



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE RETREAT

August 28, 2019

The Boston School Committee held a retreat on August 28, 2019 at 5 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; and student representative Evelyn Reyes.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

International Travel Request: Boston Latin School – Moscow, Russia – August 31-September 7, 2019

Developing a Strategic Vision for the Boston Public Schools

BPS Strategic Planning Review PowerPoint

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Loconto called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. He announced that interpretation services were available in Spanish, adding that the district is making a concerted effort to make interpretation services available at all School Committee meetings.

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ACTION ITEM

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Boston Latin School to travel to Moscow, Russia from August 31-September 7, 2019.

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS (BPS) STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW AND COMMUNICATIONS OUTREACH DISCUSSION

Superintendent Cassellius said that since her appointment last spring, she has reviewed multiple plans by BPS, placing the most focus on the BPS Strategic Vision, which the School Committee approved in 2015. She read aloud the strategic vision statement and theory of action, noting that both are lengthy. She suggested adding language about her core values of Joy, Unity, Inclusion, Collaboration, and Equity (JUICE). She reviewed the plan's five aspirations, six priority areas and 10 items that define the vision of the BPS graduate. The Superintendent then presented data demonstrating the district's progress to date for each goal within the priority areas. The majority of goals were stable, while some showed improvement, and a small number saw a decline. The Superintendent pledged to tie all of the district's work back to the goals of the strategic plan and to provide the Committee with regularly updated data.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila asked requested that the data in priority area #4 (*BPS will implement strategies to ensure every school will have highly effective school leaders, teachers, and staff. The workforce will reflect the rich diversity of the students BPS serves*) be further disaggregated. Dr. Coleman agreed, suggesting that the data be disaggregated by school. The Superintendent said that she is exploring the idea of creating data dashboards. She suggested that the Committee may want to consider forming a policy task force or a data task force. Mr. Loconto said that he and Vice Chair Oliver-Dávila have discussed the possibility of creating a partnership task force.

Mr. O'Neill thanked the Superintendent for the presentation and expressed support for her community engagement plan. Ms. Robinson asked how schools will use the data and adjust accordingly. The Superintendent said that her leadership team at central office is working in cross-functional groups to support schools. She plans to present both short-term and long-term plans to the School Committee for consideration. Dr. Rivera suggesting adding language to the vision statement that address factors such as poverty, affordable housing, and equitable access to high quality schools. Dr. Coleman urged the district to use the data to drive improvement. Ms. Oliver-Dávila described the strategic plan as strong, and said that she looks forward to receiving feedback from the community. She said that the strategic plan is mainly focused on K-12, and suggested taking a broader approach, in which the city is viewed as a classroom. She urged the district to expand its partnerships with the businesses and higher education communities, and to deepen its engagement with Latino families, who comprise 44 percent of the BPS population. She also suggested creating a college and career task force.

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Mr. Loconto briefly summarized the discussion, saying that the Committee looks forward to receiving regular updates on the district's progress with the strategic plan. He said that community feedback will be important. Dr. Coleman encouraged the members and Superintendent to think about what metrics should be added or removed. The Superintendent suggested adding data on chronic absenteeism and retention rates. Mr. O'Neill suggested pairing a national peer group (e.g. Austin and Seattle) and a state peer group (of other large urban districts) and a goal for each category. The Committee agreed to provide the Superintendent with direct feedback on the strategic plan via email and phone.

The Superintendent then transitioned into an overview of her 100-Day Engagement Plan, during which time she plans to visit all 125 BPS schools, hold seven neighborhood-specific town hall style community meetings, convene six school-parent council meetings, participate in 26 community sessions along with numerous meet-and-greet events and more than 40 meetings with advocacy, philanthropic, corporate, faith-based, and nonprofit partners. Since her appointment last May, the Superintendent has held meetings with more than 65 community partners.

The Superintendent clarified for Ms. Reyes that she plans to meet with the Boston Student Advisory Council and engage deeply with students. During her schools visits, the Superintendent plans to assess school culture and climate, sense of place within Boston, overall facility conditions and hear from students and teachers. Mr. Tran said that the BuildBPS facilities master plan should be aligned with strategic plan. Ms. Oliver-Dávila suggested that the district explore alternative and creative methods of family engagement. Dr. Coleman and Mr. O'Neill said that going forward the Committee will keep a laser-focus on the district's progress on the strategic plan. The Superintendent assured the Committee that the work of the plan has been ongoing. Mr. O'Neill suggested that Superintendent update the Committee during her engagement tour with the main themes of what she has heard and learned. The Superintendent's engagement schedule is publicly available at <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/engagementtour>.

PLANNING FOR 2019-2020 SCHOOL COMMITTEE TASK FORCES, TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL INITIATIVES

Mr. Loconto said that the Committee plans to hold another retreat later this fall, at which time the Committee will discuss the possibility of establishing additional task force, possibly in the areas of partnerships and/or college and career. He has tasked Mr. Tran with drafting guidelines for the nomination of Task Force members. He clarified that the School Quality Working Group and English Language Learner Task Forces can move forward with their plans to add new members while the guidelines are being drafted. All Task Force members will continue to be publicly presented to and approved by the School Committee.

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Parliamentarian working remotely. \$8K savings. Policy manual development. MASC approx \$12K over 3 years. Supt said Office of Equity will review from an equity lens. Jeri and Alex expressed support

Committee meeting start time. Experimented with 5 and 5:30. Feedback? Mr. O'Neill said its difficult with traffic. Other schools board limit speakers per topic or limit speakers in rounds of public comment. Mr. Loconto agreed and said meeting will need to start at 6 when there is a quorum. Ms. Oliver Davila asked that Committee receive report the Fri. prior to the meeting. Dr. Coleman said Committee reexamine the structure of the public comment. Mr. O'Neill said on evenings when we have citations to start at 5:45 p.m.

BSC school visits. Collected visits and use the map and grid as tools to expand reach.

The Committee and Superintendent agreed to schedule another retreat for this fall.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Robert Jenkins praised the Superintendent's community engagement plan. He also expressed concerns about the viability of some athletic program and transportation.

Peggy Wiesenberg, education advocate, suggested that the Committee post draft presentations are on the BPS webpage prior to the School Committee meeting. She asked the Committee to consider establishing subcommittees on budget and policy.

Michael Wasserman, executive director, Boston Debate League (BDL), discussed the BDL's partnership with BPS.

Jennifer Green, director, programs, NFTE, testified regarding partnerships and college and career readiness.

ADJOURN

At approximately 7:20 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary