool of 57 prospective candidates, 39 of whom submitted materials for consideration by the search committee. Seven out of 12 semifinalists interviewed were either sitting or former big city superintendents. The Search Committee ultimately recommended three strong, qualified finalists for the School Committee's consideration. All candidates are people of color, who reflect the BPS student population. He called Dr. Santos is an inspirational example of what BPS graduates can achieve. He praised Dr. Izquierdo, a child of immigrants, for her nearly three decades of impressive work in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. He expressed his support for **Dr. Cassellius**, calling her a seasoned educator who is well positioned to guide and unify the district.

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Approved – By a ballot vote of 5-2, the Committee selected Dr. Brenda Cassellius as the next Superintendent of Boston Public Schools, pending the successful negotiation of an employment contract. Each member voted as follows:

Dr. Hardin Coleman	Brenda Cassellius
Mr. Michael O’Neill	Brenda Cassellius
Dr. Lorna Rivera	Marie Izquierdo
Ms. Jeri Robinson	Brenda Cassellius
Mr. Quoc Tran	Brenda Cassellius
Vice Chairperson Alexandra Oliver-Dávila	Marie Izquierdo
Chairperson Michael Loconto	Brenda Cassellius

Approved – On roll call, the Committee approved a motion to appoint Dr. Brenda Cassellius as BPS Superintendent and enter into contract discussions. Dr. Rivera abstained; all other members voted yes.

NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Coleman encouraged the Committee to examine how it can support the goals of the new superintendent, calling the state prescribed superintendent evaluation instrument inappropriate for BPS.

Ms. Robinson proposed that the Committee consider dividing the district’s schools among School Committee members as a way to help the Committee better support schools.

Mr. Loconto said that the Committee will schedule a retreat in the near future to discuss these issues. He congratulated Sociedad Latina for receiving Community Preservation Act funding.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

At approximately 8:33 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn to executive session for the purpose of discussing strategy in preparation for negotiations with the superintendent-designate, a non-union employee. The School Committee did not return to public session.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary