



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

**January 30, 2013**

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on January 30, 2013 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, visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org), email [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:feedback@bostonpublicschools.org) or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Superintendent's Memo: Responses to School Committee Questions: Lee Academy Pilot School and the Early Childhood Center at the Fifield

Superintendent's Memo: Expanding Early Childhood: Proposal for the Lee Academy Pilot School and Early Childhood Center at the Fifield

Report – Expanding Inclusion in Boston Public Schools

Report – Early Learning Centers and Early Education Centers

Report – Innovation Plans for Blackstone and Trotter Elementary Schools

### **ATTENDANCE**

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael O'Neill; Vice-Chairperson Alfreda Harris; John Barros; Meg Campbell; Claudio Martinez; Mary Tamer and student representative Dan Chu.

School Committee Member Absent: Rev. Gregory G. Groover.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. O'Neill called the meeting to order and 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. A journalism student from Emerson College also recorded the meeting.

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## **PRESENTATION OF CITATIONS**

The School Committee and Superintendent Johnson were joined by Boston Teachers Union President Richard Stutman as they presented citations to the following teachers who have earned or renewed National Board Certification:

Erin Borthwick, Joyce Kilmer K-8 School  
Mary Jacques, Thomas Edison K-8 School  
Marie Levey-Pabst, Boston Community Leadership Academy  
Delores Martinez, Mary Lyon K-8 School  
Lisa Nguyen, Thomas J. Kenny Elementary School  
Aaron Oswiecki, Boston Latin School  
Nicole Da Silva, East Boston High School  
Thierno Tall, Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers  
Carla Zils, Thomas Edison K-8 School  
Ellen Dunn, William Ohrenberger School  
Thomas Hocker, Boston Latin Academy  
Lisa MacGeorge, Samuel Adams Elementary School

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

The School Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the January 16, 2013 School Committee meeting.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

In his Annual State of the City Address on January 29<sup>th</sup>, Mayor Thomas M. Menino committed \$30 million over three years to improve school quality and accelerate student performance. The funding will provide Boston Public Schools (BPS) with new tools to improve access to quality and provide valuable resources to high support schools.

The Superintendent thanked Executive Director for the Arts Myron Parker-Brass and her staff for coordinating the district's Martin Luther King Jr. celebrations at the House of Blues and Strand Theatre on January 18th.

The External Advisory Committee on School Choice will hold community meetings about the final three proposals on Monday, February 4<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at the Orchard Gardens K-8 School and on Tuesday, February 5<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. at Suffolk University.

On February 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m., Deputy Superintendent for Individualized Learning Eileen Nash will meet with students and families at the Dr. William W. Henderson Inclusion Elementary School to help them prepare for transition to the school's designated pathway school, the Harbor Middle School.

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Graduation rates for BPS have risen for the sixth consecutive year, with a four-year graduation rate of 66 percent. Graduation rates are up among African American and Latino students, English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Vice Chairperson Alfreda Harris was recently named as an inductee into the National Junior College Athletic Association Hall of Fame.

Isabel DePina has been appointed headmaster of the Harbor High School. Ms. DePina currently works for the Boston Plan for Excellence as a special education clinical teacher educator.

*The Superintendent requested that the School Committee postpone its vote on the Lee Elementary School/Lee Academy Pilot School/Early Childhood Center at the Fifield until February 6<sup>th</sup> to provide her staff with more time to respond to Committee members' questions. Mr. O'Neill thanked the Superintendent for her recommendation to table the vote.*

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

#### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following people testified regarding inclusion and special education services:

Boston City Councilor John Connolly  
Dianne Lescinkas, parent, Harbor Pilot School  
Phillip Robertson, parent, Harbor Pilot School  
Carolyn Kain, Chair, Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SpedPac)  
Kim Cogavin, parent, Patrick Lyndon K-8 School  
John Wu, parent, Mary Lyon K-8 School  
Daniel Burke, parent, Mary Lyon K-8 School  
Christine Rausea, parent, Mary Lyon K-8 School  
Mike Took, Boston Leaders for Education  
Eileen Mooney, parent, Michael J. Perkins Elementary School

The following parents from the Dr. William W. Henderson Inclusion Elementary School testified in favor of expanding the school to a K-8:

Cara Donovan  
Nancy Hood  
Diane Sheehy  
Kathleen McManus  
Jeff Hampton  
Daniel Young  
Jackie Wright

Gloribell Mota, parent, Hugh R. O'Donnell Elementary School, testified in favor of adding an Advanced Work Program at the O'Donnell School.

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Ellen Frechette, Chair, Lee Academy Pilot School Governing Board, testified in favor of the Superintendent's proposal to relocate Lee Academy to the Fifield building.

Karen Kast-McBride, parent, Washington Irving Middle School, testified regarding the allocation of resources for high support schools.

## **REPORTS**

***Expanding Inclusion in Boston Public Schools*** – Dr. Thomas Hehir, the Silvana and Christopher Pascucci Professor of Practice in Learning Differences at Harvard Graduate School of Education, presented his research on the impact of inclusion practices for students with disabilities in Massachusetts. According to Dr. Hehir, students with disabilities who are eligible for free or reduced lunch are more likely to be placed in substantially separate settings. He also found that urban districts tend to offer fewer inclusion opportunities. He concluded that all students – those with disabilities and their non-disabled peers – benefit from inclusion. Dr. Hehir praised BPS for having some of the best inclusion schools in the country and said that the district has the tools necessary to bring inclusion to scale.

Eileen Nash, Deputy Superintendent for Individualized Learning and John Verre, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Support Services, then presented a brief update on the district's ongoing efforts to expand inclusive opportunities. Since the 2009-10 school year, BPS has increased the number of students in full or partial inclusion settings from 46 percent to 54 percent. The number of schools in the BPS Inclusive Schools Network has also risen dramatically. Ms. Nash outlined a number of steps that BPS is taking to increase the number of students placed in inclusive settings as well as the number of schools offering full inclusion for students with disabilities. She will return to the Committee in June with a more detailed action plan for implementation in September.

School Committee members asked questions about racial, gender and socio-economic disparities and the reason why it might be appropriate to place some students in a substantially separate setting, all of which were answered by Dr. Hehir.

***Early Learning Centers and Early Education Centers*** – At the January 16<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting, several Committee members asked the Superintendent to review the district's current policy regulating enrollment at early childhood centers. Ann Waterman Roy, Director of Strategic Planning, and Jason Sachs, Director of Early Learning Services, presented the Superintendent's recommendation to allow more students with disabilities to access Early Education Centers (EECs) and Early Learning Centers (ELCs). The proposal calls for students with disabilities to be included in classes with their general education peers up to the maximum extent permitted by state laws and regulations and in accordance with the educational needs of EEC and ELC students.

Ms. Campbell requested a variety of enrollment data for EECs and ELCs, which Ms. Waterman Roy agreed to provide. The Committee is expected to vote on the proposal at its February 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

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***Innovation Plans for Blackstone and Trotter Schools*** – Al Taylor, the assistant superintendent of networks who has worked extensively with turnaround schools, presented the Superintendent’s proposal to convert the William Blackstone and William Monroe Trotter Elementary Schools into Innovation Schools. Mr. Taylor explained that innovation status would provide both schools with the flexibilities needed to continue the impressive growth they have demonstrated as turnaround schools. Blackstone Elementary School Principal Cynthia Paris-Jeffries and Trotter Elementary School Principal Mairead Nolan described how their school communities have enthusiastically endorsed their respective innovation plans.

School Committee members thanked the school leaders and the innovation planning committees for their hard work. The Committee is expected to vote on the proposals on February 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

Karen Kast-McBride, parent, Washington Irving Middle School, testified regarding the Expanding Inclusion in Boston Public Schools report.

Nora Toney, President, Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts, testified regarding inclusion at EECs and ELCs.

Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent, testified regarding the Expanding Inclusion in Boston Public Schools report.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Tamer thanked all of the parents who testified at the meeting.

### **ADJOURN**

At 9:30 p.m., the School Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan  
Executive Secretary