



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

February 27, 2013

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on February 27, 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, email feedback@bostonpublicschools.org or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Grants for Approval Totaling \$1,040,649

- Boston Energy in Science Teaching (BEST) - \$175,374
- Collaborative Research: COSEE: Ocean Communities in Education (COSEE-OCEAN) - \$55,000
- Lee Academy Pilot School - \$117,016
- Massachusetts 21st Century Community Learning Centers Enhanced Program for Students with Disabilities - \$45,000
- Race to the Top – STEM Early College High Schools - \$50,000
- Scaling Up Diplomas Now Grant - \$598,259

International Travel Request: Boston Green Academy – Canada - April 1 - April 8, 2013

International Travel Request: Boston Latin Academy – Italy – April 11 - April 18, 2013

International Travel Request: Jeremiah E. Burke High School – Dominican Republic – April 10- April 19, 2013

International Travel Request: The Muriel Snowden International School at Copley – France and Spain – April 12- April 20, 2013

International Travel Request: The Muriel Snowden International School at Copley – Jamaica – April 10 – April 17, 2013

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Superintendent's Memo: Improving School Choice

External Advisory Committee on School Choice (EAC) Memo: Summary and Recommendations

ATTENDANCE

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

School Committee Member Absent: Vice-Chairperson Alfreda Harris.

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.

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The School Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the February 6, 2013 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Boston Latin School recently won the Best Big Band Award at the Charles Mingus High School Jazz Festival in New York City. Willens Jean-Jules won the Outstanding Soloist Award for his stellar work on the trumpet. The Superintendent congratulated BLS Music Director Paul Pitts and Headmaster Lynn Mooney-Teta.

The Curley K-8 School recently received an anonymous donation of \$50,000 for construction of a multi-purpose playing field.

Boston is a finalist for a \$5 million technology competition. The city and OIIT developed "Darwin," a concept that would use technology to help parents engage in their child's education through data. To vote, please find the link on the BPS Facebook page.

Dr. Caren Walker Gregory, Headmaster of the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers, was inducted into the National Headmasters Association in Philadelphia earlier this month.

Three BPS teachers were selected for the first-ever Teacher in Excellence Awards for their contributions to student achievement in the Mass Math+Science Initiative: Audrey Schindler McDonald, an English teacher at East Boston High School; Fred Pontillas, a biology teacher at the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science; and Sarah Varsanik, a calculus

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teacher at Brighton High School. They will receive the awards in a celebration on March 7 at the Museum of Science.

The BPS Citywide Science Fair, featuring more than 300 student exhibits, will take place on March 2nd at Northeastern University

Also on March 2nd, the Success Boston initiative will host a college application and financial aid completion boot camp for all BPS 12th graders at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School.

Fourteen BPS schools experienced double digit gains in MCAS proficiency rates for African American students; 12 schools saw double-digit gains for Hispanic students.

Matt Wilder, director of media relations, will leave BPS next month to serve as the Director of Communications for Massachusetts Secretary of Education Matthew Malone. The Superintendent thanked Mr. Wilder for his service and wished him well in his new position.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Nina Kallen, parent, Dennis Haley Elementary School, testified the release of liability in field trip permission slips.

Vanessa Snow, advocate, Hyde Square Task Force, testified regarding for-profit college recruiters visiting BPS high schools.

John St. Amand, Vice Chair, Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SpedPac), testified regarding the SpedPac meeting on February 28, 2013.

The following people testified regarding improving school choice:

- Patricia Kinsella, parent, Curley K-8 School, and member, QUEST
- Mary Jo Hetzel, Coalition for Equal Quality Schools
- Fran Smith, community organizer
- Peggy Wiesenberg

ACTION ITEMS

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee unanimously approved grants totaling \$1,040,649.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee unanimously approved an international travel request for 10 students and two chaperones from Boston Green Academy to travel to Canada from April 1 to April 8, 2013.

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Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee unanimously approved an international travel request for 16 students and two chaperones from Boston Latin Academy to travel to Italy from April 11 to April 18, 2013.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee unanimously approved an international travel request for 13 students and three chaperones from the Jeremiah E. Burke High School to travel to the Dominican Republic from April 10 to April 19, 2013.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee unanimously approved an international travel request for 13 students and three chaperones from The Muriel Snowden International School at Copley to travel to France and Spain from April 12 to April 20, 2013.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee unanimously approved an international travel request for 13 students and three chaperones from The Muriel Snowden International School at Copley to travel to Jamaica from April 10 to April 17, 2013.

REPORT

Improving School Choice – External Advisory Committee (EAC) members Laura Perille, Carolyn Kain and Mary Tamer (who is also a School Committee member) presented the EAC’s recommendation on Improving School Choice. The EAC spent more than a year analyzing data and held dozens of community meetings before approving the Home-Based model. This plan provides families with choices based upon their home address, adding quality school options if none are located close to home. The presenters explained that the Home-Based model increases overall equity, giving more children a chance to attend a high quality school; offers families more predictability, increasing the chances a family will receive one of their top choices; and strengthens communities by reducing the distance children travel to school by about 40 percent. The model is also flexible, adjusting as school quality improves. Overlays for English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, and middle schools would provide families with better predictability and more options closer to home. The EAC recommended no changes to the district’s current 50/50 walk-zone policy at this time, calling for a review of the data two years after implementation if the Home-Based model is approved. The Committee also made a number of additional recommendations to the district, including the creations of a Quality Schools Advisors Panel to monitor and evaluate efforts to increase equitable access to a quality education for all students and the issuing of an annual accountability report on improving school performance. Families can explore their options under the Home-Based plan by using the interactive tool available at www.bostonschoolchoice.org. The Superintendent then delivered comments on the district’s ongoing journey towards equity and excellence. Read the complete text here: <http://bostonschoolchoice.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/2-27-13-superintendent-eac-statement.pdf>

School Committee members thanked the EAC for their work and asked questions about the various overlays, quality improvement efforts, quality assurance measures and cost savings, all of which were answered by the Superintendent and the presenters.

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The Committee requested that the following information be provided on or before the Improving School Choice hearing on March 7th:

- additional socioeconomic and racial data
- cost savings data
- middle school overlay capacity analysis
- walk zone data

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORT

The following people testified on the Improving School Choice report:

- Achly Esparra and Wilmer Quinones, members of Sociedad Latina and the English Language Learners Youth Advisory Task Force
- Megan Wolf, BPS parent and member, QUEST
- John Weiss, BPS parent
- Karen Kast-McBride, parent, Irving Middle School
- Peggy Wiesenberg
- Kim Janey, Massachusetts Advocates for Children
- Sherman Zemler Wu, parent, Mather Elementary School
- John Mudd, advocate

NEW BUSINESS

Rev. Groover announced that he will be unable to attend the next few School Committee meetings while he recovers from surgery.

Ms. Tamer requested information on how other school districts handle liability issues for field trips. She urged the Superintendent to explore creating an inclusion model at the Irving Middle School. She also asked for the admissions criteria for non-exam high schools. Finally, Ms. Tamer congratulated Ms. Campbell, who serves as Executive Director of Codman Academy Charter Public School, which recently received state approval to expand to a K-12.

Mr. O'Neill announced the dates and times for upcoming School Committee hearings on the Fiscal Year 2014 Budget and Improving School Choice.

ADJOURN

At 9:16 p.m., the School Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn to executive session to discuss collective bargaining. Mr. O'Neill announced that the Committee would not return to public session.

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Attest:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Sullivan".

Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary