

## **OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**January 29, 2014**

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on January 29, 2014 at 6 p.m. at the Edward Winter Chambers, 26 Court Street, and Boston, Massachusetts.

For more information about any of the items listed below, contact the office of the Boston School Committee: [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:feedback@bostonpublicschools.org) or 617-635-9014.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

School Committee Meeting Minutes: January 15, 2014

Grants for Approval Totaling \$16,038,824

- External Diploma EDIC - \$100,000
- GED Test Centers - \$7,153
- Innovation Schools Enhancement & Sustainability Grant - \$90,000
- Innovation Schools Planning Grant - \$20,000
- Race to the Top - \$15,355,975
- SPED – Early Childhood, Program Improvement (#262) - \$465,696

Memo: Innovation Plan Proposal: John F. Kennedy Elementary School

Superintendent's Memo: Administrative Guild, SEIU Local 888 - Revised

Report: School Turnaround at New Level 4 and 5 Schools

Report: Update on the Boston Compact

Report: School Quality Working Group Membership Update

### **ATTENDANCE**

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael O'Neill; Meg Campbell; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Rev. Gregory G. Groover; Michael Loconto; Margaret McKenna; and student representative Ayomide Olumuyiwa.

School Committee Member Absent: Vice-Chairperson Claudio Martinez.

*January 29, 2014*

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. O'Neill called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. He announced that the meeting was being broadcast live by Boston City TV (Comcast Channel 24 and RCN Channel 13) in cooperation with BNN-TV and would be rebroadcast at a later date. Karisa Egan, a journalism student at Emerson College, also filmed the meeting.

Mr. O'Neill announced that the School Committee is holding a series of public roundtable discussions to solicit feedback on the Committee's draft strategic plan. He referred people to [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org) for more information.

## **PRESENTATION OF CITATIONS**

The School Committee and Superintendent McDonough presented citations and pins to the following BPS teachers who earned or renewed National Board Certification in 2013

Scott Balicki - Boston Latin School  
Elvira DeLuca - Boston Latin Academy  
Mary Dibinga – Boston Latin Academy  
Jennifer Dines – Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School  
Frances Farrell – Fenway High School, Boston Academy  
Sheila Hanson-Fazzolari – James Otis School  
Donna Flaherty – Boston Latin Academy  
Arielle Freeman – Boston Community Leadership Academy  
Alison Galanter – Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers  
Jeffrey Isen – Boston Latin Academy  
Seneca King – Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers  
Kristen Toher Leathers – Brighton High School  
Miranda Lutyens – Boston Latin Academy  
Robin Mankel – Brighton High School  
Kathleen Markiewicz – Boston Latin School  
Lillie Marshall – Boston Latin Academy  
Julian McNeil – Boston Latin Academy  
Elizabeth Rooney – Fenway High School  
Amy Shapiro – Boston Community Leadership Academy  
Allyson Via – Boston Latin Academy  
Debra Watson – Mildred Ave. K-8 School  
Clara Webb – Boston Latin School

Recertification: Karene-Sean Hines – Timilty Middle School

Mr. O'Neill read a statement of congratulations from Boston Teachers Union President Richard Stutman, who was unable to attend due to an executive board meeting.

*January 29, 2014*

## **APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

The School Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the January 15, 2014 School Committee meeting.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

The BPS drop-out rate has fallen to 4.5 percent – the lowest level since the district began tracking it in the 1977-1978 school year. Fewer than one thousand students dropped out last year.

Five BPS high schools have a drop-out rate of zero: Another Course to College; Harbor High School; Muniz Academy; New Mission; and the Quincy Upper. Boston Latin School, Boston Latin Academy, TechBoston Academy, Fenway, Boston Arts Academy, Kennedy Academy, Lyon High School and the O'Bryant all have drop-out rates below one percent.

The BPS graduation rate is 65.9 percent, the same as last year, which is also a record. The Superintendent thanked all high school headmasters, guidance counselors, teachers and the staff at the Re-Engagement Center and in summer programs who contributed to this achievement.

Today Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester named receivers for two BPS Level 5 schools. Unlocking Potential will develop a turnaround plan for the John P. Holland Elementary School and Blueprint will do the same at the Paul A. Dever Elementary School, and these processes will be informed by the recommendations that were developed by each school's local stakeholder group. The district will work to ensure stability and opportunity for students and staff at the Level 5 schools. The Superintendent pledged that no other BPS school will ever move into Level 5 status.

A number of BPS schools will celebrate Black History Month by hosting events to help students better understand history and the value of diversity.

The Kuumba Singers, the oldest African-American student group at Harvard University, will perform for students at the Murphy K-8 School. One of the performers, Matthew Williams, is a Murphy School graduate.

Next week at Greater Egleston Community High School, OriGiNation will perform "Our Story: A celebration of the African-American Experience through Spoken Word, Music and Dance."

The Higginson-Lewis is working to incorporate Black History Month into daily student lessons. Each day a different class will present an element of African-American history to the school.

**January 29, 2014**

On January 30<sup>th</sup> Madison Park Technical Vocational High School will host a Teacher Career Fair aimed at college or graduate students who will hold an educators' license by this fall. The event is part of the district's expanded outreach to attract top talent to schools.

Also on January 30<sup>th</sup>, The English High School will celebrate its second annual Winter Gala and Arts Showcase featuring a student art gallery and musical performances.

BPS's First Registration Period will end January 31<sup>st</sup>. Families will be notified about their assignments in mid-March, at which time the Superintendent will provide the Committee with an update on the implementation of the new Home-Based school choice system..

The Superintendent will present his preliminary Fiscal Year 2015 budget to the Committee on February 5<sup>th</sup>.

The Committee voted by unanimous consent to accept the Superintendent's Report.

#### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Heshan Berents-Weeramuni, parent, Curley K-8 School, testified regarding the school's budget for FY15.

Stephanie Ward, parent, Boston Latin School, and member, QUEST, testified regarding the implementation of the Home-based school choice plan.

Annie Spitz, parent, Boston Teachers Union K-8 Pilot School, testified regarding the school's budget for FY15.

Peggy Wiesenber, former BPS parent, testified regarding the implementation of the Home-based school choice plan.

Joel Thompson, parent, Boston Teachers Union K-8 Pilot School, testified regarding the school's budget for FY15.

Jeff Dorigan, parent, Boston Teachers Union K-8 Pilot School, testified regarding the school's budget for FY15.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

Dr. Coleman asked the budget office to include more information regarding goals and outcomes of grants for approval, which Deputy Chief Financial Officer Erika Giampietro agreed to provide.

**Approved** – The School Committee approved by unanimous consent grants totaling \$16,038,824.

**January 29, 2014**

**Approved** – On roll call, the School Committee unanimously approved an Innovation Plan proposal for the John F. Kennedy Elementary School.

**Approved** – On roll call, the School Committee unanimously approved a revised supplemental appropriation request in the amount of \$548,081 to cover the cost of the collective bargaining agreement between the Boston School Committee and the Administrative Guild, SEIU Local 888.

## REPORTS

**School Turnaround at New Level 4 and 5 Schools** – The Superintendent presented a brief update on the district’s two newly designated Level 5 schools, the Paul A. Dever and John P. Holland Elementary Schools. Earlier today, state Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester appointed Unlocking Potential as the receiver for the Holland and Blueprint Schools Network as the receiver for the Dever. The receivers will develop turnaround plans for each school based upon the recommendations that were developed by each school’s local stakeholder group. The Superintendent repeated his pledge that no other BPS school will ever move into Level 5 status.

Ms. McKenna expressed her disappointment with the Commissioner’s decision to place the Dever and Holland Schools in receivership, calling it disruptive. Mr. O’Neill noted that the Commissioner chose two receivers who have experience working with BPS. Ms. Campbell stated that she believes that children will benefit from the Commissioner’s decision, which she called courageous.

Carline Pignato, principal of the Channing Elementary School, and Leah Blake McKetty, principal of the Winthrop Elementary School, then presented an overview of their turnaround plans for the newly designated Level 4 schools. Both schools will focus on improving effective leadership, using data-driven instruction, strengthening family and community engagement and building a culture of high expectations.

School Committee members requested additional data about the schools, including enrollment, attendance, etc., as well as an analysis of how the schools reached Level 4 status, which the Superintendent agreed to provide. Committee members also asked questions about the school’s plans to strengthen partnerships and family and student engagement. Mr. O’Neill asked the Superintendent to present an update on turnaround plans for other Level 4 schools in the near future.

**Boston Compact Update** - Deputy Superintendent of Academics Dr. Eileen de los Reyes, who serves on the Steering Committee of the Boston Compact, joined Boston Compact Chief Collaboration Officer Rachel Weinstein in providing an update on the Compact’s work since its inception in 2011. The Compact is a collaboration of BPS, charter and Catholic schools in Boston. Accomplishments include the creation of common enrollment calendars and school showcases with representatives from all sectors. Moving forward, the Compact will focus on exploring universal enrollment, recruitment, development and retention of educators of color,

**January 29, 2014**

and identifying adequate resources for facilities improvements. Kevin Andrews, former headmaster of Neighborhood House Charter School, joined the presentation to the Committee.

School Committee members praised the cross-sector collaboration and asked clarifying questions about the presentation, all of which were answered by the Superintendent and the presenters.

***School Quality Working Group Membership Update*** – Dr. Coleman, co-chair of the School Quality Working Group, proposed the following membership changes:

- John St. Amand, Vice Chair of SpedPAC, would take the position formerly held by Carolyn Kain
- Rhiannon Varmette, a teacher at Orchard Gardens K-8 School, would take the position formerly held by Rebecca Garcia-Escobar
- The position formerly held by Dr. William Henderson would not be filled

#### **ACTION ITEM**

***Approved*** – On roll call, the School Committee unanimously approved the above membership changes to the School Quality Working Group.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent, testified regarding poverty.

John Mudd, education advocate, testified regarding the Superintendent's report: School Turnaround at New Level 4 and 5 Schools.

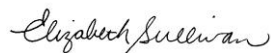
#### **NEW BUSINESS**

No new business was introduced.

#### **ADJOURN**

At 9:41 p.m., the School Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan  
Executive Secretary