



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

September 12, 2018

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on September 12, 2018 at 5:30 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 PRIOR TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael Loconto; Vice Chairperson Dr. Hardin Coleman; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; and Jeri Robinson.

School Committee Members Absent: Michael O'Neill; Regina Robinson and Dr. Miren Uriarte.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Loconto led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order. He announced that the Committee would immediately adjourn to executive session to conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with United Steel Workers of America, Local 8751. To conduct this discussion in an open session could have a detrimental effect on the Committee's negotiating position, he explained. The Committee will return to public session.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion to adjourn to executive session to conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with United Steel Workers of America, Local 8751.

The Committee returned to public session at 6:32 p.m.

ATTENDANCE AT PUBLIC SESSION

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael Loconto; Vice Chairperson Dr. Hardin Coleman; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Michael O'Neill; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson and Dr. Miren Uriarte.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
School Committee Chamber
Roxbury, MA 02119

September 12, 2018

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Boston School Committee Meeting Minutes: July 16, 2018

Boston School Committee Executive Session Minutes: December 14, 2016; December 6, 2017; June 27, 2018; and July 2, 2018.

Grants for Approval Totaling \$72,125,049:

- Charlestown Community Impact Fund - Charlestown High School - \$5,000.00
- English for New Bostonians - Madison Park Adult Education Center - \$24,000
- GED/HiSet Testing Program - Madison Park Adult Education Center - \$5,287
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – Districtwide - \$17,562,190
- Massachusetts ELT - BAA, Dever, Young Achievers - \$1,324,426
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Grant- Districtwide- \$30,000
- School Redesign Grant: Brighton + Excel - Brighton, Excel- \$925,735
- School Redesign Grant: Grew - \$94,440
- School Redesign Grant: Madison Park - \$524,000
- Special Education Early Childhood Grant – Districtwide- \$467,461
- Title I - Districtwide - \$39,852,100
- Title II-A – Improving Educator Quality – Districtwide - \$3,902,446
- Title III – Districtwide - \$2,225,038
- Title IV – Districtwide - \$2,738,507
- USDA Summer Food Services Program – Districtwide - \$1,500,000
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers - Gardner, Kenny, Eliot, Hennigan, English - \$594,419
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers - BINCA, Edison - \$350,000

Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers Memorandum of Understanding PowerPoint

Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers Memorandum of Understanding Equity Impact Statement

Memorandum of Understanding Type A: Agreement between the Boston Public Schools and the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers, a Horace Mann Charter School – DRAFT

Student Activity Accounts PowerPoint

Student Activity Accounts Equity Impact Statement

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
School Committee Chamber
Roxbury, MA 02119

September 12, 2018

Student Activity Accounts Policy - DRAFT

Memo from Michael D. O’Neill to Boston School Committee re: Internal Audit Task Force Proposed Charge and Membership, September 12, 2018

Internal Audit Task Force for Boston Public Schools Candidate Profiles

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the July 16, 2018 Boston School Committee meeting.

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the following executive session minutes: December 14, 2016; December 6, 2017; June 27, 2018; and July 2, 2018.

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

It’s great to be here with all of you tonight. It’s back-to-school season in the Boston Public Schools, and that means it’s the time of year our teachers, staff, parents — and even our students — get excited about.

One of the topics that has, understandably, been on everyone’s minds is school bus transportation. As many of you know, we are continuing to engage in active and ongoing negotiations with the bus drivers’ union, United Steelworkers Local 8751. We do have a standing commitment not to speak publicly about details pertaining to collective bargaining, but I would like to remind the public that we are very much engaged with the union. I know many families and staff are concerned about on-time performance for our school buses. There are always challenges the first week of school, but that does not mean that we are content with performance delays. We understand the very real impacts that delays have on our students, families, and staff.

However, we are striving — and continue — to do better. We have increased the number of call-takers in the Transportation Call Center from 32 to 40. On the morning of the first day of school, the average call center wait time decreased from 18 minutes last year to 14 minutes this year. That being said, I have heard of cases where parents waited significantly longer than that. Additionally, our on-time bus performance — while not 100% — has improved over last year.

On the morning of the first day of school last Thursday, buses were 51% on-time vs. 41% on-time last year; with 80% of the buses arriving within 15 minutes of the opening bell. This on-time percentage increased to 73% in the afternoon, vs. 65% the year before, last Thursday. The on-time percentage increased to 71% on the morning of the second day of school, on Friday, with 93% arriving on-time within 15 minutes. For the past few days, the morning on-time

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
School Committee Chamber
Roxbury, MA 02119

September 12, 2018

performance has been between roughly 75-80% on-time, and on-time within 15 minutes between 90-95% of the time. Are these numbers great? No. But these increases do show an ongoing and consistent effort by our transportation staff to provide adequate service to our students. I would like to thank our staff in our Transportation Department. All of these folks work from very early in the morning and well into the evening under stressful conditions. I would like to thank each and every one of these employees for all the work that they do - along with all of the staff here in Bolling and in our schools who work tirelessly — I mean, truly tirelessly — to make sure the first few days of the school year go as smoothly as possible.

There is an enormous reservoir of talent within Central Office and throughout the district. This summer, I have hosted 11 principal listening sessions, reaching 72 of our school leaders in my first weeks in this role, along with central office listening sessions across nearly every department, with more to come. As well I have been meeting and will continue to meet with numerous community groups, staff, and families. Last night I spent time with the teacher leaders on the BTU Academic Committees and I just came from a brief meeting with all of the BTU building reps. All of these conversations are helping to inform my understanding of some of the strategic shifts needed in central office to most effectively support our schools and our students. I want to thank everyone who has taken the time to share their experiences and recommendations, and particularly to the many who have offered problem-solving approaches to our shared challenges.

As interim superintendent, it is my responsibility to listen carefully, to make important and sometimes difficult decisions when needed, and to leverage the expertise, talent, resources, and commitment to public education on behalf of our students and families. That is what I have endeavored to do over the last two months, and the approach I will use to guide the work that we will do together during the 2018-19 school year. In the coming months, I will continue listening, and I hope staff, faculty, and community members will continue engage with me — making recommendations, pushing me and others, while also working with us to problem-solve and identify solutions. I believe that is our best hope for decisions that serve the interests of our students and advance the mission of the Boston Public Schools.

That being said, it's been an exciting week for all of teachers and staff in the Boston Public Schools as we welcomed back our 57,000 students. What happens INSIDE our school buildings is incredibly important as well, and I want to thank the staff, faculty and school leaders who have worked so hard to prepare for this new school year.

On the first day of school on Thursday, Mayor Walsh joined me and numerous members of the BPS team as we fanned out to several schools — greeting students, families, and staff. We started the day early on Thursday at The English High School in Jamaica Plain, where we were all pumped up by the terrific school marching band; and we got a wonderful tour from the new headmaster, Caitlin Murphy, who showed us some of the school's successful career technical education programs. We also stopped by the Perkins School in South Boston and met with the Massachusetts Elementary Principal of the Year, Craig Martin, before heading off to the

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
School Committee Chamber
Roxbury, MA 02119

September 12, 2018

Countdown to Kindergarten Parade in East Boston, and visiting the Adams and Otis schools there. I also had the pleasure of visiting schools on Tuesday for the first day of kindergarten. We went to Mildred Ave., the Winthrop, and the Higginson.

Some of the things we saw in schools were 21st Century Furniture, which all schools are receiving as part of a \$13 million allocation from BuildBPS. Examples include adjustable desks, ergonomic chairs, and portable teacher lecterns, which are designed to be flexible to encourage collaborative learning. It should be noted that, since 2017, the City and BPS have spent more than \$45 million to carry out major system repairs of school buildings through the BuildBPS process with assistance from the Massachusetts School Building Authority's (MSBA) Accelerated Repair Program. This includes replacing 3,000 windows; and repairing roofs and boilers at six schools. With an additional \$15 million worth of roof, boiler, and window repairs at six additional schools beginning in 2018-19. As I have stated before, one of my major priorities as Interim Superintendent is to move forward with a transparent and authentic process on BuildBPS, so we can re-engage civic and citywide conversations about the future of our schools. It's great to know that some of the early projects in the BuildBPS pipeline are already underway.

Also new this school year is the expansion of the My Way Cafe school meals program. In collaboration with the Shah Family Foundation, this summer, the City of Boston Public Facilities Department renovated kitchens in schools in Mattapan, Roxbury, and East Boston. This expands the program to a total of 30 schools, which can now prepare and cook meals on-site. I think what really struck me the most about the first day of school — as I begin my first school year as Interim Superintendent — is seeing the smiles on the faces of all the students, parents, teachers, and staff of all ages and backgrounds in every corner of Boston. It's an example of how everyone is eager to start the new year off right, and how we all share in a collective effort to provide the best possible learning environments for our students. I cannot express in words how much effort our staff has put in over the summer to make sure the first day of school went as smoothly as it did — and, as a former BPS parent, I know first-hand how much preparation goes on at home as well. I'd like to thank everyone — from our custodians, to our teachers, to school leaders, and Central Office staff, and most importantly, our families — for everyone's hard work and preparation to helping our school year get off to a great start.

Ms. Perille introduced the following new school leaders:

- Carolyn Allston, Clap Elementary School
- Kevin Brill, Greater Egleston High School
- Dana Brown, Dearborn STEM Early College Academy (9-12)
- Shelly Olsen, Dearborn STEM Early College Academy (6-8)
- Derrick Ciesla, Russell Elementary School
- Lem Ivy, Ellis Elementary School
- Jerleen John, West Roxbury Academy
- Darlene Marcano, Urban Science Academy
- Anita Moore, Jackson-Mann K-8 School

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
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School Committee Chamber
Roxbury, MA 02119

September 12, 2018

- Dan Mulvey, Mary Lyon K-8 School
- Caitlin Murphy, English High School
- Marcia Riddick, Mather Elementary School
- Jomila Smith, Irving Middle School
- Bannet Steele, Roosevelt K-8 School
- Rhianon Varmette, East Boston Early Education Center
- Meghan Welch, Sumner K-8 School
- Kimberley Williams, Kilmer K-8 School

Mr. Loconto introduced Evelyn Reyes, a junior at the John D. O'Bryant School of Math and Science, who will serve as student representative on the Boston School Committee for the 2018-19 School Year. Ms. Reyes will join the Committee on September 26th.

Mr. O'Neill praised the Interim Superintendent's new school leader selections, noting their diversity and ties to Boston. He encourage the new school leaders to engage closely with the Boston Special Education Parents Council (Sped PAC), Citywide Parents Council (CPC), and their respective school site councils (SPCs). He also encouraged Ms. Perille to communicate with school leaders about transportation issues so that they can share information with families.

Ms. Regina Robinson thanked all of the school secretaries and bus drivers for their hard work and dedication. She encouraged the district to build and expand its partnerships with schools of education at local colleges and universities. She requested information about the linguistic abilities of school leaders, as well as the themes that emerged from Ms. Perille's recent listening sessions with school leaders. Ms. Perille agreed to follow up on both issues.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila welcomed Ms. Reyes as student representative, and echoed Mr. O'Neill's comments about the importance of communication between school leaders and families. She urged colleges and universities to provide students majoring in education with more financial support. She requested an update on the district's efforts to recruit and retain teachers of color.

Dr. Uriarte congratulated Ms. Perille on a good to start to new school year, adding that she has some concerns about transportation. She encouraged the district to increase the number of Latino teachers and school leaders.

Mr. Loconto announced that the School Committee will hold a planning retreat at the Bolling Building on September 20th from 5-7 p.m. The retreat will be open to the public.

Mr. O'Neill welcomed Ms. Reyes and noted that she will be a presenter at the Council of Great City School's annual fall conference in October.

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

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
School Committee Chamber
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September 12, 2018

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George, chair, Education Committee, Boston City Council, said that this fall she will host a series of town halls across city to discuss education.

Sasha Cantu, former BPS parent, testified regarding bullying.

Jill Maguire, BPS parent, testified regarding concerns about transportation and curriculum.

Lisa Guisbond, executive director, Citizens for Public Schools, testified regarding the superintendent search.

Janet Fillion, teacher, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding the proposed student activity accounts policy.

Anne Savereid, volunteer, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding the proposed student activity accounts policy.

Jane Miller, BPS parent, and co-founder, Start Smart BPS, re superintendent search.

Erin Birmingham, BPS parent, and co-founder, Start Smart BPS, testified regarding the superintendent search.

Shellina Semexant, parent, KIPP Academy, testified regarding transportation concerns.

Nicole Williams, parent, KIPP Academy, testified regarding transportation concerns.

Linda McRae, parent, KIPP Academy, requested more bus monitors on school buses.

Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent, testified regarding the superintendent search.

Rev. Willie Bodrick, Boston Network for Black Student Achievement, testified regarding the superintendent search.

Mary Battenfeld, member, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), testified regarding the superintendent search.

Sholonda Ancrum, parent, testified regarding transportation concerns.

Julia Mejia, parent, Collaborative Parent Leadership Action Network (CPLAN), testified regarding the diversity of teachers and school leaders and the superintendent search.

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
School Committee Chamber
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September 12, 2018

ACTION ITEM

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$72,125,049.

REPORTS

Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers Memorandum of Understanding – Dr. Caren Walker Gregory, the headmaster of the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers, presented for the Committee’s consideration a five-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) renewal between the Horace Mann Charter School and BPS. Dr. Walker Gregory highlighted the school’s academic achievements, high graduation rate, and its successful partnerships with the higher education, hospitals and business community.

Committee members asked questions about enrollment, best practices and challenges, all of which were answered by Dr. Walker Gregory. Mr. O’Neill encouraged Dr. Walker Gregory to add language related to the school’s adherence to the BPS Code of Conduct. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the MOU on September 26th.

Student Activity Accounts Update – In response to the findings of a recent audit of 118 student activity accounts by Ernst and Young, Chief Financial Officer Eleanor Laurans presented a policy proposal that would establish a comprehensive set of rules and procedures for student activity fund management. Ms. Laurans was joined by BPS Business Manager Ed Glora and Director of Federal and State Grants Anu Jayanth. The audit results can be found online at www.bostonpublicschools.org/SAA.

Student activity accounts are bank accounts used by individual schools to manage funds associated with student activities, such as prom, student clubs, and field trips. The propose policy enforces best practices and includes new protocols designed to ensure the sound fiscal stewardship of funds dedicated to the benefit of students. The district has provided training to school leaders, school staff and central office staff on how to properly use student activity accounts and published a new manual and website.

Dr. Uriarte cautioned the district about unintended consequences and encouraged district leaders to make the policy, procedures and training user-friendly. She requested additional information about SAA training, which Ms. Laurans agreed to provide, and said she looks forward to learning more about the new system’s data tracker. Ms. Regina Robinson suggested praised the district’s video tutorial and encouraged student input. Mr. O’Neill praised the proposal, saying that transparency is important. He encouraged the district to streamline processes to minimize labor for school staff. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the proposed policy on September 26th.

Boston School Committee Meeting

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
School Committee Chamber
Roxbury, MA 02119

September 12, 2018

Internal Audit Task Force Update – Mr. O’Neill presented the Committee with a draft charge and membership for the Internal Audit Task Force. Approved by the Committee in December 2017, the Internal Audit Task Force will be charged with creating a job description for an internal audit executive, approving annual audit plans, monitoring the work of the internal audit executive, and reporting annually to the School Committee. Scott Baranowski of Wolf & Company, a proposed co-chair of the Task Force, provided a brief overview of the proposed Task Force members. Mr. O’Neill said that he is working with Dr. Uriarte and Ms. Oliver-Dávila to identify a Certified Public Accountant and an undergraduate student majoring in accounting to join the Task Force.

Ms. Regina Robinson suggested that Mr. O’Neill reach out to The Partnership to identify a man of color to serve on the Task Force. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the proposed charge and membership of the Internal Audit Task Force on September 26th.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent, testified regarding the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers Memorandum of Understanding and BuildBPS.

Anne Savereid, volunteer, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding the Student Activity Accounts report.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairperson Loconto said that the School Committee received a complaint of an Open Meeting Law violation and that the BPS Office of the Legal Advisor will respond. He said that the Committee has taken action by approving the release of executive session minutes of June 27, 2018 and July 2, 2018.

ADJOURN

At approximately 10:02 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary