



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

January 14, 2015

The Boston School Committee held a meeting at 6 p.m. on January 14, 2015 at the Edward Winter Chambers, 26 Court Street, Boston, 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.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Minutes:

- December 10, 2014 School Committee Meeting
- December 10, 2014 Strategic Planning Session
- January 5, 2015 School Committee Meeting

Grants for Approval Totaling \$551,120

- Alternative Education State Grant: Education Pathways to Support Students Most at-Risk of Not Graduating from High School (Fund Code 790) - \$20,000
- MA 21st Century Community Learning Centers Enhancement for Students with Disabilities Grant (Fund Code 245-B) \$10,000
- MA 21st Century Community Learning Centers Summer Enhancement Grant (Fund Code 647-B4) \$20,000
- Reading Recovery: Scaling Up What Works i3 Federal Grant - \$1,120
- US ED Full-Service Community Schools - \$500,000

International Travel Request: Boston Latin School: France, February 11-22, 2015

International Travel Request: Boston Latin School: Germany, Poland, & Czech Republic, April 14-26, 2015

International Travel Request: Muriel Snowden International School at Copley: China, April 11-24, 2015

School Committee Memo: Superintendent Search Committee Update

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Superintendent's Memo: Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Statements of Interest for the Accelerated Repair Program

Extended Learning Time (ELT) Proposal

Draft Memorandum of Agreement between the School Committee of the City of Boston and the Boston Teachers Union, AFT Massachusetts

Inclusion Task Force Report: Increasing Inclusive Practices Power Point; and Recommendations of the Boston School Committee Inclusion Task Force Report

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael O'Neill; Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman; Meg Campbell; Michael Loconto; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; and student representative Ayomide Olumuyiwa.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O'Neill called the meeting to order and announced that the proceedings were being broadcast live by Boston City TV (Comcast Channel 24 and RCN Channel 13) and would be rebroadcast at a later date.

Mr. O'Neill announced that at the Committee's annual organizational meeting on January 5, 2015, he was re-elected chair and Dr. Coleman was elected vice-chair. He then welcomed new School Committee member Regina Robinson and congratulated Jeri Robinson, who was re-appointed to a four-year term by Mayor Walsh. Mr. O'Neill thanked Claudio Martinez for his six years of service on the School Committee, including one year as vice-chair. Applications to fill the vacancy are due to the School Committee's Citizens Nominating Panel on January 20th and can be obtained on the BPS web site.

Mr. O'Neill recognized his sister, Siobhan O'Neill, and niece who were in attendance.

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The School Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the December 10, 2014 School Committee meeting and strategic planning session and the January 5, 2015 organizational meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Last week BPS announced its first weather-related cancellation day of the 2014-15 school year. District leaders always weigh the impact such a decision will have on the families we serve,

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while keeping the safety of students a top priority. The decision to close was made out an abundance of caution.

The first round of registration for school year 2015-16 kicked off last week. More than 1,200 visitors registered on the first day alone. Round One of registration is for grades pre-K, Kindergarten, 6 and 9. Rising BPS ninth graders will soon receive their choice forms directly from their schools. All other grades may register starting in February. Families are encouraged families to visit www.discoverBPS.org for more information.

The Superintendent formally welcomed new School Committee member Regina Robinson.

The Superintendent expressed his sorrow for the terrorist events that took place in Paris last week. He reaffirmed the District's commitment to developing global citizens, and assured that all reasonable precautions to manage risk on these programs have been taken.

Last night Mayor Walsh delivered his first State of the City address at Symphony Hall. The District looks forward to continuing on the path of progress for the initiatives outlined in the address. BPS's K1 program, nationally recognized for its success in closing the achievement gap, continues to expand, adding an additional 100 seats for next September. Last month, Charlestown High School kicked off its C-Town Tech program, enrolling rising ninth graders in a technology program that earns college credit and prepares for real world jobs across the country.

Tonight, members of the Boston Teachers Union approved an agreement that would extend the school day by 40 minutes – the equivalent of one month annually – in 60 schools. Tonight, the District will provide the Committee with an in-depth presentation on the proposal and request a vote at the next meeting. The agreement will redefine the workday in BPS. The proposal has gained nationwide attention, including a piece that aired last Sunday on NBC Nightly News.

The District is moving forward on the important work of creating turnaround plans for two schools identified in September as Level 4 underperforming. BPS leaders have been working closely with local stakeholder groups for each school to create comprehensive plans for improvement. Under the plans that are being developed, Dorchester Academy would partner with ABCD, which has proven experience reconnecting students who have faced educational challenges with a new love for learning. Partnering with ABCD, the school would shift to an alternative education focus, structured more like our successful Boston Day and Evening Academy and feature three overarching components: Competency-based curriculum, holistic support and wrap-around services, and a pathway to college and career engagement. The Grew Elementary School would pursue a turnaround strategy used previously in schools such as Orchard Gardens K-8 and the Trotter Elementary School that includes new leadership, a longer school day, and intense planning of curriculum and instruction, rooted in student performance data and supported with enhanced teacher development and collaboration. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is currently reviewing these plans. The District will provide the Committee with a full report on Turnaround Schools later this year.

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Earlier today, two hundred high school students with disabilities participated in the first-ever youth leadership workshop, “Passport to Your Future.” The event was held at UMass Boston and was a collaboration between BPS and UMass, and included many community partners. The event included a job fair and workshops focused on youth leadership, community engagement, independent living, employment and college. The event culminated with a tour of UMass Boston.

Tonight the Committee will receive a report on the work of the Inclusion Task Force. The District looks forward to implementing the recommendations being presented. Under the leadership of Eileen Nash, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Related Services, BPS has been working on a steady trajectory to expand inclusion in our schools. These recommendations build on that work, ensuring that students recommended for inclusion have access to quality classrooms in all geographic areas of the city using the new assignment system. These findings dovetail with those in the recent report regarding achievement of Black and Latino Males and the Superintendent is pleased to take this work to it the next level.

Finally, the Superintendent is submitting a list of schools for consideration of the Massachusetts School Building Authority’s Accelerated Repair Program. These are relatively smaller projects, but no less critical. For each of the schools we are submitting statements of interest that focus on badly needed window replacements. Boston has a proud history as the nation’s oldest school district, but with that means we have some of the oldest school buildings. BPS facilities crews across the city do a fantastic job of maintaining schools and the Superintendent is hopeful that BPS will be granted approval from the MSBA to move forward on these projects.

Mr. Loconto requested additional information on the Boston School Building Authority proposed by Mayor Walsh in his State of the City address. The Superintendent agreed to follow up at a later time.

The School Committee approved the Superintendent’s Report by unanimous consent.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

LaSheila Warren, bus monitor, testified regarding union dues for Local 2936.

Barbara Rosa, Citywide Parents Council, invited BPS parents to join the Citywide Parents Council.

Pam Richardson, teacher, Mattahunt Elementary School, testified regarding the Extended Learning Time proposal.

Kristen Swenson, teacher, Mattahunt Elementary School, testified regarding the Extended Learning Time proposal.

Marvin Mitchell, special education administrator, Manning Elementary School, testified regarding inclusion.

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Kenneth Hawkes, parent, Boston Latin School, testified regarding alcohol-related sexual assault.

Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent, testified regarding the membership of the Superintendent Search Committee.

The following testified regarding the inclusion and school climate at the Henderson Inclusion Upper School:

Gerard Gorman parent, Henderson Inclusion School
Michelle Griffin, parent, Henderson Inclusion School
Mary DiCicco, parent, Henderson Inclusion School
Phyllis Leslie, parent, Henderson Inclusion School
Jill McDonough, parent, Henderson Inclusion School
Dianne Lescinkas, parent, Henderson Inclusion School
Yvonne Pope, parent, Henderson Inclusion School

John St. Amand, vice chair, Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (Sped Pac), testified regarding inclusions services and budget.

Kenny Jervis, BPS parent, testified regarding District support for the Clap Innovation School and Perry K-8 School.

The following people testified regarding the Fiscal Year 2016 budget:

Nakkisha Thompson, parent, Orchard Gardens K-8 School
Kyle Robidoux, parent, Orchard Gardens K-8 School
Heshan Berents-Weeramuni, parent, Curley K-8 School

ACTION ITEMS

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$551,120.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students from Boston Latin School to travel to France from February 11, 2015.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students from Boston Latin School to travel to Germany, Poland and Czech Republic from April 14-26, 2015.

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Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students from the Muriel Snowden International School at Copley to travel to China from April 11-24, 2015.

REPORT

Superintendent Search Committee Update – Dr. Coleman, co-chair of the Superintendent Search Committee, presented a brief oral report on the search process. The Search Committee held its eight community forum on January 12th at the Lilla Frederick Middle School in Dorchester. More than 130 parents, students and other BPS stakeholders attended. The Search Committee will meet in executive session later this week to identify candidates who will be interviewed for further consideration. The School Committee will announce details of the public process phase of the search in the near future.

Mr. O'Neill announced that two Search Committee members are stepping down. Dr. William Henderson has some previously planned international travel that coincides with the planned executive sessions for initial interviews of candidates. Additionally, in light of the recent appointments of both Ms. Jeri Robinson and Ms. Regina Robinson to the Boston School Committee, Ms. Jeri Robinson, has stepped down from the Search Committee so as to not have a quorum of Boston School Committee on the Search Committee.

Mr. O'Neill proposed the addition of two members to the Superintendent Search Committee: Ayele Shakur, regional executive director for BUILD – Greater Boston and chair of the NAACP Education Committee, and Pastor Samuel Acevedo, founding executive director of the Boston Higher Education Resource Center (HERC).

ACTION ITEM

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the addition of Ayele Shakur and Pastor Samuel Acevedo to the Superintendent Search Committee.

REPORTS

Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Statements of Interest for the Accelerated Repair Program – Carleton Jones, Executive Director of Capital and Facilities Management, presented Statements of Interest (SOIs) for the MSBA's Accelerated Repair Program (ARP) for the following schools: Young Achievers Science & Math K-8 School; Community Academy of Science and Health; TechBoston Academy; David A. Ellis Elementary School; Donald McKay K-8 School; Curley K-8 School; Charles Sumner Elementary School. The ARP focuses on the preservation of existing assets by performing energy efficient and cost-saving upgrades, which will result in direct operational savings for school districts.

School Committee members asked clarifying questions about the SOIs, all of which were answered by Mr. Jones and the Superintendent. Responding to a question from Ms. Campbell,

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Mr. Jones stated that the District's 10-year facilities master plan is expected to begin in February or March. Referencing a recent study, Mr. Jones said he anticipates that all current BPS facilities will be needed for the foreseeable future, although they may need to be reconfigured. Ms. Campbell requested a copy of the report, which Mr. Jones agreed to provide. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the statements of interest on January 28th.

Extended Learning Time (ELT) Proposal – Dr. Ross Wilson, Assistant Superintendent for the Office of Human Capital, announced that BPS and the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) have reached a tentative agreement to extend the school day by 40 minutes per day for additional instructional time in approximately 60 non-autonomous k-5, middle and k-8 schools beginning in School Year 2015-16. The change will be phased in over the next three years with approximately 20 schools per year. School start times will remain the same, although Mr. O'Neill urged the District to re-examine the issue. The BTU approved the agreement earlier that day.

School Committee members applauded the agreement. Regina Robinson suggested that the District consider extending the day for high school students. Ms. Campbell and Jeri Robinson urged the District to reach out to community partners who run after school programs that may be affected by the ELT agreement. Mr. O'Neill and Dr. Coleman asked the District to measure the success of ELT schools. The School Committee is scheduled to vote on the proposal on January 28th.

Inclusion Task Force Report – Inclusion Task Force members Michael Loconto, Regina Robinson, and Deputy Superintendent of Special Education and Related Services Eileen Nash presented the recommendations of the School Committee's Inclusion Task Force. Since the fall of 2013, the Inclusion Task Force has been exploring ways to increase quality inclusion opportunities in BPS. Student with disabilities comprise approximately 19.5 percent of the BPS population. To measure the quality of the District's inclusive options, the Task Force has aligned their recommendations with the School Quality Working Group's Quality Framework. The District estimates that it will need approximately 12 months to identify, develop and test outcomes and indicators, and to create a supplementary report for each school.

School Committee members praised the Inclusion Task Force for its hard work and dedication. Jeri Robinson urged the District to apply best inclusive practices to help close the achievement gap. Mr. O'Neill called for the Inclusion Task Force to continue in some form as a monitoring body, calling its work critical as the District continues to expand inclusive practices.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

John Mudd, education advocate, testified regarding inclusion.

Charlotte Spinkston, executive director, Urban Pride, testified regarding inclusion.

Mary Battenfeld, BPS parent and members, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), testified regarding the Extended Learning Time proposal and inclusion.

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NEW BUSINESS

Mr. O'Neill stated that BPS takes all criminal allegations seriously and investigates them accordingly. Dr. Coleman commented that alcohol-related sexual assault is a national problem and asked the Superintendent to provide information on the District's efforts to educate students on the issue. The Superintendent agreed to follow up. Regina Robinson asked how the District measures student satisfaction; the Superintendent said he would return to the Committee with that information.

ADJOURN

At 9:40 p.m., the School Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary