



## OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REMOTE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

September 22, 2021

The Boston School Committee held a remote meeting on September, 2021 at 4:15 p.m. on Zoom. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee), email [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:feedback@bostonpublicschools.org) or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

### ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Jeri Robinson; Vice Chairperson Michael O'Neill; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Ernani DeAraujo; Lorena Lopera; Rafaela Polanco Garcia; and Student Representative Xyra Mercer.

School Committee Member Absent: Quoc Tran.

### DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

#### Agenda

Meeting Minutes: [September 1, 2021 Boston School Committee Meeting](#)

[New School Leaders, SY 2021-2022 PowerPoint](#)

[Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Boston School Committee and the Boston Teachers Union regarding Health and Safety for School Year 2021-2022](#)

[PowerPoint: The School Committee of the City of Boston Memorandum of Agreement Reopening Health and Safety SY21-22 Boston Teachers Union September 22, 2021](#)

[Grants for Approval Totaling \\$1,494,075](#)

[FY22 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief \(ESSER\) II Funding Implementation Plan](#)

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FY 22 Budget: Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II Funding Update PowerPoint, September 1, 2021

ESSER Fund Recovery Strategy Equity Impact Statement

Memo from Eva Mitchell, Chief Accountability Officer, to Boston School Committee re: Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funding Plan, Aug. 27, 2021

School Year 2021-2022 Mask and COVID-19 Testing Policy

Code of Conduct Update PowerPoint

BPS Code of Conduct, Revised September 2021

Memo from Assistant Superintendent Dacia Campbell to Boston School Committee re: New Revised 2021 Code of Conduct, September 7, 2021

Code of Conduct Equity Impact Statement

Library Services Strategic Plan, 2022-2026 PowerPoint

Library Services Strategic Plan, 2022-2026

Memo from Dr. Deb Frogatt to Boston School Committee re: Boston Public Schools Library Services Strategic Plan 2022-2026, September 14, 2021

BPS Library Services Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Equity Impact Statement

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Jeri Robinson called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. Ms. Lopera, Ms. Polanco Garcia, Ms. Robinson, and Mr. O'Neill were present. Mr. Tran was absent. Mr. DeAraujo was absent but joined during the executive session. Dr. Coleman and Ms. Mercer were absent but joined the public meeting at 5:15 p.m.

**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 collective bargaining with the Boston Teachers Union and the United Steelworkers of America Local 8751 (School Bus Drivers). She announced that the Committee would return to public session at approximately 5 p.m.

**RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION**

The Committee returned to public session at approximately 5:20 p.m. Ms. Robinson explained that the Committee had just returned from an executive session for the purpose of conducting a strategy session related to collective bargaining with the Boston Teachers Union and the United Steelworkers of America Local 8751 (School Bus Drivers).

Ms. Robinson 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](http://bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee) and on YouTube. She announced that simultaneous interpretation services were available in 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. Translated meeting documents were posted at [www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee) prior to the start of the meeting.

## APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

*Approved* – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the September 1, Committee 2021 meeting.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

*As prepared for delivery.*

Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you all for joining us this evening for our first School Committee meeting of the 2021-22 school year.

I want to acknowledge the current Haitian refugee crisis at the U.S./Mexico border. I know many of our students, staff, and families themselves emigrated from Haiti, or have family and friends who live there currently. Our Haitian students represent one of the largest ethnic populations in the district, and BPS stands with the Haitian people during this truly difficult period for the nation. I have heard from staff and other community members who are anxious about loved ones because of the crisis created by the most recent natural disasters and the political instability in the country, exacerbating concerns that have been compounded by the poor treatment of Haitian refugees in Texas. We continue to keep the people of Haiti here and abroad in our thoughts and support is available for anyone who needs it.

I'd like to focus my report tonight on various data points from the first couple weeks of the school year. We were very pleased to report our highest first-day attendance rate on record for the first day of the school year, Thursday, September 9th. Our attendance rate has continued to improve as the school year has progressed, reaching a high of 88% on Friday, September 17th. As you can see here, we have averaged 86% attendance and are seeing a bit lower attendance in the upper grades. We mentioned to the Committee in recent weeks that our enrollment generally stabilizes once we remove the students who "did not report" or DNR. BPS plans to withdraw

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approximately 1,500 students marked as DNR from our rosters by the end of the week. We will report our 2021-22 school year enrollment to DESE on October 1st, after which we will have an even better understanding of our attendance. We've had over 900 students register since September 1st and our Welcome Services team continues to support families with registration online, by phone and in-person at our 4 Welcome Centers. Following two school years impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, it's wonderful to see such strong attendance and to have all of our students back in their classrooms, learning in-person.

I know that in Boston, and across the Commonwealth, some parents have advocated for a remote learning option for their students. I want to reiterate that the State has mandated full in-person learning for students. During our last meeting, Deputy Superintendent of Academics, Drew Echelson outlined the process for Home & Hospital Instruction. So far, 20 students have been approved for traditional Home & Hospital services. 23 students have requested the modified Home & Hospital services available this year. The district has approved 19 of these requests, 3 are pending approval, and 1 was not approved because the student's physician did not view the accommodation as necessary. We have also approved 267 applications for homeschooling this year, which is higher than in previous years. While we continue to explore a virtual school option for the future, and are providing the Home and Hospital option to students who meet that criteria, we know that the best learning environment for our students is inside the classroom.

During our last meeting, we alerted the Committee that Boston was experiencing challenges similar to other districts across the Commonwealth and the country due to the national bus driver shortage. Here you will see our average bus on-time performance and hotline wait times from school years 2014-2020. In the middle column, you'll see the numbers for those metrics last year during disrupted in-person learning (when many of our students were learning remotely), and on the right the numbers for this school year thus far. It's important to note that Boston Public Schools transports approximately 24,000 students every day to 232 different schools (BPS and non-BPS). We provide door-to-door transportation for 5,989 students. BPS transports all bus-eligible students who are Boston residents to our schools as well as charter, parochial, and private schools. BPS also transports students in the care of the Department of Children and Families to their school buildings, as well as Boston students to non-BPS schools located outside of Boston, including Worcester, New Hampshire, and Cape Cod. We have 700 buses in our fleet and operate 641 daily. I want to thank our 641 drivers and monitors who show up every day and get our kids safely to school. So far this year, the on-time transportation of students in Boston has surpassed the average over the past five years (not counting last year's hybrid learning which only saw roughly half of our students attending school in person by the end of the year). On the first day of school, 57% of buses were on time and that percentage increased to 81% for the second day, Friday, September 10th. A bus considered "on-time" arrives before the school bell time. BPS also tracks the number of buses that arrive within 15 minutes of the bell time and those that arrive within 30 minutes of the bell time. The table here shows the on-time performance, as well as the within-15 minutes and within-30 minutes performance of buses, during the first 5 days of the year. As you can see from the table, 96 percent of students arrive at school within 15 minutes of school start time and 99 percent arrive within 30 minutes. While our goal is always to be at 100 percent, these numbers represent a significant improvement over past year's performance. Last week, during the first full week of the school year, BPS Transportation averaged 82% on time performance, with our highest performing day last week peaking on

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Friday, September 17th at 90% on-time rate for morning trips. Although it's not on the slide, so far this week 90% of buses have arrived on time each day. Our Transportation Call Center has provided real-time support to families from 6am to 7pm daily, with over 7,200 calls handled since the start of school. As a reminder, the hotline number is 617-635-9520. Families can also track their child's bus using the *Where's My School Bus?* App, available at <https://schoolbus.bostonpublicschools.org/>. BPS currently has 664 active bus drivers, and 105 StandBy drivers. TransDev has hired 46 new drivers since July. Six drivers are currently completing training and we are processing an additional 16 drivers to join the team. We continue to process opt-outs and consolidate routes where possible in order to minimize the impact of driver and monitor shortages.

Earlier this month, Governor Baker called on the National Guard to support local districts with transportation of students to school due to the bus driver shortage. Our understanding is that the National Guard members possess 7D licenses which qualify them to operate vans that hold a limited number of students. BPS does not currently have vans in our fleet that these members would be qualified to drive, meaning we would have needed to lease these vehicles at an additional cost to the district and on a short timeframe. In addition, National Guard drivers are not fully trained to serve our student population, including our students with disabilities. We were also told that the assistance of the National Guard members would be short term, posing potential disruption when the temporary assistance ended. The City would also have needed to impact-bargain with the drivers union, which typically takes several weeks. After carefully reviewing the current complement of backup bus drivers, our projections for continued improvement in on-time performance, as well as the relatively short period of time that National Guard members will be available to support transportation efforts, BPS declined the offer of assistance.

We remain focused on long-term solutions and tonight I am announcing a Superintendent's Working group. Several of you have asked me to address our deep challenges-- and share more broadly the recommendations from our Transportation Consultant with our public to resolve the long-standing systemic and contractual issues plaguing our bus operations. Some of those deeper issues include our walk zones, student assignment system, charter transportation, start times, tiered routing, monitor and bus driver contracts, and communications to families. I am doing this because I believe it will take political will and public support to make these necessary changes. I want to acknowledge and commend the Transportation Team and in particular, Ms. Stanislaus on their continued work to improve. They have worked hard over the past year with our TransDev partner to implement every operational improvement they can from the report. What is needed are the harder changes. These changes will be necessary to improve the whole system. It's time the public understands the deeper complexities of our transportation system and the reasons behind the yearly snarls of getting kids to school on time. I will provide you with an update on the working group members, the charge and the structure of the Working Group on October 6th.

This year BPS is building upon last year's efforts to ensure our health and safety protocols are in place. We are focusing on 4 mitigation strategies:

- Consistent and correct mask wearing
- Expanding access to vaccines and promoting their safety

- Frequent COVID-19 testing
- Improving ventilation and regularly assessing air quality

In addition to the weekly pooled testing, we are also providing testing for students experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Any student who complains of any of the symptoms of COVID-19 will have access to a rapid test, and decisions on next steps are based on the results of the test. Also new this year is the Test and Stay program, introduced by DESE, which allows individuals who are identified as a close contact of a confirmed positive case to stay in school with daily testing for 5 days, if they do not have any symptoms. So far, over 18,000 families have provided consent for their students to participate in weekly pooled testing. As we did last year, BPS is reporting positive cases among students and staff to DESE and posting updates to a dashboard on the BPS website. DESE posts updates on Thursdays for the week prior, spanning Thursday-Wednesday. The BPS dashboard reflects reporting for the same time period. Multiple cases in one school do not necessarily indicate that the cases are related. BPS and public health officials communicate individually with each student or staff member who is confirmed positive or confirmed as a close contact. All districts started their reporting last week, for the period encompassing September 13-15th. We just provided our report for this week, for the period encompassing September 16th to 22nd. The dashboard will be updated tomorrow, but here you can see a preview of the updated numbers. This week, we have 32 positive cases among students and 20 among staff. This brings us to 46 cases year-to-date for students and 28 cases year-to-date for staff. BPS remains committed to transparently reporting this weekly update and notifying all school communities and administrative offices when there is a positive case reported in the building. The dashboard is available at [bostonpublicschools.org/CovidDashboard](https://bostonpublicschools.org/CovidDashboard). We continue to work with the state on their protocols and testing contract with CIC Health. There have been some delays and we are working through these issues for a smooth administration. I want to thank our Health Services and Data and Accountability teams, as well as the Boston Public Health Commission for their continued collaboration on our health and safety protocols.

Yesterday, DESE released its annual state assessment results for schools and districts statewide, which underscore the district's continued effort to close opportunity and achievement gaps for students and address the effects of the global pandemic on student learning. The data shows declines in student performance, affirming what we all know - that the pandemic did impact student learning and that our academic acceleration initiatives are necessary to continue closing the gaps that have been exacerbated by the challenges of the past 18 months. However, declines for our district were generally less severe than the state's average declines. The large urban districts in MA had comparable grades 3-8 scores in 2019, however, Boston experienced smaller decreases in ELA and Math in terms of the percentage of students who met/exceeded expectations on the assessment. Here you will see results from the 2020 administration of the MCAS for BPS students. Several changes were made to MCAS administration for 2021. In grades 3-8, students took only one session of the MCAS and students were allowed to take the test in-person or remotely. 91% of BPS students in grades 3-8 took the MCAS in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math, with participation by grade level ranging from 87% - 94%. In grade 10, 70% of students took the ELA MCAS and 68% of students took the Math MCAS. Here you will see the 4 performance levels of 2021 ELA MCAS. The line on the bar represents the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations from 2019. 31% of tested students met or exceeded expectations in grades 3-8 in ELA, a decrease of 4 percentage points from 2019,

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which is less than the statewide decline of 6 percentage points. For students who participated in 10th grade MCAS, ELA results were consistent with pre-pandemic performance. This slide shows the same graph for 2021 Math MCAS results. 20% of tested students met or exceeded expectations in grades 3-8 in Math, a decrease of 13 percentage points from 2019, which is less than the statewide decline of 16 percentage points. For 10th grade students, math performance also declined from 2019.

We have invested in the social-emotional health and well-being of our students by deploying a full-time nurse, social worker and family liaison in every school and expanding the Hub Schools model to provide access to wraparound services for students and families in schools. Last school year, we launched new data tools including Panorama Student Success which enables school-based and district staff to access real-time, actionable and holistic student data, work together to log support notes, and design and monitor Student Success Plans. And starting this school year, BPS will contract with an online vendor that provides 24/7 tutoring support aligned with BPS curriculum and instruction. And we are also renewing our commitment to equitable literacy by providing access to new materials and professional development for school leaders and school-based staff. We will provide a full analysis of the MCAS results to the Committee during our next meeting on October 6th.

As mentioned earlier, ventilation and air quality remain a key focus in our buildings. Our Facilities Team continues to install Indoor Air Quality Sensors in classrooms across the district. To date, more than 3,000 sensors have been installed across 88 schools. This project is on track for completion by the end of October. Bids have been returned for the installation of air conditioning units across the district and we are moving forward with the contract process. We are on track for installation of units to begin in October. The district has also procured pop-up tents (10ft x 10 ft) through WB Mason. Each school that has opted in will receive five tents. Parameters on use and storage have been provided to schools to ensure they are in compliance. School leaders continue to request additional air purifiers and fans as needed. Turnaround for delivery of these units is 24 hours after request approval. The system for PPE delivery requests is live and deliveries of confirmed requests occur weekly. There have been some delays from our new bottled water vendor. We have been working with them and today all schools have their stock of water and we have 100 bottles in reserve. We have operational improvements we are making with the team to identify shortages and this should ensure schools are fully stocked with plenty of water. As a reminder, this year we are beginning our first phase of our 16M dollar investment in clean potable refillable stations in every BPS school. This will eliminate the need to truck in bottled water.

I want to provide an update on another important part of our Operations, Food and Nutrition Services. Here you will see some of the delicious meals being served to our students by our Food and Nutrition Services team. FNS has a new produce supplier for fresh fruits and vegetables and is delivering directly to our warehouse. FNS is also working with a new grocer that has started delivering to five of our largest schools, relieving some stress at our distribution warehouse. My Way Cafe projects are moving forward at 17 sites, with new construction scheduled largely after school hours from 2:30 to 11:00 pm. We are working with individual schools to determine if “day work” is possible to progress and will soon schedule the delivery of new equipment. The vacancy rate is still fairly high at 22 percent, but the team is scheduling interviews weekly and

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prioritizing hiring of Serve/Safe-certified staff. We continue to plan with our City of Boston colleagues regarding meal plans for quarantined students and are also expecting an updated plan of PEBT distribution.

During our last meeting, I informed members of our hiring needs and I want to provide a quick update as to where we are in the process of hiring for some key positions. Overall, we're at about 90% of teacher vacancies hired/submitted for this year, compared to 95% at this point last year. This is due to the higher than usual volume of resignations and retirements and newly posted positions created from ESSER funding. For context, there have been 51 new teacher vacancies posted since the start of September, compared to 29 vacancies posted in the same time-frame last year (an increase in September postings of 76% over last year).

- Of ALL educator hires this year (including teachers and guidance counselors):
  - 34% identify as Black/African-American (vs 31% last year)
  - 16% identify as Latinx (vs 16% last year)
  - 7% identify as Asian (vs 6% last year)
  
- Of EXTERNAL educator hires this year (Teacher/Guidance):
  - 26% identify as Black/African-American (vs 23.5% last year)
  - 17% identify as Latinx (vs 15% last year)
  - 11% identify as Asian (vs 9.8% last year)

Nearly 47% of hires this year identify as speaking one or more of BPS' official languages other than English. The vacancy targets seen here for hourly roles ((Transportation, Food and Nutrition Services, and Custodial staff are estimates. These roles are pool positions, so not individually posted jobs. We've done our best to estimate hires needed in consultation with these departments. It has been a struggle to find people to fill hourly roles in general this year, as these are some of the lowest-paid roles in the district. OHC has been working to support these departments, and connecting them with colleagues in the Retention, Cultivation and Diversity departments , and we continue to process hires as they come through, making as many accommodations as possible to streamline the welcome sessions and processing of paperwork to move candidates through quickly. For our custodial staff, the remaining vacancies are part-time. Our fantastic Custodial Team feel like they are in good shape in terms of full-time positions, but are always hiring for part-time roles. They would love to have another 10-15 part-time folks hired.

In other news from yesterday, Winship Elementary School in Brighton was one of five schools in Massachusetts named a National Blue Ribbon School. Schools are recognized each year for their overall academic performance or progress in closing achievement gaps among student groups. The Winship is one of 325 schools recognized across the country this year for their achievement. Congratulations to Principal Brian Radley and the amazing staff and students at the Winship on this well-deserved honor!

BPS is proud to recognize the achievements and contributions of Hispanic American and Latinx champions who have inspired others to achieve success. To all the Latinx members of our community, we see you, we celebrate you and we lift up all that your heritage and culture bring



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to the Boston community! The Division of Academics curated resources for our educators to guide classroom discussions and the Office of English Learners is hosting events to celebrate the vibrant contributions of the Latinx community. The first event: “Conversations ¡Con Salsa!, Patria y Cultura” (*With Salsa! Homeland and Culture*) will be moderated by José Massó. This virtual event will be held on Wednesday, September 29th from 6:00-7:30 pm, in both English and Spanish, and will focus on racialization in Puerto Rico through music. The second event, Women in Salsa, will also be moderated by José Massó, with special guest Cita Rodríguez. The conversation will touch on the legacy of three legendary and iconic Cuban singers, Celia Cruz, Graciela, and La Lupe and their influence on the singing career of Cita Rodríguez. The virtual event will also include discussion of the role of bilingual education in the classroom. This event will be on Wednesday, October 6th from 6:00-7:30 pm. OEL is celebrating Latinx and Hispanic heritage all year long. Details on these events and future events are available on the district calendar at [bostonpublicschools.org/calendar](https://bostonpublicschools.org/calendar).

In early August, BPS notified the Mission Hill K-8 School community that the co-teacher leaders had been removed from their positions and placed on administrative leave, pending further investigation into their role in misconduct at the school. This decision was made following an investigation that found credible evidence that the school did not take appropriate action after complaints were filed about the mistreatment of at least one student between 2014 and 2019. Due to the sensitive nature of the investigation’s findings and additional allegations, BPS is not providing additional details at this time to protect the identities of students and families involved. Two additional teachers were placed on paid administrative leave as a result of separate allegations. The physical, social and emotional health of our students is the top priority of the Boston Public Schools. Once the findings of the months-long investigation were shared with me, I felt it was necessary to take swift action to foster a safe and respectful teaching and learning environment. The evidence was credible and substantial, and included reports dating back at least five years. The findings also uncovered many more concerns that warrant a deeper look.

I have directed additional training, support, and resources for members of the school community to ensure a safe, culturally affirming and welcoming learning environment for all Mission Hill K-8 School students. I am grateful for Margarita Muniz Academy Head of School Dania Vazquez, who stepped in to lead the Mission Hill K-8 Pilot School and assist in opening school through the end of September. We aim to name an interim leader by early next week. Dr. Vazquez is working tirelessly on the daily operations as well as setting up expectations. Recently retired Hale School Principal Romaine Teque-Mills has also temporarily returned to BPS to support the Mission Hill community during this time of transition, through classroom observation and interacting with staff and students. We’ve held two meetings with the Mission Hill community and Dr. Wai is meeting with the governance board chair on a weekly basis. Dr. Grace Wai, the Elementary School Superintendent, and Assistant Superintendent Dacia Campbell have been working to identify an Interim Principal and continue to support and monitor the school and ensure a safe and respectful school climate.

Mission Hill is one of 32 transformation schools that is in its third year of targeted support to include adoption of district curriculum, instructional implementation, and assessment literacy. Mission Hill is also one of the original BPS pilot schools, which allow certain autonomies. However, the investigation points to years of academic decline as well as an apparent disregard

for district and state mandates regarding management and governance. The school has had district support over the years including from Succeed Boston as well as the Office of Equity, though these practices were inadequately implemented. As a result, the district has provided training in Bullying Prevention/Intervention from Succeed Boston; on discipline of students with disabilities, on DESE policy/requirements for de-escalation/physical restraint; and responding to records requests. We will also hold upcoming trainings on the Code of Conduct and from the Office of Equity on addressing bias-based incidents. The district office is deploying an inclusion specialist to fill ensure and the Assistant Director for Special Education is reviewing all IEPs to ensure student needs are being met. As a result of the administrative leaves and other leaves, the school is looking to fill several positions. Dr. Wai has called and emailed 55 candidates from the recruitment office and searched for applicants who have applied to substitute in the district. Please contact Dr. Wai if you know of any qualified candidates for teachers, paraprofessionals or daily substitutes. I know that Mission Hill parents and caregivers are here tonight to express their concerns about changes in leadership and staffing that has impacted their children's experience. I understand this change is difficult for some families to understand, but the team and I at BPS continue to pursue the best interests of our students, staff, and overall community. We look forward to announcing the new school leader in the coming days and the school community has the full support of all of us at BPS as we continue working towards a successful school year.

Lastly, now that all our schools are open and the school year is in full swing, we have begun the process of implementing the exam school policy that was passed this summer. I will be bringing an updated presentation at our next meeting on October 6th.

Now we have the pleasure of introducing the Committee to our new school leaders for the 2021-22 school year. This slide shows some stats about our school leaders this year. We have 15 first-time BPS school leaders this year. Of the 15 new school leaders, 12 are internal hires and 7 are fluent in a language other than English. 87% of the new principals and heads of school are leaders of color, and 80% have prior experience working in a BPS school or administrative role. In addition, two are BPS graduates. On the far left bar you will see the race/ethnicity breakdown for all of our school leaders, in the middle you'll see the breakdown for the new school leaders, and on the right you'll see the race/ethnicity breakdown of our existing school leaders. Our Chief of Schools, Corey Harris, is here tonight to tell you a bit more about these amazing educators. Now I'll turn things over to Corey.

*[Mr. Harris introduced the [new school leaders](#).]*

Thank you, Corey, and thank you to all our school leaders for joining us tonight. That is my Superintendent's Report for this evening.

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Ms. Mercer requested an update on the recent relocation of the Edward M. Academy for Health Careers to the Endicott building. Mr. DePina said that he and his team continue to work with EMK staff to maximize the functionality of the building and continue to have conversations around next steps. Ms. Mercer asked about the status of Wi-Fi access following a disruption in service at some schools. Mr. Despina said that construction issues impacted Wi-Fi access at about 30 schools, adding that the technology department has been working around the clock to

restore service. She asked about the installation of air conditioners in classrooms. Mr. DePina said that BPS will work with contractors to navigate any obstacles related to installation.

Mr. DeAraujo said that he has been hearing from families who have experienced persistent problems with transportation service. He expressed a sense of urgency as well as the need for long-term solutions to avoid similar problems next school year. He expressed support for the Superintendent's Transportation Working Group and spoke about the importance of aligning stakeholders. Mr. DeAraujo expressed disappointment that there was no exam school admissions policy implementation update on the agenda, noting that he conditioned his July vote on receiving additional data from the district in September. He requested that data about the impact of awarding additional points to students from high poverty schools be presented to the Committee at the October 6th meeting.

Mr. O'Neill congratulated the new school leaders. He echoed Mr. DeAraujo's request for data on the exam schools admissions policy implementation and expressed concern about potential negative consequences of awarding bonus points to students attending some BPS schools. He shared concerns about the delays and disruptions in transportation service that some families are experiencing and encouraged the district to improve its communication. Mr. O'Neill expressed support for the Superintendent's proposal to establish a Transportation Working Group and encouraged her to include representation from students, parents and school leaders.

Ms. Lopera also expressed concern about chronically late buses. She applauded the creation of the Transportation Working Group and echoed Mr. O'Neill's call for student and parent representation. She emphasized the need to improve communication with families.

Ms. Polanco Garcia praised teachers and school leaders for going above and beyond their duties to support students. She applauded the district's hiring of bilingual school leaders.

Dr. Coleman said he looks forward to receiving disaggregated data and school-by-school data on the 2021 MCAS results, in addition to the district's plan to address areas of concern. He praised the significant increase in the hiring of school leaders of color and bilingual leaders. He said that BPS Transportation needs a multi-year solution.

Ms. Robinson spoke about the importance of improving overall communication throughout the district and giving every child what they need.

Mr. DeAraujo requested an update on Covid pool testing. Senior Advisor Megan Costello said that testing started last week, adding that every school is expected to have its first round of testing completed by Thursday.

***Approved*** - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent's Report.

***Tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Boston School Committee and the Boston Teachers Union regarding Health and Safety for School Year 2021-2022*** - Labor Relations Director Jeremiah Hasson presented a brief overview of a tentative Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Boston School Committee and the Boston Teachers Union regarding Health and Safety for School Year 2021-2022/

The Committee's bargaining goals and priorities were:

- Promote a safe and welcoming learning and working environment for all students and staff.
- Ensure full cooperation from the BTU with the City of Boston's Covid-19 Vaccination or Testing Policy.
- Negotiate an agreement that is fair and equitable for BTU members and for members of our other bargaining units.
- Create a fiscally responsible and sustainable reopening model.

Memorandum of Understanding Highlights:

- BPS will provide the appropriate PPE (masks, gloves and gowns) in accordance with DESE guidance.
- BPS will install and maintain air quality data loggers in all classrooms.
- BPS staff will have the opportunity to participate in the pool testing program. If staff develop symptoms during the day, BPS will provide rapid tests in schools with the goal of keeping more staff members in the building and serving our students.
- BPS will continue to report positive cases by school on the BPS website.
- BTU agrees to accept the City of Boston's Vaccine Verification or Required Testing for Covid-19 Policy.
- BTU members will be provided up to ten paid days for Covid-related sick leave. If a vaccinated BTU member exhausts said leave time, and then tests positive for Covid, they may receive up to ten additional days to recover from the virus.

If the Committee votes to approve the agreement this evening, the Boston Public Schools will move forward with implementation.

## **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Sonia Medina, South End resident, Orchard Gardens K-8 School parent, testified regarding health and safety.
- Loren Carmona, Jamaica Plain resident, BPS parent, testified regarding transportation concerns.
- Maria Mejia, Roxbury resident, Blackstone Elementary School parent, testified regarding transportation concerns.
- Josefina Burgos, Dorchester resident, Russell Elementary School, testified regarding remote learning.
- Noemy Rodriguez, East Boston resident, Edison K-8 School parent, testified regarding

transportation concerns.

- Mike Heichman, Dorchester resident, Boston Education Justice Alliance (BEJA) member, testified regarding Covid and goals for this school year.
- John Mudd, Cambridge resident, advocate, testified in favor of a policy to support access to native language for English Learners and English Learner Students with Disabilities.
- Ruby Reyes, Dorchester resident, BEJA executive director, testified regarding reopening.
- Allison Cox, Jamaica Plain resident, Mission Hill K-8 School parent, testified regarding concerns about recent staffing changes at the school.
- Susan Maze-Rothstein, Code of Conduct Advisory Council Co-Chair, testified regarding the revised Code of Conduct.
- Laura McCune-Poplin, Jamaica Plain resident, Mission Hill K-8 School parent, testified regarding concerns about recent staffing changes at the school.
- Andrew Liff, Jamaica Plain resident, Mission Hill K-8 School and Boston Latin Academy parent, Mission Hill K-8 School parent, testified regarding concerns about recent staffing changes at the school.
- Avery Saulnier de Reyes, Roxbury resident, Mission Hill K-8 School parent, testified regarding concerns about recent staffing changes at the school.
- Riadh Lobbard, Jamaica Plain resident, Mission Hill K-8 School parent, testified regarding concerns about recent staffing changes at the school and the school's autonomy.
- Shery Keleher, Charlestown resident, BPS parent, testified regarding low expectations.
- Kassandra Guthrie, Dorchester resident, Mission Hill K-8 School parent, testified regarding bullying, Covid, and curriculum.
- Janice John, Jamaica Plain resident, former Mission Hill K-8 School parent, testified in support of corrective action being taken at the school.
- Edith Bazile, Dorchester resident, advocate, testified regarding the Code of Conduct and special education.
- Nat Adams, West Roxbury resident, parent, and BPS graduate, testified regarding the status of the implementation update for the exam schools admissions policy.
- Elizabeth Pierce, Jamaica Plain resident, Mission Hill K-8 School parent, testified regarding concerns about recent staffing changes and IEP services at the school.
- Emily Bauernfeind, Jamaica Plain resident, Mission Hill K-8 School parent, testified regarding concerns about recent staffing changes at the school.
- Elizabeth Cumberbatch, Jamaica Plain resident, Mission Hill K-8 School parent, testified regarding concerns about recent staffing changes at the school.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

Ms. Robinson asked for more information about the innovation pathways planning grant. The Superintendent explained that most secondary schools will use the innovation pathways planning grant funding to support career pathway programs. Speaking about the American Rescue Plan: Homeless Children and Youth grant, Ms. Robinson requested a future update on families who received housing vouchers during the pandemic.

*Approved* - On roll call, the Boston School Committee unanimously approved grants for approval totaling \$1,494,075.

***Approved*** - On roll call, the Boston School Committee unanimously approved a collective bargaining agreement between the Boston School Committee and the Boston Teachers Union regarding Health and Safety for School Year 2021-2022.

Mr. Robinson invited the members to ask final questions about the FY22 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II Funding Implementation Plan prior to the vote.

Ms. Lopera applauded the district's work to create the plan and suggested that the district group the investments into buckets of work and provide the Committee with regular progress reports. Chief of Finance Nate Kuder said that the district's ESSER and finance teams are in the process of planning for FY23 and will return to the Committee with updates. He spoke about the Superintendent's commitment to providing every school with a quality guarantee.

Ms. Robinson asked about ESSER III investments under review. The Superintendent said that the list of investments being considered represents what the district has heard from families and includes deferred maintenance and curriculum materials.

Mr. O'Neill cautioned the district to spend the one-time funding wisely and not rely on it for day-to-day spending. He urged the Superintendent to use the next round of ESSER funding to reimagine schools. Mr. O'Neill confirmed that members had received the school-by-school funding allocations as requested.

***Approved*** - On roll call, the Boston School Committee unanimously approved the acceptance of the FY22 Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II Funding Implementation Plan.

Ms. Robinson summarized the proposed School Year 2021-2022 Mask and COVID-19 Testing Policy. The policy states that all BPS students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, will be required to wear masks while inside school buildings, during yellow bus transportation, and when attending school or watching athletic events. If students are in violation of this policy, the school leader will consult with the parents/guardians, Health Services, and/or the Office of Special Education in order to ensure compliance and the student code of conduct will be applied if appropriate to the situation. Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of Boston Public Schools policies. All students will have access to free and voluntary COVID-19 Pool Testing. All members of the BPS community are encouraged to participate, regardless of vaccination status. Parents must consent to testing.

Mr. DeAraujo expressed support for the policy. Mr. O'Neill noted that a masking policy is mandated by DESE, adding that it is important for the Committee to confirm the policy with a vote.

***Approved*** - On roll call, the Boston School Committee unanimously approved the acceptance of the BPS School Year 2021-2022 Mask and COVID-19 Testing Policy.

## REPORTS

***Code of Conduct Update*** - Superintendent Cassellius first provided a brief update on Safety Services. The recent police reform bill changed state laws, which consequently impacts the policy passed by the Committee on September 15, 2020 regarding the preparing and sharing of student incident reports and information with the Boston Police Department (BPD). School Safety Specialists no longer have the powers they previously had when they were specially licensed by the BPD, including making arrests and writing police reports. The Superintendent will be setting forth a proposal for the Committee to amend the policy to align with state law.

Dacia Campbell, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Schools, presented a revised BPS Code of Conduct (COC) policy. The COC update reflects BPS' efforts to develop, support and improve our school community for all students. This policy has gone through multiple iterations that include the feedback of internal and external stakeholders. The COC aligns with the BPS Strategic Plan, and the district's commitment to students and families to identify and eliminate disproportionality in the implementation of the COC. The COC is structured as a progressive document that outlines incremental interventions and supports to address student behavior, beginning with prevention efforts, transitioning into suspension alternatives, and ending with removal as a last resort.

A major highlight of this new version of the COC is the adoption of no suspensions for grades K-2, tight restrictions for the suspension of students in grades 3-5 and provides for more checks and balances for emergency removal procedures. Another significant change is that the COC provides a clear, user-friendly visual of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework. The framework supports the 3 levels of care: promotion, prevention, intervention and provides specific strategies for School Leaders and school staff to adjust their practices to resolve disruptions and conflicts with the goal of keeping students in the classroom and engaged in their learning.

Noteworthy changes made to the February 2016 COC version:

- Updated the Code to reflect BPS's strategic plan goals and commitments and reworked the language throughout the Code.
- Renamed the Code of Conduct
- Reformatted for readers' ease (ex. searchable document, hyperlinked to related documents, clarified language, etc.)
  - Developed a more concise version with policy information and procedural guidance removed ( moved to Superintendent Circular, Code of Conduct Implementation Procedures, # SUP-05)
  - Removed deficit language
  - Less legalese
  
- Adoption of the 2017 Greater Boston Legal Services Settlement Agreement
  - No suspension for grades K0-2

- Restrictions on suspensions in grades 3-5
  - Child has assaulted a classmate or member of educational staff
  - Child possessed a dangerous weapon or controlled substance
  - Sexual misconduct
  - Civil rights violations; or
  - Repeated bullying
- Emergency Removal: Action must be logged into the student information system as soon as possible.
  - ★ Provided more protection to BPS students through modification of our Emergency Removal Policy. Under this new Code, Emergency removal may not exceed one (1) school day following the day of the emergency removal, a change from 2 days.
- Added new Codes for: Academic Misconduct; and Encouraging a physical fight by staging or instigating the fight and/or disseminating or posting video of the fight if action has a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.
- Eliminated duplicitous code violations
- Restructured the sections on Building Safe, Supportive, and Equitable School Communities and aligned to our adopted MTSS Framework to support Tier 1 classroom instruction.
- Added a new section on Interpretation and Translation Rights, and Applicability of the Code of Conduct.

Ms. Campbell said that the district plans to make two additional revisions to the draft: first, revising the language to read that a student may not be excluded from a field trip that is required for teaching learning and/or will result in a graded assignment; and secondly, removing any references in the document to school police.

Ms. Mercer requested the names of the district's Code of Conduct team members. Ms. Campbell agreed to follow up. Ms. Mercer asked how the district captures data on multi-racial students. Monica Hogan, senior executive director, Office of Data and Accountability, explained that families indicate race when they register students with BPS. Ms. Mercer asked why students with disabilities are suspended at a higher rate. Ms. Campbell said that district leaders are working to address that concern and identify root causes, adding that she looks forward to partnering with the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) to drive improvement. Jodi Elgee, senior director, Counseling and Intervention Center, applauded Ms. Mercer's thoughtful questions and invited her to join COCAC. She explained that Succeed Boston supports students who have violated the COC.

Mr. DeAraujo spoke about the importance of communicating with families in a way that is understandable and about the role of restorative justice.



Dr. Coleman praised the team for structuring the COC around the multi-tiered support system. Ms. Elgee explained that the district creates reentry plans for students returning to school and follows a collaborative, restorative justice process.

Mr. O'Neill applauded the district's restorative justice-based approach to the COC. He thanked COCAC and BSAC for being instrumental partners to BPS. He said that he looks forward to reading Dr. Maze-Rothstein's comments. Ms. Campbell said that BPS is committed to continuing its dialogue with COCAC.

The Superintendent said that the BPS Code of Conduct is the most progressive policy she has seen in the way that it restricts suspension and respects restorative justice. She affirmed that BPS values its partners in this work.

Ms. Campbell clarified for Ms. Robinson that the COC is applied across all grade levels. Ms. Robinson asked what strategies the district is using to support younger students who may require interventions. Ms. Campbell said that BPS uses Aspen to document behaviors and interventions in order to provide students with support.

Ms. Lopera asked if BPS is documenting patterns of educators issuing suspensions. Ms. Campbell said that BPS is focused on providing Tier 1 support for classroom teachers. Operational leaders flag schools with high suspension rates and provide training for school leaders. Deputy Superintendent of Operations Sam DePina said that the data is reviewed on a monthly basis. Ms. Lopera requested that the Committee receive suspension data showing the correlation between educator and student demographics.

The Committee is scheduled to vote on the revised Code of Conduct on October 6th.

***Library Services Strategic Plan, 2022-2026*** - Dr. Deborah Frogatt, Director of Library Services, presented the district's Library Services Strategic Plan for 2022-2026. The Library Services Strategic Plan is a five-year plan that serves as a beacon for planning and facilitating equitable access to effective school library programs for the district. The anchor goals directly align with the BPS 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. The plan serves a guidepost for the BPS Library Services in order to strive for equitable access to school libraries and library resources. The plan also addresses how Boston will use an influx of federal funds through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) to support the district's libraries and librarians.

The 2022-26 plan includes:

- An Executive Summary
- BPS Library Services Vision, Mission and Theory of Action Statements
- BPS Library Services Staffing and History
- Current Program Narrative
- Key Commitments and Anchor Goals

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting**  
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The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners receives and approves a school library's or school district library department's strategic plan. Once approved, BPS Libraries can apply for Library Services and Technology Act grants. In order for a school or district library strategic plan to remain compliant, an annual action plan must be submitted. Funding for these grants come from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the plan on October 6th.

Mr. DeAraujo asked how BPS plans to provide library services at schools that are lacking space. Dr. Frogatt spoke about the hard decisions that school leaders have to make when it comes to creating space for a library. She spoke about the value of classroom collections, onboarding new librarians, and using ESSER funding for one-time costs, such as shelving and technology.

Ms. Mercer spoke about the importance of investing in school libraries and credited her school's library with helping her develop a love of reading and learning.

Ms. Lopera spoke about the need for accessible and affordable literature in native languages and encouraged school leaders to make it a priority. The Superintendent spoke about her goal of providing every student and every school with a quality guarantee so that all students get what they need. Ms. Lopera encouraged the district to think creatively and streamline investments.

Mr. O'Neill advised the district to be thoughtful in its approach creating foundational budgets for schools in the future as enrollment varies.

Ms. Robinson suggested that BPS explore using a bookmobile to bring opportunities to schools that are lacking library space. She praised the creativity of the Nathan Hale Elementary School in prioritizing a school library. Christine Landry, Assistant Superintendent for Professional Learning, spoke about BPS' partnership with the Boston Public Library to expand literacy opportunities for students.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. DeAraujo suggested that the Committee consider adopting a policy on native language instruction.

Ms. Robinson said that the Committee is planning for a return to in-person, hybrid meetings. She said that the Committee is participating in a professional development training hosted by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) on Saturday, September 25 and is planning a two-part remote retreat for October 12-13th. Dr. Coleman and Mr. DeAraujo requested that the Committee discuss how to handle public comment given the increase that the

**Boston School Committee Remote Meeting**

**Zoom**

**September 22, 2021**

Committee has experienced since transitioning to remote meetings. Ms. Robinson suggested that the Committee discuss with MASC how other districts manage public comment.

**ADJOURN**

At approximately 10:17 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan  
Executive Secretary