



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

July 16, 2018

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on July 16, 2018 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; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Michael O'Neill; Regina Robinson; and Dr. Miren Uriarte.

School Committee Members Absent: Vice Chairperson Hardin Coleman and Jeri Robinson.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Boston School Committee Meeting Minutes: June 20, 2018 and July 2, 2018
Grants for Approval Totaling \$545,384.69:

- Promoting Adolescent Health through School-Based HIV Prevention – Districtwide - \$410,000.00
- Puerto Rico Displaced Students – Districtwide - \$135,384.69

International Travel Request: Josiah Quincy Upper School – Netherlands – July 21-28, 2018

BPE Dearborn Memorandum of Understanding PowerPoint

BPE Dearborn MOU Equity Impact Statement

Boston Area Research Initiative: Evaluation of Boston Public Schools' Home-Based Assignment Plan PowerPoint

Boston Area Research Initiative: An Evaluation of Equity in the Boston Public Schools' Home-Based Assignment Policy, July 2018

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Home-Based Assignment Plan Equity Analysis Equity Impact Statement

CALL TO ORDER

The Committee gathered in the School Committee Chamber. Chairperson Loconto led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the June 20, 2018 and July 2, 2018 School Committee meetings.

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

** As prepared for delivery.*

Good evening, Chairperson Loconto, members of the School Committee, and members of the public who are here tonight and watching from home.

I would like to begin my report tonight by thanking each of you on the School Committee for the opportunity to serve the school system I love and believe in, as its interim superintendent, during a challenging time.

As a longtime education advocate and parent of two BPS students from kindergarten to graduation, my life revolved around BPS for over 20 years. So, I sit here tonight both honored and humbled to serve in this incredibly important role — important because it is designed to provide leadership, vision and support to all of you who make this system work, and especially to the teachers, staff and school leaders who are on the frontlines of educating our students and engaging with families and community partners.

I greatly appreciate the trust you have placed in me. Please know that I will work my hardest to ensure that the Boston Public Schools remains focused on its core mission of providing every student with access to a high quality education and to build on their assets and support their aspirations.

No transition is without some upheaval. As we undergo a change of leadership, we know there will be challenges ahead. Yet, one of the most amazing things about the Boston Public Schools is that even amid difficult times, there are great things happening every day throughout the district that reflect the important work taking place on behalf of Boston's children by so many caring and dedicated employees. I would like to highlight some of these positive things happening this summer.

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Last week, I visited the Mildred Avenue K-8 School as we kicked off our “5th Quarter” summer learning initiative, which blends fun, enrichment activities and traditional academics to offer students a well-rounded education to help stop the summer slide. Research shows us that students with at least 80 percent attendance in rigorous summer learning programs outperform their peers in math, English Language Arts, and social and emotional skills. Last summer, the average daily attendance rate for the district’s 5th Quarter initiative was 83 percent. This summer we are projecting to have 13,000 students enroll in our summer learning programs at 135 sites with programming that includes academic mentoring, leadership training, college readiness, and more. Programs range from the New England Aquarium to the full-inclusion Gardner Pilot Academy in Allston, which has been offering quality summer learning since 1999, with a focus on students with disabilities and English Learners.

On Saturday morning, 18 Boston Day and Evening Academy (BDEA) students returned from a two-week voyage aboard the historic Roseway schooner. The students traveled to Ellis Island, then up to New Bedford, and back to Boston Harbor. This is the second year that BDEA students set sail with World Ocean School, a nonprofit that provides educational, hands-on programs to underserved students, challenging them academically, physically, and emotionally.

Through a trip arranged by the Office of Opportunity and Achievement Gaps’ 10 Boys Initiative, 20 BPS students traveled an even greater distance this summer, studying in Ghana. 10 Boys offers a character-based curriculum model to improve students’ academic performance, while working to reshape their life trajectory. 10 Boys aims to motivate Black and Latino boys to enhance their leadership, decision-making, and critical-thinking capacities. The two-week trip to Ghana is jam-packed with experiences including service learning in an orphanage; tours and lectures at national museums and universities, and a tour of the Cape Coast Castle slave dungeons, where tens of thousands of Africans were held in captivity while they waited for ships to take them to the Americas and the Caribbean during the Transatlantic slave trade.

As part of our ongoing commitment to ensure the youth of Boston are eating nutritious and delicious food all year long, BPS, the City of Boston, Project Bread and other partners are again this summer teaming up to provide free breakfast and lunch to anyone under age 18 at more than 100 locations citywide. Here at the Bolling Building, we are offering free lunches from 11:30 to 1:30, as well as games and activities. This past Friday, I had the pleasure of joining our partners and our students in the Plaza Palooza festivities at City Hall Plaza. For a list of locations, hours and menu offerings that are part of the Boston Summer Eats program, please log onto Bostonpublicschools.org/summermeals.

The Boston Public Schools’ nationally recognized early childhood education program is the subject of a new book being published by Harvard Education Press. “Children at the Center,” which hits bookstores tomorrow, provides a closely observed account of a decade-long effort to reshape the district’s early learning programs into today’s widely regarded model that is known for achieving exceptional results. According to a description of the book, the authors show how “the BPS Department of Early Childhood was able to work with and against the constraints of

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the current accountability system to create a holistic, child-centered, play-based program that has had a significant impact in narrowing income-based learning gaps.” Congratulations to Jason Sachs, executive director of Early Childhood, and his team, including book contributors Marina Boni, Abby Morales, David Ramsey, Melissa Tonachel and K0-K1 teacher Jodi Doyle Krous for telling the story of the acclaimed BPS early childhood program. Proceeds of the book will benefit BPS early childhood programming. It’s available for sale online at Amazon and the Harvard Education Press at <http://hepg.org>.

We are off to a great start for the summer cleaning of our 128 school buildings. Our 390 full-time custodians had their annual training at the Dearborn on June 26-28. All schools are getting a top-to-bottom cleaning: Bathrooms are deep cleaned, dispensers replaced, classrooms walls are washed, floors stripped and refinished, carpets are shampooed, and school grounds are maintained, while many minor painting projects are happening. In addition to our normal cleaning, all wooden classroom floors are being lightly sanded and polyurethaned, and the stone floors in school lobbies and corridors are being polished. Our area managers are utilizing both the "Summer App" to track progress at each school, as well as a "Daily Log" used by custodians to monitor daily progress. Custodians and area managers are also helping to coordinate the delivery and moving of 21st Century Furniture, which is a \$13 million investment through the BuildBPS 10-Year Educational and Facilities Master Plan3 that will create more flexible learning spaces with comfortable, movable furniture and digital screens.

Some of the highlights are as follows:

- Quincy Upper School - ceilings in cafeteria have been scraped of falling paint chips.
- Perry School - all wood flooring is being "drum sanded" and refinished.
- Timilty School - 1st floor corridor to be stripped and "stone polished" allowing for a low maintenance and chemical free program.
- Brighton HS - Corridors are being re-polished.
- Chittick School - Corridors to be stripped and stone polished.
- Burke HS - 4th floor (formerly Dearborn) to be thoroughly cleaned and prepped for emergency "swing space".

There is an army of good people in our school buildings and Central Office who are doing remarkable work, and who want to make sure that the right work is taking place, not only in this building but in our schools and throughout the district. It is my role, as interim superintendent, to make sure that these people feel encouraged, inspired and supported — that they know I believe in the power of this important work. There are also some hard truths about the work we need to do as a district, about where we need to do things differently, and who is in the best position to ensure we deliver on our goals and commitments. We need to acknowledge where we are now —and where we have succeeded and failed and stumbled — if we want to collaboratively solve problems to benefit our students and families and really move this district forward.

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Over the next several months, I will focus on three main priorities that will drive our work, at least initially.

1. Throughout the summer, our team will prioritize a smooth start of the 2018-19 school year, with a focus on ensuring that the central office team is providing effective support for our schools, students and families.
2. I am conducting a strategic assessment of all Central Office functions, with a focus on re-establishing transparent and supportive interactions with school leaders and educators who are critical to everything we do in our schools.
3. We will also determine a thoughtful and strategic approach to keeping the many critical community conversations of the future of our schools moving forward during this transitional time at BPS. This will involve working with the BuildBPS and Community Engagement planning teams to review and revise plans to move this complex initiative forward, with a focus on developing a thoughtful, transparent and authentic community engagement process as we enter the new school year. (This will include soliciting the input and expertise of school leaders as representatives of your school communities, as well as direct engagement with families and community advocates.)

I would like to give you an update on some important early action steps I'm undertaking. Last Thursday, I launched the first two of 14 listening sessions I am hosting with BPS school leaders over the course of July and August. These are candid conversations about what is working well with our organization and where there are opportunities for improvement. Principal and headmaster voice will be front and center in my listening campaign, and I am asking them to provide me some of their valued insight as leaders within BPS. Their input, ideas and frank feedback offered in these sessions will help to inform and support my work ahead. I look forward to working with our school leaders as we collaboratively prepare for the start of the year, ensuring that we bring our collective best to every school, for every student in our city. Central Office Meetings. I am also conducting direct sit-downs with multiple levels of Central Office Staff, not just top leadership, in order to help me gain a better understanding of what is functioning well and how things could operate more efficiently to better serve our schools and their students and families.

While the leadership team and many in Central Office will remain focused on planning for the new school year, I have asked Myran Parker-Brass, our outgoing BPS Executive Director for the Arts and a longtime instructional leader within BPS, to join me as Transition Advisor for the remainder of the summer. She will assist me in processing much of the assessment information we are gathering from both school leaders and Central Office teams. During the initial assessment period over the summer, the ASSET team will report directly to my office, with additional support provided by Associate Superintendent Tommy Welch and Ms. Parker-Brass. Former Interim Superintendent and longtime BPS CFO John McDonough will join me for two weeks in July, to serve as a mentor and coach given his deep expertise in Central Office resource allocation and operations.

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Committee members welcomed Ms. Perille in her new role as Interim Superintendent, offering their thanks and support.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila said that it is important that Asians are represented in initiatives such as The 10 Boys Initiative. She also called for the appointment of more Latinos in district leadership positions.

Ms. Regina Robinson asked for more details about the interim superintendent's listening sessions with school leaders. She encouraged Ms. Perille to support leaders of color.

Dr. Uriarte invited Ms. Perille to attend a meeting of the English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force, which she co-chairs, and encouraged her to appoint leaders with deep ELL experience to senior team.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Carolyn Kain, chair, Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPAC), testified regarding the implementation of the district's comprehensive health education policy which calls for a modified curriculum for students with special needs.

Dianne Lescinkas, secretary, SpedPAC, testified regarding the implementation of the district's comprehensive health education policy

Kevin Murray, BPS parent, and member, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), testified regarding the home-based assignment policy equity analysis.

Jose Lopez, chair, education committee, Boston Branch NAACP, testified regarding the home-based assignment policy equity analysis.

John Mudd, education advocate, testified regarding the superintendent search process.

Danne Davis, former educator, testified regarding the superintendent search process.

Peggy Wiesenber, community member, testified regarding BPE Dearborn Memorandum of Understanding.

ACTION ITEMS

Ms. Oliver-Dávila requested that the district provide a future update on BPS students who were displaced from Puerto Rico.

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Ms. Regina Robinson requested a district update on health and wellness.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee unanimously approved grants for approval totaling \$545,384.69.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee unanimously approved an international travel request for students and chaperones from the Josiah Quincy Upper School to travel to the Netherlands from July 21-28, 2018.

Ms. Regina Robinson requested data on the Dearborn STEM Academy’s inclusion program. Ms. Oliver-Dávila praised BPE’s hard work.

Approved – The Committee unanimously approved, on roll call, a memorandum of agreement between the Boston Public Schools and BPE for Level 4 Turnaround Plan for Henry Dearborn STEM Academy effective July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2020.

REPORTS

An Evaluation of Equity in the Boston Public Schools’ Home-Based Assignment Policy – Dr. Daniel T. O’Brien, associate professor in the School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs at Northeastern University and co-director of the Boston Area Research Initiative (BARI), presented an overview of BARI’s report, *An Evaluation of Equity in the Boston Public Schools’ Home-Based Assignment Policy*. Dr. O’Brien served as the lead co-author of the report, together with Dr. Nancy Hill, a Charles Bigelow Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and founding member of BARI’s advisory council. BPS commissioned the report to evaluate the implementation of the district’s Home-Based Assignment Policy (HBAP) using a lens of equity.

Key findings of the report include:

1. HBAP reduced longest commutes
2. Implementation decisions: Staggered implementation was prudent; inaccurate construction of 6th grade choice baskets exacerbated inequities
3. Defining Access: Inequities in competition for high quality seats; disparities across race mirrored geographic disparities; geography plans critical role

The report concluded that inequalities existed regardless of HBAP due to racial and economic residential segregation within the city. BARI recommends that BPS take the following steps to address the concerns outlined in the report: focus intensely on improving the quality of schools throughout the city; address the implementation for grades 6-8 as it relates to universal minimum access; and modify the policy to attend to equity in competition for seats rather than the number of schools or number seats, requiring a more sophisticated algorithm.

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Monica Roberts, assistant superintendent of Engagement, discussed the district's next steps, which include conducting an equity analysis of HBAP every two years.

Committee members thanked BARI researchers for conducting the report and asked numerous questions about the researchers' methodology and conclusions, all of which were answered by Dr. O'Brien. Members expressed support for the report's recommendations, particularly around expanding school quality, and conveyed a shared sense of urgency. Ms. Perille agreed with the Committee's request to follow up on the report's recommendations and said that the district will provide an update in the fall. Chairperson Loconto said the district needs to more efficiently direct its funding to expand quality, calling for an integrated, collaborative approach. Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked the Boston Planning and Development Agency to formally recognize Mission Hill in its research.

Superintendent Search Process Update – Interim Superintendent Perille excused herself from the Committee's discussion about the superintendent search process to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest. Chairperson Loconto said that the Committee is engaging with foundations to provide financial support for the search. The Committee will formally name a search committee, select a search firm, and conduct public interviews of the final candidates. The Committee plans to schedule a retreat soon to plan fall meeting agendas and discuss the superintendent's search process. Members suggested reviewing materials from past superintendent search processes as a guide.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Peggy Wiesenberg, advocate, testified regarding the Committee's relationship with deputy superintendents according to the City's charter, and the home-based school assignment analysis.

Matt Cregor, civil rights attorney, testified regarding the home-based school assignment analysis.

Mary Battenfeld, BPS parent and member, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), testified regarding the home-based school assignment analysis.

John Mudd, education advocate, testified regarding the home-based school assignment analysis and the superintendent search process.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairperson Loconto wished Chief of Staff Rob Consalvo a happy birthday. He congratulated Mr. O'Neill and Ms. Sullivan who are both celebrating 10 years with the Boston School Committee – Mr. O'Neill as a member and Ms. Sullivan as executive secretary.

Mr. O'Neill stated that he has received a great deal of interest from people wishing to serve on the Internal Audit Task Force and said he will provide the Committee with a full update in the near future.

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ADJOURN

At approximately 9:47 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary