



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

December 19, 2012

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

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Rev. Gregory G. Groover; Vice-Chairperson Michael D. O'Neill; John Barros, Meg Campbell; Mary Tamer; and student representative Dan Chu.

School Committee Member Absent: Alfreda J. Harris and Claudio Martinez.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Grants for Approval totaling \$1,781,576

Foreign Travel Request: Boston Latin School – Spain – February 14-24, 2013

Foreign Travel Request: Boston Latin School – Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic – April 10-21, 2013

Foreign Travel Request: Boston Latin Academy – Costa Rica – February 15-23, 2013.

Report: Boston Student Advisory Council Update

Report: English Language Learners Youth Advisory Task Force Update

Report: Superintendent's Self Assessment

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Groover called the meeting to order and introduced the Madison Park Technical Vocational High School JROTC, who led the pledge of allegiance.

Rev. Groover requested a moment of silence in honor of the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, CT.

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Rev. Groover 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.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

The School Committee and Superintendent Johnson presented a citation to the Clarence R. Edwards Middle School Football Team, winner of the 2012 Boys Middle School Football City Championship. Principal Leo Flanagan accepted the citation along with coaches John Rice, Jared Magee and Bobby Hoell.

Three veterans who left Boston Public Schools (BPS) before graduation to join the U.S. Armed Forces received honorary diplomas:

- Joseph Doherty, Jamaica Plain High School, 1950. Mr. Doherty served in the U.S. Marines during the Korean conflict.
- Maurice Fuoco Jr., Hyde Park High School, 1964. Mr. Fuoco served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam.
- The late Fred Yenofsky, Dorchester High School, 1941. Mr. Yenofsky served in the U.S. Army during World War II. His son, Mark, accepted the diploma on his behalf.

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The School Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the November 28, 2012 School Committee meeting.

APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the following executive sessions:

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| • December 2, 2010 | • February 15, 2012 | • September 5, 2012 |
| • July 20, 2011 | • March 28, 2012 | • September 19, 2012 |
| • September 19, 2011 | • April 11, 2012 | • October 24, 2012 |
| • January 18, 2012 | • August 22, 2012 | |

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The Superintendent convened a team of central office staff to strengthen school safety across the district. She is sending a letter to families asking them to be partners in this effort. The district is also reviewing safety procedures at after school programs. School counselors are working with

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teachers to help guide their conversations with students regarding the recent school shooting tragedy in Newtown, CT.

As part of her management reorganization, the Superintendent announced the following personnel changes:

Mary Skipper, Assistant Network Superintendent for High Schools. Ms. Skipper is currently headmaster of TechBoston Academy, which has a 98.4 percent graduation rate. Keith Love and Nora Vernazza will lead TechBoston as interim co-headmasters for the remainder of the school year.

Al Taylor, Assistant Superintendent of Networks. Mr. Taylor currently oversees all turnaround schools; in the new structure, schools of all types will be grouped into networks.

Melissa Partridge, Director of Extended Learning. Ms. Partridge has a strong connection with Boston's non-profit and foundation community and has played a major role in doubling the number of students participating in summer learning opportunities.

Jonathan Sproul, Director of Institutional Advancement and Partnerships. Mr. Sproul currently serves as Assistant Director of our Health and Wellness Department.

Elie Jean-Louis, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Networks. Mr. Jean-Louis currently serves as Assistant Academic Superintendent for Elementary Schools.

BPS Chief Financial Officer John McDonough provided the Committee with a brief budget update. Mr. McDonough explained that budget reductions at the federal and state levels pose a significant financial challenge for the district. Special education services funding could be greatly impacted. BPS school budgets would be released later this week.

The Superintendent reiterated her commitment designing a new school choice process that will increase access to quality schools.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Dawn Ash, Chair, BPS Code of Conduct Advisory Council, provided a brief update on the Committee's work to date and encouraged others to join the Council.

Michael Heichman, advocate, Coalition for Equal Quality Education, testified regarding improving the school choice process.

Carolyn Kain, Chair, Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SPED PAC), and John St. Amand, Vice Chair, SPED PAC, testified regarding special education issues.

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Frank Neisser, advocate, Coalition for Equal Quality Education, testified regarding improving the school choice process.

Sherman Zemler Wu, BPS parent, expressed his support for the recommendation of the External Advisory Committee on School Choice to provide sibling grandfathering and transportation until the 2019-2020 school year.

ACTION ITEMS

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent grants totaling \$1,781,576.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent a foreign travel request for 18 students and two chaperones from Boston Latin School to travel to Barcelona, Madrid and Cordoba, Spain from February 14-23, 2013.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent a foreign travel request for 46 students and five chaperones from Boston Latin School to travel to Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic from April 10-21, 2013.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent a foreign travel request for 15 students and two chaperones from Boston Latin Academy to travel to Costa Rica from February 15-23, 2013.

REPORTS

Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) Update – BSAC member and School Committee Student Representative Dan Chu (Boston Latin Academy), Audrey Ngankam (Boston International High School), Heaven Reda and Angelica Mendes (both of Urban Science Academy) presented an update on BSAC's priorities for the 2012-13 school year. Areas of focus include school discipline, constructive feedback and teacher evaluation, health and wellness and the development of a civics curriculum.

Ms. Tamer encouraged widespread participation in BSAC among all BPS high schools. She also urged BSAC to broaden its survey and data collection. Mr. O'Neill and Mr. Barros thanked the students for their presentation and emphasized the importance of student voice. Rev. Groover requested data on the status of constructive feedback surveys submitted by high schools to BSAC.

Rev. Groover announced that since several Committee members were feeling under the weather, the Committee would postpone its discussion of the Superintendent's self assessment until the first full School Committee meeting of 2013.

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English Language Learners (ELL) Youth Advisory Task Force Update – Members of the ELL Youth Advisory Task Force presented an update on the group’s accomplishments and goals for the 2012-13 school year.

Presenters included:

Christina Arcy, TechBoston Academy, BSAC

Alefe De Pina, Boston International High School, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI)

Achly Esparra, Greater Egleston High School, Sociedad Latina

Jerson Familia, Boston Community Leadership Academy, Sociedad Latina

Vickie Miranda, East Boston High School, Sociedad Latina

Jossiene Monteiro, Jeremiah E. Burke High School, DSNI

Wilmer Quiñones, Greater Egleston High School, Sociedad Latina

Yiming Yu, Charlestown High School, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center

The Task Force has been working to build a robust network with various youth groups and give a voice to ELL students in BPS. Some of the concerns raised by ELL students include the need for teachers and staff to build cultural competency as well as better communication between BPS and ELL families. The Task Force has established two sub-committees to focus on research and curriculum.

Mr. Barros stated that the diversity of BPS’ student population is an asset to the district. Ms. Tamer stated that BPS must address not only the achievement gap but the opportunity gap as well. She also encouraged the Task Force to utilize free online surveys. Mr. O’Neill asked the Task Force to assist with messaging around the drop out issue.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

There were no speakers for public comment on reports.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was introduced.

ADJOURN

At 8:37 p.m. the School Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary