



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REMOTE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

June 8, 2022

The Boston School Committee held a remote meeting on June 8, 2022 at 5 p.m. on Zoom. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee, email 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 D. O'Neill; Stephen Alkins; Brandon Cardet-Hernandez; Rafaela Polanco Garcia; Quoc Tran; and Student Representative Xyra Mercer.

School Committee Member Absent: Lorena Lopera.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Meeting Minutes: May 25, 2022

United Steelworkers Local 8751 Letters of Agreement and FY23 Supplemental Appropriation Request PowerPoint

DRAFT Side Letters A and B 2022

Transdev Bus Drivers MOA

Innovation Schools Renewals

Burke HS BPS Innovation Plan

Burke Innovation Annual Evaluation

Burke Equity Impact Statement

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Eliot K-8 Innovation Proposal Cover Letter

Eliot K-8 School Presentation

Eliot K8 Innovation Plan 2023

Eliot K8 Innovation Schools Annual Evaluation

Eliot K-8 Equity Impact Statement

Holmes Innovation Plan

Holmes Annual Evaluation

Holmes Equity Impact Statement

Muñiz Innovation Plan Cover Memo

Muñiz Academy Innovation Proposal Cover Letter

Margarita Muniz Presentation

Muñiz Innovation Action Plan

Muñiz Innovation Plan

Muñiz Annual Evaluation

Muñiz Equity Impact Statement

Winthrop Elementary School Innovation Plan

Winthrop Elementary School Annual Evaluation

Winthrop 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. Mercer, and Mr. O'Neill were absent (Ms. Mercer later joined the meeting in progress; Mr. O'Neill joined the executive session in progress). All other members were present.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a motion to adjourn to executive session to conduct a strategy session related to the Committee's role in the collective bargaining between its contractor Transdev and the United Steelworkers Local 8751.

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Ms. Robinson announced that the Committee would return to public session.

At 5:55 p.m. the Committee returned to public session. 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 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 prior to the start of the meeting.

PRESENTATION OF CITATIONS

Chair Robinson presented citations to the following Boston Public Schools graduating seniors who are members of the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC):

- Anisa Adawe, Burke High School
- Lana Chan, Boston Latin School
- Josiehanna Colon, New Mission High School
- Olga Gjika, Excel High School
- Ajanee Igharo, Boston Latin Academy
- Tiffany Luo, Boston Latin School
- Wellington Matos, Fenway High School
- Hazel McLaughlin, Snowden International High School
- Thy Nguyen, Excel High School
- Stacy Tran, Dearborn 6-12 STEM Academy

The Committee offered special thanks to student representative Xyra Mercer, who is graduating from the Henderson K-12 Inclusion School.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the May 25, 2022 School Committee meeting.

REPORT

Superintendent Search Process Update - Chair Robinson announced that the Committee would adjust the order of the agenda to receive a superintendent search process update earlier in the evening. Superintendent Cassellius logged out of the meeting and rejoined immediately after the search update.

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Chair Robinson said that the Superintendent Search Committee met over two days this week in executive session to continue interviewing candidates for the position of Superintendent. The Search Committee has now completed this round of interviews and plans to meet again in executive session to continue this process. They remain on track to ultimately select 2-3 final candidates to recommend to the School Committee for consideration, once they complete their interviews and deliberations and allow for background checking, verification of credentials, etc. Once they finish that and finalize their recommendations, the Search Committee will have completed its charge.

Based on the feedback from the Search Committee co-chairs, the School Committee is hopeful to be in a position to publicly release the names of the finalists at some point during the week of June 13 or June 20. The School Committee will then hold three days of public interviews that include panel discussions with stakeholder groups on Zoom with interpretation, as well as in-person School Committee interviews.

Once the candidates are announced, the Committee anticipates holding public interviews the week of June 21, followed by a final vote at a special School Committee meeting on Wednesday, June 29.

Mr. O'Neill, who serves on the superintendent search committee, said that there is strong gender and ethnic diversity as well as knowledge of Boston in the candidate pool.

Ms. Robinson invited anyone who is interested in participating in a panel session to reach out to her, adding that details will be posted on the BPS website.

Dr. Alkins and Mr. Cardet-Hernandez asked about the possibility of appointing an interim superintendent. Ms. Robinson said that she is working with the Superintendent's senior leadership team and others to identify a clear answer. Mr. O'Neill clarified for Mr. Cardet-Hernandez that a Committee vote would be required for the appointment of an interim superintendent.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

**As prepared for delivery.*

Thank you, Madame Chair, and thank you all for joining us tonight. I have a few updates that I want to share before we dive into this evening's presentations. I want to first take a moment to thank the members of the Boston City Council for voting to pass the Boston Public Schools \$1.33 billion FY23 budget today. I want to acknowledge the hard work of Councilor Tania Fernandes Anderson for her leadership as the chair of the Council's Ways & Means Committee as the City of Boston implemented a new budget process for the first time. And of course all of the City Councilors for their support of Boston Public Schools. Thank you to Mayor Wu and her team for their commitment to our students and ensuring they have the support they need to reach their full potential. Lastly, I want to applaud the hard work of the BPS budget team: Chief Financial Officer Nate Kuder, Deputy Chief Financial Officer David Bloom and their teams for the countless hours they dedicated to preparing this budget and shepherding it through the process.

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As our students and families continue to recover from the pandemic, this budget reflects our shared commitment to providing much-needed student and family supports; strong, inclusive academics; and more physical education, art, music, and academic enrichment opportunities. We added more counselors, funding to support the implementation of our new graduation requirements and additional psychologists. This will help round out our Hub Schools support teams in our schools and get us closer to our goal of a quality guarantee for every student. I am especially excited to launch our library expansion with 35 additional FTE's this fall. Literacy is our focus and having a licensed librarian in every school is essential to providing an excellent education. Finally, this budget also supports the recently announced Green New Deal for the Boston Public Schools, a partnership between the BPS and the City of Boston that will ensure that our students have access to modern, clean and welcoming learning environments. I will speak more to that later in my remarks. Thank you again to the City Council for their continued partnership on this and so many other important issues facing our students and families.

Last week, I had the pleasure of attending the Annual BPS Valedictorian Luncheon at Fenway Park with Mayor Wu and School Committee Chair, Jeri Robinson, Mr. O'Neill, Ms. Polanco-Garcia, Ms. Lopera and Mr. Cardet-Hernandez. We honored 33 of our high school students with all of their proud friends, family and teachers and their school leaders. The event was emceed by Callie Crossley and featured remarks from the Mayor, Chair Robinson, myself and Brighton High School senior Khadiza Akter, who gave the valedictorian address. It was great to see all of the smiling faces as we honored these incredible students for their achievements. I too am beyond proud of every single one of you and I'm excited to see you all walk across the stage over the next few weeks with the rest of your senior class!

On that same note, I wanted to also make sure to mention that graduation season is among us! I am excited to celebrate and honor all of our amazing seniors walking across the stage this month. These last few years have been very challenging on all of you, yet you have persevered through it all and have made it to graduation! I look forward to attending as many graduation ceremonies as my schedule permits. Just yesterday I attended the graduation ceremony for BCLA — congratulations again! I hope that the entire Class of 2022 is proud of all that you have accomplished and what you will continue to accomplish after graduation. Whatever your plans are post-graduation, I want to remind you to do it with all you've got. Live out your dreams and make your mark on the world by giving back to your community.

Speaking of summer, I wanted to remind everyone that it isn't too late to sign your student's up for some of our many summer opportunities. We are again providing a series of programs for students to access support services, academic recovery and acceleration initiatives, and other enrichment activities, as well as paid internship and job opportunities. These programs are school-based, partner-based, and activity-based while serving all neighborhoods and offering a mix of in-person and remote opportunities. You can find more information and a full list of all of the summer opportunities available to your students on our website at www.bostonpublicschools.org/summer.

I am excited to announce that nominations for the 2022 Educator of the Year Award are now open! All BPS stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, school staff,

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students, families, community members, and partners, are invited and encouraged to nominate exceptional educators to honor their devotion to their work.

Our educators have been through a lot over the course of the last few years, and they deserve every bit of appreciation we can give them! Please visit our website at www.bostonpublicschools.org/eoy to complete a nomination form in one of our 10 BPS languages. Nominations will close on July 31, 2022 at 5 p.m.

Now that I've shared a few highlights, I want to dive into a couple of updates I have for you this evening. A little while ago, we shared a letter with all BPS families and staff announcing that the Boston Public Health Commission has advised that beginning on Monday, June 13th, masks will no longer be required inside of BPS buildings, regardless of vaccination status. This decision comes based on sustained downward trends in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. While masks will no longer be required in our buildings, it is important to note that they will remain optional for students and staff who would like to wear them. Masking is an important tool in keeping our school and broader Boston community safe, therefore any students, guardians or staff who choose to continue to wear masks will be supported in that choice. We will continue to provide access to vaccinations for all students and staff across the district. This is a significant milestone for the district and for the entire city, and I want to thank all of our staff for being on the frontlines, and our families and students for the continued support and partnership in ensuring our schools are safe and healthy learning environments.

As you are aware on May 12, Mayor Wu announced a \$2 billion plan to overhaul BPS facilities, including new construction and renovation projects, as well as district-wide upgrades. As a reminder, members of the public are invited to review the public building dashboard made available online on the Green New Deal website. As part of the plan, investments have been made toward hiring new staff members to support execution of the Green New Deal. We are excited to report that the hiring process is underway. In addition, the Green New Deal plan also includes a proposal to combine some of our smaller school communities to form two campus schools. We've begun conversations with those school communities and I want to remind everyone that these are just proposals. There are a lot of details we will need to figure out over the coming months before formally bringing these proposals to the school committee next fall. We believe these two campus schools will provide the quality guarantee that all our students deserve. These schools would allow for more efficient building operations, free up resources to reinvest in schools, expand enrichment opportunities, and produce stronger student outcomes. We know that any change can be hard, and we are committed to working with these school communities over the next several months to answer questions, collaborate on ideas and develop a proposal for how their two campus schools would work. We will be coming to the school committee later this month to update you with more information on all the Green New Deal for BPS projects and we will formally bring the two-campus school proposals to you in the Fall of next year, after several months of engagement with families and staff.

I wanted to share an update on the DESE report. Multiple news outlets have accurately reported that DESE shared a draft agreement for the City of Boston and BPS to sign. Mayor Wu and her team have been collaborating with BPS to respond to the DESE proposal and to ensure that its focus is on the academic and social and emotional learning needs of our students. I want to thank the School Committee members who weighed in on those proposals and who have offered feedback to the district and to the Mayor's Office. Recently, DESE hosted senior leaders from

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BPS and the Mayor's team at their headquarters to discuss the two proposals. The discussions were collaborative and productive. I expect that we will have more to update the community on in the next few weeks. I also expect that any agreement we come to will focus on specific areas where critical improvements are necessary, such as: special education, transportation, and data integrity, among other areas. While I remain proud of BPS and all of the leading work we implement every day, I also know that there are significant areas where improvement must be accelerated through transformational action. I am confident that the path forward is one in which we engage in a focused and strategic partnership with DESE.

Lastly, I wanted to quickly share an update around some serious concerns that were made and brought to the attention of the School Committee during the public comment period of our last meeting. I want to first say that the concerns made were already known to the District and we had already taken action in compliance with our protocols, which is to review the allegations, investigate the facts, and take appropriate remedial action if necessary. Given that the allegations involved conduct by BPS staff members, and such findings and action steps are confidential personnel information, I cannot share any specific information at this time. I also want to state that when we receive concerns or allegations during public comment regarding any of our students, we similarly review the allegations, alert the appropriate departments and/or personnel of the allegations and an investigation is conducted, and based on the findings, the appropriate action is taken. Again, because allegations involving individual students are confidential, I cannot comment specifically on the findings or outcomes, but I want to assure you that the District responds to concerns from every forum that they are received. Thank you to everyone for your continued partnership and support in ensuring all of the Boston Public Schools are safe, inclusive and welcoming learning environments for all within them.

I will now turn it over to our School Committee student representative, Xyra Mercer to share some updates around BSAC.

Thank you Xyra! It is great to see all of the work that BSAC has been doing. That is all for my Superintendent's report for this evening. Thank you.

Dr. Alkins asked how many students are graduating from BPS. The Superintendent agreed to follow up with the information.

Mr. Cardet-Hernandez requested clarity about the School Committee's role with the DESE agreement. The Superintendent said several items are still being clarified legally, adding that she is hopeful that BPS will be able to partner with the state, with the state offering technical assistance in particular areas such as ELL and special education support.

Ms. Polanco Garcia asked about the Green New Deal and the district's long-term vision for school mergers. The Superintendent responded that the long-term vision is to merge small schools into two campus schools, creating efficiencies and allowing BPS to provide more programming and enrichment opportunities. The vision for larger schools is to provide a quality guarantee for all students. The Superintendent clarified that the School Committee will not be asked to vote on school mergers until fall 2022, following months of community engagement. If approved, the mergers would take effect in the fall of 2023. The Superintendent confirmed for

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Ms. Polanco Garcia that she recommends the expansion of elementary schools to a Pre-K-6 model. Ms. Polanco Garcia requested a list of schools that have installed air quality filters. The Superintendent said that the information is available online at bostonpublicschools.org/Page/8810.

Acting Chief of Family and Community Advancement Denise Snyder confirmed for Mr. Cardet-Hernandez that more than 5,000 students have registered for BPS summer learning opportunities.

Dr. Alkins recommended the racial equity planning tool in the Green New Deal community engagement process. The Superintendent suggested that her team present a report on the racial equity planning tool at a future School Committee meeting.

Ms. Robinson said that the district's practice of awarding soft landings to schools experiencing enrollment decline is unsustainable. She encouraged district leaders to engage with school communities about potential mergers early in the process. The Superintendent agreed about the importance of transparency and predictability for families. Senior Advisor Megan Costello said that families are asking for urgency in resources, which the Green New Deal's \$2 billion investment will help provide. BPS is committed to working with families first to explore the creation of two campus school communities and will present recommendations to the School Committee in the fall.

Mr. Cardet-Hernandez requested clear timelines around phases and milestones of the Green New Deal going forward.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people testified regarding instruction and support for English Language Learners (ELLs):

- Suzanne Lee, Chinatown resident and ELL Task Force Co-Chair
- Roseann Tung, Jamaica Plain resident and ELL Task Force member
- John Mudd, Cambridge resident and ELL Task Force member
- Miren Uriarte, Jamaica Plain resident and ELL Task Force member

Carolyn Kain, Dorchester resident and Henderson K-12 Inclusion School parent, testified regarding school climate and culture.

The following people testified with concerns about the Green New Deal:

- Lauren Peter, Roslindale resident and Sumner Elementary School parent
- Elizabeth Ferrenz, Roslindale resident and Sumner Elementary School parent
- Mimi Lai, Roslindale resident and Sumner Elementary School parent
- Allison Friedmann, Roslindale resident and Sumner Elementary School parent
- Rachel Young, Roslindale resident and Sumner Elementary School parent

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Courtney Feeley Karp, Roslindale resident and Henderson K-12 Inclusion School parent, testified regarding the Henderson Interim Principal selection process.

Robert Jenkins, Mattapan resident and Friends of Madison Park member, testified regarding school safety and athletics.

Michael Heichman, Dorchester resident and Boston Education Justice Alliance (BEJA) member, testified regarding the threat of state intervention.

Ruby Reyes, Dorchester resident and BEJA executive director, testified regarding leadership.

Grace Hebard, Dorchester resident and Henderson Upper School staff, testified in support of school library staffing and funding.

Edith Bazile, Hyde Park resident, and Boston Advocates for Educational Excellence member, testified regarding trauma informed instruction.

Keyona Aviles, Dorchester resident and Henderson K-12 Inclusion School parent, testified regarding the threat of state receivership.

Deeth Ellis, Jamaica Plain resident and Boston Latin School teacher, testified regarding certified school librarians and BTU contract negotiations.

Helen Ho, West Zone Early Learning Center parent, testified regarding Sheltered English Instruction placement.

REPORTS

United Steelworkers Local 8751 Letters of Agreement and FY22 and FY23 Supplemental Appropriation Request - Labor Relations Director Jeremiah Hasson presented the Superintendent's recommendation for School Committee approval of two letters of agreement among the Mayor, Superintendent, School Committee and the United Steelworkers Local 8751 (bus drivers).

Letter of Agreement A:

- Contemplates scenario in which BPS retains different transportation vendor(s), but procurement documents specify that the current union would continue to be employed by the new vendor(s)
- The union agrees to no strikes, work stoppages, or slowdowns

Letter of Agreement B:

- Contemplates scenario in which the City or School Committee provides school bus services with its own employees, rather than through a vendor, and would obligate COB/BPS under the CBA to employ current union to perform services

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- The union agrees to no strikes, work stoppages, or slowdowns

Mr. Hasson also presented the Superintendent's request for the Committee to approve an FY23 supplemental appropriation request to the Boston City Council in the amount of \$1,510,820 to support the increases in wages and benefits in the collective bargaining agreement between Transdev and the United Steelworkers Local 8751.

Mr. O'Neill expressed optimism that the agreement will improve on-time bus performance.

The Committee is scheduled to vote on the Letters of Agreement and FY23 supplemental appropriation request at its June 21, 2022 meeting.

Innovation Renewal Proposals - Deputy Superintendent of Academics Drew Echelson presented Innovation Plan renewal proposals for the following schools: Burke High School (Amilcar Silva, School Leader); Eliot K-8 (Traci Walker Griffith, School Leader); Holmes Elementary (Edverette Brewster, School Leader); Muñiz Academy (Dania Vazquez, School Leader); and Winthrop Elementary (Leah Blake, School Leader).

Innovation plans are developed to create ideal conditions for serving students. Plans utilize different autonomies from standard policies. Original plans are developed by stakeholder teams at schools and approved by faculty and the School Committee. At the end of each approved plan period (usually five years), the School Committee must vote to renew the plan. Renewal keeps the current plan and conditions in place and include minor updates, not any new alterations to working conditions.

Committee members asked clarifying questions related to re-engagement, the hub school model, MassCore, staffing, autonomy, and accountability, all of which were answered by the presenters. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the Innovation Plan renewal requests at its June 21, 2022 meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Alkins requested an update on the transition process for displaced students at the recently closed Mission Hill K-8 Pilot School, which the Superintendent agreed to provide at the next meeting.

ADJOURN

Approved - At approximately 10:23 p.m. the Committee unanimously approved a motion, by roll call, to adjourn the meeting.

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Attest:

Elizabeth Sullivan

Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary