



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

December 10, 2014

The Boston School Committee held a meeting at 6 p.m. on December 10, 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 December 3, 2014 School Committee Meeting

Grants for Approval Totaling \$204,050

- DOJ Youth Forum Cities -\$100,00
- Strategic Support to Specific Underperforming School Districts: Bridge Grant - \$104,000
- Strategic Support to Specific Underperforming School Districts: Supplementary Startup Support - \$50

Report: English Language Learners Task Force Update

Report: ELL Task Force Recommendations: FY14-15 Update

ATTENDANCE

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

School Committee Members Absent: Vice-Chairperson Claudio Martinez; and Dr. Hardin Coleman (departed at approximately 6:20 p.m.).

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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.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

The School Committee and Superintendent presented a plaque to Rev. Groover in recognition of his eight years of service on the Committee. Rev. Groover, who served four years as chair and one year as vice chair, has decided not to seek another term.

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The School Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the December 3, 2014 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

This week more than half of Boston Public schools are taking part in "Hour of Code," a national effort to engage more students in computer science. Students at the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing won a contest to participate in a video chat with New Jersey Senator Cory Booker on the subject of expanding access to technology, which took place this morning. Mayor Walsh joined students at the Quincy Elementary School yesterday and where they worked on computer programs. The Superintendent thanked the BPS Office of Instructional and Information Technology and school leaders for their efforts to expand access to computer science throughout the district.

Today the Superintendent visited the Dearborn 6-12 STEM Academy to discuss his decision to select BPE as the external operator for the school beginning next year. The Superintendent thanked the Dearborn stakeholder group for their work and pledged that BPE, working in partnership with the community and BPS, will succeed in bringing rapid academic progress to the school.

Today President Obama announced a national early education grant. Massachusetts is one of 15 states to share a \$250 million award over the next several years. The state expects to receive \$15 million in the first year. The funding will help BPS reach its goal of offering access to a high-quality pre-k program to every child in Boston in the years ahead.

On December 6th, Mayor Walsh hosted a My Brother's Keeper summit at the Timilty Middle School. Many BPS students and parents participated, and BPS Chief Equity Officer Tanisha Sullivan facilitated a subcommittee on education. That same day, the BPS Office of Engagement held its winter session of Parent University, which helps parents engage in their children's education.

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In his address to the Boston Chamber of Commerce earlier today, Mayor Walsh called on all Bostonians to deepen their efforts to create mentorship opportunities for Boston teenagers. In the weeks ahead, BPS will join with other City agencies and community partners to increase awareness of and excitement about mentorship opportunities.

The Superintendent congratulated High School Network Superintendent Mary Skipper, who has been named the new superintendent of Somerville Public Schools! Ms. Skipper will assume her new role this summer.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Vatsady Sivonxay, assistant to Boston City Councilor Tito Jackson, and James Jackson, assistant to Boston City Councilor Ayanna Pressley, presented Rev. Groover with a City Council resolution in appreciation of his service on the School Committee.

John St. Amand, vice chair, Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (Sped Pac), testified regarding transition services and budget concerns for special education.

Carolyn Kain, chair, Sped Pac, testified regarding inclusion.

John Mudd, education advocate, thanked Rev. Groover for his years of service on the School Committee.

Steve Clinkenbeard, parent, Mission Hill K-8 School, testified regarding the availability of information for parents seeking inclusion high schools.

The following people testified regarding identifying a permanent location for the Margarita Muniz Academy:

- Diana Lam, chair, Board of Trustees, Margarita Muniz Academy
- Delhi Emanuel, president, parent council, Margarita Muniz Academy
- Jan Phlegar, clerk, Board of Trustees, Margarita Muniz Academy
- Dania Vazquez, headmaster, Margarita Muniz Academy

The following members of the Boston Teachers Union Inclusion Committee testified regarding inclusive education practices:

- Donna Lashus, paraprofessional, Higginson-Lewis K-8 School and BPS grandparent
- Maria Brooks, teacher, Higginson-Lewis K-8 School
- Theresa Loliscio, speech therapist, Unified Student Services
- Donere Johnson, parent, Taylor Elementary School
- Marjie Crosby, occupational therapist, Unified Student Services

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The following people testified regarding the Superintendent's selection of BPE as the external operator for the Dearborn 6-12 STEM Academy:

- Jesse Solomon, executive director, BPE
- Yvonne Powell, volunteer, Dearborn 6-12 STEM Academy
- Sam Acevedo, executive director, Boston Higher Education Resource Center

ACTION ITEM

Approved – The School Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval in the amount of 204,050.

REPORTS

English Language Learners Task (ELL) Force Update – ELL Task Force members Diana Lam, Janet Anderson, Dr. Maria Serpa and coordinator Harry Smith, presented an update on the group's work. Since the School Committee endorsed the ELL Task Force's recommendation 2011, the Task Force has acted as a monitoring body that meets regularly to review the District's progress towards implementing the recommendations. The ELL Task Force has established sub-committees to focus on three priority areas: providing support for existing dual language programs and expansion across the District; studying the impact of the Home-Based student assignment plan on ELL students; and improving programming and supports for ELL students with disabilities. The ELL Task Force will present its next update to the Committee in June, 2015.

Ms. Robinson stressed the importance of communications with families, which the Task Force has identified as an area for improvement. Mr. Loconto called for careful planning to address population influxes.

BPS Office of English Language Learners Update – Kim Tsai, director of Legal Compliance for the Office of English Language Learners, presented an update on the District's ongoing work in the three priority areas identified by the ELL Task Force. BPS continues to strengthen the capacity of its dual language programs and is piloting a program to provide more culturally and linguistically appropriate social workers to support students in dual language schools. The District has expanded multilingual outreach to families for school registration and is working to improve the identification and assessment of ELLs. To strengthen support for ELL students with special needs, BPS is creating more opportunities for cross-functional collaboration between the Office of English Language Learners and the Office of Special Education and Support Services. The District has also staffed a new position, a liaison for ELL students with disabilities. The District is also engaging in a comprehensive review of program quality to ensure its programming infrastructure and implementation has led to quality instruction that will close achievement gaps for ELLs.

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In response to questions from Ms. Campbell, the Superintendent confirmed that the principal of the Sarah Greenwood K-8 School is bilingual and does attend dual language meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

No speakers.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Loconto, who serves as the School Committee representative on the Inclusion Task Force, announced that the Task Force will present its report to the Committee in January 2015.

ADJOURN

By roll call, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to executive session to discuss collective bargaining. Mr. O'Neill announced that the Committee would not return to public session. The public session adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary