



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

November 5, 2014

The Boston School Committee held a meeting at 6 p.m. on November 5, 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 October 15, 2014 School Committee Meeting

Grants for Approval Totaling \$616,111.

- BPS Department of Adult Education: EEC IBM Reading Companion - \$9,334
- Improving Teacher Quality - \$53,190
- Inclusive Preschool Learning Environments – Fund Code 391 – \$334,837
- Massachusetts High School Graduation Initiative (MassGrad) - \$218,750

Private School Application: Northeastern University Vision School @ Boston Ballet, 360 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115

Superintendent's Memo: ELL Overlay Proposal to Combine Clusters F & G

Report: School Safety Update

Report: Achievement Gap Update

ATTENDANCE

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

School Committee Members Absent: None.

November 5, 2014

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.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mr. O'Neill requested a moment of silence in honor of former Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, who passed away on October 30th.

DIPLOMA PRESENTATION

The Committee and Superintendent presented U.S. Army veteran John Michael Walsh with his official BPS diploma, 47 years after Mr. Walsh left Roslindale High School to serve in the Vietnam War.

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The Superintendent praised the late Mayor Menino for his relentless focus on serving all students and for never being satisfied.

On November 13th, BPS, the Annenberg Institute and the Center for Collaborative Education will present the results of a two-year research study on Black and Latino males. While every major school system in the nation faces challenges related to the achievement gap, Boston is committed to being the district that solves them.

At the request of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the District is working with the Dearborn School stakeholder group to identify a small set of possible receivers who could develop a plan and rapidly improve the school. A final decision is expected later this month.

In 2006, BPS and the Boston School Police negotiated a contract that directed the Chief of Safety Services to develop a policy regarding the use of OC (pepper spray). Following a series of community meetings on the subject, the Superintendent has concluded that pepper spray, no matter how well-developed the policy and no matter how well-crafted the training, could potentially drive a wedge between students and the school police. Therefore, he is directing the Chief of Safety Services to neither issue nor authorize the use of OC spray to School Police Officers within the Boston Public Schools.

November 5, 2014

BPS is working closely with the Boston Public Health Commission at the Condon Elementary School where about 140 students and 10 staff members have contracted norovirus. Custodial teams have sanitized the school and the Facilities Department is working to ensure that all schools have a full supply of hand soap and other supplies necessary for good hygiene.

The Superintendent congratulated the Trotter Elementary School, winner of EdVestors' 2014 School on the Move Prize, and runners up Hurley K-8 School and Orchard Gardens K-8 School.

The Superintendent wished Boston Latin Academy the best of luck with its rigorous accreditation process, which is taking place this week.

On November 6th, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School will host a forum to discuss the qualities the school community desires in an Executive Director and Headmaster.

Chris Giuliani has been appointed Deputy Chief Financial Officer for the Boston Public Schools. He has worked with the City's budget management office for 14 years, most recently as Deputy Budget Director for Revenue, Research and Fixed Costs.

Dr. Coleman asked the BPS budget office to add a great level of detail to the information provided in grants for approval, particular with grant outcomes and indicators.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Carolyn Kain, chair, Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPac), testified regarding special education issues.

Celia Kirwan, parent, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding school start times.

John St. Amand, vice-chair, SpedPac, testified regarding parent partnerships.

Linda Freeman, parent, Community Academy of Science and Health, testified regarding her satisfaction with the special education services her child is receiving.

ACTION ITEMS

Approved – The School Committee approved by unanimous consent grants totaling \$616,111.

Approved – On roll call, the School Committee unanimously approved a private school application for the Northeastern University Vision School @ Boston Ballet.

Approved – On roll call, the School Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent's recommendation to combine Clusters F and G of the English Language Learners Overlay portion of the Home-Based School Choice Plan.

November 5, 2014

REPORTS

School Safety Update – Sam DePina, Chief of Comprehensive Student Support Services, and Eric Weston, Chief of Safety Services, presented an update on the District’s efforts to improve the safety and security of school communities. The number of arrests in BPS schools has decreased significantly – falling from 464 in the 2007-08 school year to 152 in the 2013-14 school year. In that time, the number of incident reports filed also decreased significantly, from 4543 to 3591. School Police collaborate with school leaders for training in emergency preparedness and active shooter scenarios.

In response to the feedback the District received during a recent community engagement process, the Superintendent has decided not to pursue a policy which would have permitted School Police Officers to carry OC (pepper) spray.

School Committee members applauded the Superintendent’s decision regarding OC spray, citing the importance of community engagement early in the policy exploration process.

Achievement Gap Update – Tanisha Sullivan, Chief Equity Officer, led an in-depth presentation on the District’s ongoing efforts to eliminate achievement and opportunity gaps. While BPS outperforms most urban districts, significant achievement gaps persist between Black and Latino students and their White and Asian peers. For example, proficiency rates for Black males are less than half the rates for White and Asian females. Additionally, Black and Latino students are over-represented in substantially separate classrooms and under-represented in Advanced Work Class. The District has made elimination of the achievement gap a top priority, has established a theory of action, and will operationalize the theory of action by increasing support for school leaders, teachers and families, increasing student access to engaging and rigorous instruction and curriculum, holding District staff at all levels accountable for eliminating achievement and opportunity gaps.

The following people co-presented along with Ms. Sullivan: Deputy Superintendent for Academics Dr. Eileen de los Reyes; Chief of Comprehensive Student Support Services Sam DePina; Manager of Compliance and Quality Assurance for the Office Special Education & Student Services Lisa Martiesian; Edison K-8 School Principal Mary Driscoll; and Chief Data & Accountability Officer Dr. Kamal Chavda.

School Committee members agreed that the data is troubling. Ms. Campbell, Rev. Groover and Mr. Martinez called for an open conversation about race and asked how the District will provide the financial support and resources needed to eliminate the achievement gap. Ms. Campbell requested an equity audit to about how other districts track students. Mr. O’Neill praised the Committee for engaging in an honest, bold and difficult discussion about equity and race.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Megan Wolf, BPS parent, testified regarding the Home-Based School Choice Plan.

November 5, 2014

Barbara E. Fields, resident, testified regarding the Achievement Gap Update.

John Mudd, education advocate, testified regarding the Achievement Gap Update.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Campbell requested a high-level examination of school start times; the Superintendent agreed to share his thinking on the matter in his next Superintendent's Report on November 19th. Ms. Campbell also asked the Committee to re-examine the current exam school admissions policy, asking that the current algorithm be clearly stated on the BPS web site.

Rev. Groover called for motion for the Committee to consider the creation of a School Committee task force on eliminating the achievement gap. Ms. Campbell seconded the motion. Following extensive discussion by the Committee, Rev. Groover withdrew his motion after Mr. O'Neill agreed to put the item on the next meeting agenda for further discussion by the Committee.

ADJOURN

At 10:16 p.m., the School Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary