



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

November 19, 2014

The Boston School Committee held a meeting at 6 p.m. on November 19, 2014 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 of the November 5, 2014 School Committee Meeting

Grant for Approval: Special Education Early Childhood Allocation Grant (Fund Code 262) - \$484.467

Report: Food and Nutrition Services Update

Report: Human Capital Update

ATTENDANCE

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

School Committee Member Absent: Vice-Chairperson Claudio Martinez.

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.

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Mr. O'Neill welcomed Jeri Robinson as a member of the School Committee. Ms. Robinson is a Dorchester resident who brings more than 40 years of experience in teaching and consulting in the fields of early childhood and museum education. She's the Vice President of Early Childhood Initiatives at the Boston Children's Museum. She also serves as co-chair of the Mayor's Universal Pre-K Advisory Committee and is a member of the Superintendent Search Committee. Ms. Robinson was appointed by Mayor Walsh to fill the position vacated by Margaret McKenna.

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The School Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the November 5, 2014 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The Superintendent thanked everyone who took part in the BPS Showcase In Our Schools on November 15th. All of our schools that serve grades K0 through 8 were open for parents and students to visit. Our principals, teachers, central office staff, and many parents volunteered their time to talk to families who are interested in enrolling in BPS next year. Our Office of Engagement, led by Welcome Services, did a wonderful job organizing the event. The BPS High School Showcase will take place on December 4 at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School.

Last week BPS released an Opportunity and Equity report, which focuses on outcomes and recommendations for Black and Latino male students. The Superintendent was struck by the sense of urgency conveyed by the School Committee during its discussion on November 5th. BPS is in a strong position to tackle this issue. As Mayor Walsh said at the event, nearly every major city in the country faces these same issues - but Boston has the capacity and the will to be the first city to solve them.

BPS has already made progress on many of the recommendations in the report, such as expanding inclusive opportunities, which it will accelerate after the Inclusion Task Force makes its own recommendations in January. Mayor Walsh is leading the effort to move to universal pre-kindergarten, and we BPS has launched a number of hiring initiatives to recruit and retain more Black and Latino educators. Modifications to the Code of Conduct and progressive discipline have led to some success around reducing our suspension rates. Other recommendations will require a deeper community conversation, such as recommendations around Advanced Work Class (AWC), and Exam School enrollment. The District will seek guidance from the School Committee and the larger community to develop an action plan to address some of the recommendations.

A recent Boston Finance Commission report examining practices of the Boston Education Development Fund (BEDF) has raised concerns about how dollars were placed into BEDF from revenue generated by BPS, and then how those dollars were spent. The report covered the period

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from 2009-2012. The District will provide the School Committee with more information about BEDF as part of a larger budget update on December 3rd.

The District took steps in 2012 to address many of the underlying issues raised in the report, including the establishment of revolving funds. In 2013 and 2014, BPS expanded the number of independent individuals who are on the BEDF board so there is additional distance between the funds controlled by BEDF and the school department. The City of Boston is currently preparing for a full audit of the entire school system and its resources, which the Superintendent believes is a healthy process to undertake that will lead to further strengthening of the District. Resources must always be used to help students and the school system improve in some specific way.

For the second year in a row, educators across the Boston Public Schools continue to receive feedback to guide their professional growth and development through performance evaluations at significantly higher levels than in the past. Results published by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education show that in the 2013-14 school year, 87.1 percent of BPS teachers received an annual evaluation – compared to about 23 percent of teachers evaluated annually in 2009.

While great progress has been made, BPS still has more work to do in order to reach its evaluation goals including principals and central office staff. The District is working to ensure that principals receive evaluations at the same high levels as teachers. Still, the coaching, supervision and support of principals has never been at higher levels, thanks to the hard work of network superintendents. All BPS employees, whether educators or not, must expect evaluations from supervisors every year.

An employee of the Mission Hill K-8 School has been arrested and charged with harming a minor outside of school. Last week, an employee of the Higginson-Lewis K-8 School made a troubling allegation against another staff member involving a student. BPS is working very closely with the Boston Police to ensure student safety. District leaders are working with school leaders to review protocols around mandatory reporting and student safety.

In response to a request by Ms. Campbell and some members of the community, the Superintendent is convening a team to examine school start times.

The College Board announced last week that BPS has earned a place in its national “honor roll” for increasing access to Advanced Placement (AP) coursework as well as for increasing the success of students within AP courses. The Superintendent thanked High School Network Superintendent Mary Skipper and the Academics team for enabling this kind of success.

Last week, Child Trends Hispanic Institute, a non-partisan non-profit research center, highlighted Boston, Charlotte, Houston and Washington DC as having some of the most consistent progress among Latino students in mathematics of any districts in the nation.

BPS is coordinating with other city agencies in preparation for the forthcoming Grand Jury

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decision in Ferguson, Missouri. School leaders will support students and staff to engage in a healthy and constructive dialogue and use the event as a learning opportunity.

Mr. Loconto asked that the forthcoming financial report to the Committee include BEDF's by-laws and a roster of the board of directors. Ms. Campbell requested a list of all 501c3s affiliated with BPS and their 990 reports. Ms. Robinson requested more information AP courses and enrollment. Dr. Coleman stated that the District needs to revisit its AWC model and exam school admissions policy.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Sandra McIntosh, resident, testified regarding eliminating the achievement gap.

Mary Jo Hetzel, resident, testified regarding the eliminating the achievement gap.

Kim Janey, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, testified regarding the creation of a School Committee Task Force to Eliminate the Achievement Gap.

John Mudd, education advocate, testified regarding the creation of a School Committee Task Force to Eliminate the Achievement Gap.

Ann O'Halloran, Citizens for Public Schools, testified regarding the creation of a School Committee Task Force to Eliminate the Achievement Gap.

Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent, testified regarding the creation of a School Committee Task Force to Eliminate the Achievement Gap.

Adrienne Lovell, Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts, testified regarding the creation of a School Committee Task Force to Eliminate the Achievement Gap.

ACTION ITEM

Dr. Coleman requested that SMART goals which accompany the grants for approval be more specific.

Approved – The School Committee approved by unanimous consent a Special Education Early Childhood Allocation Grant (Fund Code 262) in the amount of \$484,467.

REPORTS

Superintendent Search Committee Update – Dr. Hardin Coleman, co-chair of the Superintendent Search Committee, presented a brief update on the status of nationwide search for a permanent superintendent of schools. The Search Committee met on November 17, 2014, at

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which time, Bill Attea, of the search firm HYA, briefed the Committee on the pool of applicants who have applied for the position. Sixty-four individuals have either completed or initiated an application. Several additional applicants are expected to apply. The Search Committee has urged HYA to recruit more female candidates and people of color. The Search Committee will hold a community forum in December or early January prior to starting the interview process. Three finalists will be publicly interviewed by the School Committee in February.

Ms. Campbell expressed concern about the diversity of the applicant pool and urged HYA and the Search Committee to look at non-traditional candidates. Ms. Robinson added that HYA has advised the Search Committee that it might want to consider revisiting the compensation package being offered for the next superintendent.

ACTION ITEM

Rev. Groover called for a motion that the School Committee recommends that the Chairperson establish a Task Force to Eliminate Achievement and Opportunity Gaps. Ms. Campbell seconded the motion. The Superintendent and Mr. O’Neill expressed support for the Task Force. Ms. Campbell offered a friendly amendment to create a working group instead of a task force, stating that a working group is more likely to have a strong focus and a hard deadline. Rev. Groover rejected the amendment, saying a task force can accomplish those goals as well as a working group. Mr. Loconto and Ms. Robinson also expressed support for the creation of a Task Force.

Approved – On roll call, the School Committee unanimously approved a motion by Rev. Groover to recommend that the Chair create a Task Force to Eliminate Achievement and Opportunity Gaps.

At a later date, the Committee will vote to establish a specific charge, membership, and timeline for the task force.

REPORTS

Food and Nutrition Services Update - Sam DePina, chief of Student Support, Deborah Ventricelli, deputy director of Food and Nutrition Services, and Naveen Reddy, director of business improvement for the Office of Finance and Budget, presented an update on the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Department, which provides free breakfast, lunch and after school meals for all 57,000 BPS students. FNS has adopted new federal nutrition guidelines that call for more fruit, vegetables and whole grains. A city-wide Food Advisory Committee is working to provide feedback and recommendations on school meals. The District is working to bring new leadership to FNS with a focus on workplace culture, accountability, organizational development and collaboration. Expected completion for the FNS strategic plan is March 2015.

Ms. Campbell suggested that the District consider offering breakfast in the classroom as a way to increase participation. Mr. Olumuyiwa suggested that the District explore composting. Ms. Robinson requested data on student participation and food waste, which the presenters agreed to

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provide at a later date. Mr. O'Neill requested data on salad bar participation. He also asked the District to clearly list the recommendations offered in all external reviews, as well as the District's response. The Superintendent agreed to provide the information going forward.

Human Capital Update – Dr. Ross Wilson, Assistant Superintendent of Human Capital, presented an update on the District's early recruitment and hiring initiative and educator evaluations. As a result of the District's aggressive recruitment effort, BPS is anticipating an increase in the number of Black and Latino teachers hired in 2015. Eighty-seven percent of teachers received performance evaluations in school year 2013-14, a significant increase since 2010. The vast majority of teachers were rated proficient, while 16.8 percent were rated exemplary and 5.6 received ratings of needs improvement or unsatisfactory. Variances in evaluation ratings across racial groups continue to decrease. Timely principal evaluation completion continues to be an area of concern. Moving forward, the Office of Human Capital is working to strengthen professional development and launch a calibration system for all evaluators.

School Committee members asked a number of clarifying questions about the evaluation data, most of which were answered by Dr. Wilson who added that further analysis is needed. Dr. Coleman requested data showing how teacher performance relates to student achievement. Mr. O'Neill expressed concern at the principal evaluation completion rates, which Deputy Superintendent of Academics Dr. Eileen de los Reyes pledged will reach 100 percent.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent, testified regarding the achievement gap.

Megan Wolf, BPS parent, testified regarding the Human Capital report.

John Mudd, education advocate, testified regarding the Human Capital report.

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