



## **OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING AND BUDGET HEARING**

**March 11, 2015**

The Boston School Committee held a meeting at 4:30 p.m. on March 11, 2015 at the Edward Winter Chambers, 26 Court Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

For more information about any of the items listed below, visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org), email [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:feedback@bostonpublicschools.org) or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Grants for Approval Totaling \$313,538.

- Innovation School Sustainability Grant (Fund Code 157) - \$28,748.
- Innovation School Sustainability Grant (Fund Code 157) - \$30,000
- Reading Recovery: Scaling Up What Works i<sup>3</sup> Federal Grant - \$4,790.
- Strategic Support – Planning Support Bridge Grant - \$130,000.
- Summer Food Service Program Expansion - \$50,000.
- Summer Food Service Program Start-Up - \$70,000.

International Travel Request: Boston Latin Academy: France and Spain, April 16-25, 2015

International Travel Request: Boston Latin School: China, April 16-25, 2015

Middle School Transportation Program Update

Massachusetts School Building Authority Statement of Interest: William Carter Development Center

Fiscal Year 2016 Recommended Budget Update

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### **ATTENDANCE FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael O'Neill; Meg Campbell; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; and Dr. Miren Uriarte.

School Committee Members Absent: Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman (*arrived while executive session was in progress*); Michael Loconto (*arrived while executive session was in progress*); and student representative Ayomide Olumuyiwa (*arrived while budget hearing was in progress*).

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. O'Neill led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order. He announced that the Committee would immediately adjourn to executive session to hold a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with the superintendent-designate, a non-union employee. The Committee will return to public session.

**Approved** – By roll call, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to executive session.

### **ATTENDANCE FOR BUDGET HEARING AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael O'Neill; Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman; Meg Campbell; Michael Loconto; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; Dr. Miren Uriarte; and student representative Ayomide Olumuyiwa.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

### **FISCAL YEAR 2016 BUDGET HEARING**

The following people testified regarding the Superintendent's FY16 budget recommendation:

Yesther Diaz Kelly, student, Orchard Gardens K-8 School  
Alene Fernandes, student, Orchard Gardens K-8 School  
Kamaru Oseni and Kashetu Oseni, students, Orchard Gardens K-8 School  
Dolores Wood, teacher, West Roxbury Academy  
Bette O'Gara, director, Key Steps  
Jack Sinnott, BPS parent and board member, Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPac)  
Mellissa Arlene Honeywood, nutritionist  
Guy Koope, parent, Haley Elementary School  
Stephanie Shapiro Berkson, parent, Eliot K-8 School  
Cristina Martinez, student West Roxbury Academy  
Chun-Fai Chan, teacher, Department of Adult Education  
Stephen Genatossio, teacher, West Roxbury Academy  
Jahvon Bruton, student, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School  
Vanessa Villanova, student, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School

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Thomas Parks, Friends of Madison Park Technical Vocational High School  
John Mudd, education advocate  
Fathi Mohamed, student, West Roxbury Academy  
Rosana Rivera, parent, Community Academy  
Celoni Espinola, teacher, Boston International High School  
Marcus Tuloe, student, Boston International High School  
Derlin Tejada, student, Boston International High School  
Celestina V. Antone, student, Boston International High School  
Mary-Key Rooleentha Donunol, student, Boston International High School  
Lucia Taylor, parent, Boston International High School  
Edmer Cayomite, teacher, West Roxbury Academy  
Michelle Pierre, teacher, West Roxbury Academy  
Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent  
Matteo Koka, student, West Roxbury Academy

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. O'Neill led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

The Superintendent welcomed Dr. Tommy Chang who is visiting Boston as he prepares to make his transition as superintendent. He expressed his commitment to working with Dr. Chang to ensure a smooth and highly-effective transition.

Today the Boston City Council honored the East Boston Hockey Team during a short ceremony in the City Council chambers for its victory over Boston Latin Academy in the City Championship last month. The Superintendent congratulated all BPS championship teams.

The Jeremiah E. Burke High School Boys Basketball team will be honored this weekend, when they are awarded the MIAA Team Sportsmanship Award for Basketball during the MIAA State Basketball finals at the DCU Center in Worcester.

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, Fenway Girls Basketball team will compete against Millis High School for the state title.

The Superintendent congratulated Nathan Hermida, a senior at Boston Latin School, who is a contestant on the TV show, "The Voice".

The Annual BPS Citywide Science Fair was held on March 7<sup>th</sup>.

March 13<sup>th</sup> is National Digital Learning Day and BPS welcomes the opportunity to participate in digital learning communities for educators. The BPS Office of Instructional and Information Technology is spearheading these opportunities, which includes a live virtual teacher panel this evening, a Twitter chat tomorrow discussing and the chance to hear from schools about the ways

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they incorporate digital learning into their classrooms. Additional information is available at [www.bostonpublicschools.org/technology](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/technology).

In order to ensure that the families affected by potential school closures have equal access to available school options as those families not impacted by the recommendations, the district has altered the registration and assignment calendar for Rounds One and Two. Assignments from Round One, will be delayed until early April. A Connect Ed call went out to families to inform them of this news; it is also posted on the BPS website and communicated through social media. The Superintendent apologized for any inconvenience to families waiting to make decisions about next school year but called the decision necessary to ensure equitable access to all families.

Students currently in schools proposed for closure are receiving new choice forms and will receive a priority - second only to sibling priority - as they choose a new school. Forms will be due by April 6. If any school proposed for closure does not close, students will continue in their schools as planned.

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, the Superintendent testified before state legislature's Chapter 70 foundation budget review commission. The commission is holding a number of public hearings around the state as they consider approaching a new calculation of Chapter 70 funding, which constitutes the majority of the funds we receive from the Commonwealth. Over the last 10 years, Boston's foundation budget has increased by 36 percent but its Chapter 70 aid has only increased by five percent. This lack of financial support runs counter to the state's commitment to closing the achievement gap for all of our students.

Tomorrow, BPS will participate in a City Council hearing that is examining transitional services for students ages 14-22. Under the leadership of Deputy Superintendent Eileen Nash, BPS has worked with Special Education Parent Advisory Council, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, and the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment program from the state Executive Office of Education to support special education students to school readiness, adult learning, or independent living. Just last month, 200 BPS special education students attended a transition fair at UMass Boston.

The Superintendent made the following personnel announcements.

Chief of Staff Melissa Dodd is leaving BPS to lead the digital district transformation for San Francisco Unified School District. The Superintendent thanked her for her hard work and dedication to BPS over the past decade.

Dr. Ross Wilson will serve as Chief of Staff during this time of transition.

Emily Qazilbash will lead the Office of Human Capital.

The Superintendent acknowledged that the past week has been very difficult for BPS following the arrest of Shaun Harrison, an English High School employee in connection with the shooting of a student. A police investigation continues, as does an internal inquiry that will seek to fully understand every detail of this employee's employment history with BPS. The Superintendent

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visited English High on Friday. Mayor Walsh and Commissioner Evans spent more than two hours at the school on Tuesday. All have great confidence in the educators and staff that work there. Last night, BPS and the Boston Police Department held a meeting at the school at which many parents expressed concern. The Superintendent expressed gratitude for their involvement and thanked the thousands of BPS employees who work hard on behalf of students every day. I stand with the employees of the Boston Public Schools who go above and beyond for students every day. The investigation thus far revealed that all proper procedures were followed, CORI background checks were completed and disciplinary procedures were maintained. Additional staff has been assigned to the school to help support students and staff through this difficult time. The district has also initiated a new Safe Space Hotline as a resource for students in all of our schools to use if they feel unsafe in or out of school. The hotline is staffed 24/7 and by trained staff from the counseling and intervention center. Students can call the hotline at 617-592-2378.

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

#### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following people testified regarding the Superintendents preliminary Fiscal Year 2016 budget recommendation:

Johnny McInnis, Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts and BPS teacher  
Maria Farrell, parent, Roosevelt K-8 School

Yvonne Powell testified regarding Level 5 schools

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$313,538.

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Boston Latin Academy to travel to France and Spain from April 16-25, 2015.

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Boston Latin School to travel to China from April 16-25, 2015.

Mr. Loconto presented a brief overview of the employment contract between the Boston School Committee and the superintendent-designate, Dr. Tommy Chang. The agreement provides an annual salary of \$257,000 for five years with the option of a performance-based annual increase of up to 4 percent. The agreement also includes a monthly car allowance and a transitional allowance for nine months. Mr. Loconto noted that Dr. Chang's salary is slightly less than average for superintendents of urban districts of comparable size to BPS, according to a report by the Council of Great City Schools.

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**Approved** – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved a five-year employment contract for Dr. Tommy Chang as superintendent of schools effective July 1, 2015.

## REPORTS

***Middle School Transportation Program Update*** – Mayor Walsh’s Education Chief Rahn Dorsey, together with members of the Middle School Transportation Advisory Committee, presented their assessment of the first year of implementation of the BPS Middle School Transportation (MST) Program. The School Committee initiated the MST program to monitor the implementation of MBTA service for 8<sup>th</sup> graders starting in school year 2014-15, and potentially 7<sup>th</sup> graders in SY15-16. BPS has coordinated closely with the MBTA and Boston Police Department to support the transition of 8<sup>th</sup> graders from yellow bus service to the MBTA, educating students and making service adjustments where needed. While there are no reports of 8<sup>th</sup> graders being victimized on the T, the Advisory Committee said that some female students have expressed concerns about harassment by older males. The Advisory Committee also stated that additional feedback from students and families is needed to fully assess the program. The Advisory Committee made 11 recommendations for the district to address in advance of full implementation of 7<sup>th</sup> graders related to data collection and reporting, communication with families and public safety, among others.

School Committee members asked a number of clarifying questions, all of which were answered by the Superintendent and the presenters. Ms. Jeri Robinson and Ms. Regina Robinson stressed the need for more community engagement. Mr. Loconto suggested implementing a 3-1-1 system and utilizing the Boston Main Streets program to assist with outreach. Mr. O’Neill called for a memorandum of understanding with the MBTA and emphasized the district must work to ensure student safety from the time they leave for school to when they return home.

***Massachusetts School Building Authority Statement of Interest: William Carter Development Center*** – Carleton Jones, Executive Director of Capital & Facilities Management, presented a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority for the Carter Development Center. The Carter is proposing the addition of a pool to provide aquatic therapy services on site for students with complex needs. The School Committee is scheduled to vote on the SOI on March 25.

***Fiscal Year 2016 Recommended Budget Update*** – Deputy Chief Financial Officer Chris Giuliani and Budget Director Nathan Kuder presented an update on the Superintendent’s FY16 budget recommendation. The district continues to invest in key priority areas, such as K-1 expansion, technology, and extended learning. Despite a four percent funding increase from the City of Boston, the district is facing a budget gap of \$42-\$51 million due to rising costs and declining state and federal funds. The Superintendent is recommending several strategies to close the gap, including: reductions in central office Full-Time Employee (FTE) count and non-salary spending, efficiencies in transportation and food services, and limited school closures to begin to address the district’s structural imbalance. The Superintendent pledged that the district is not retreating from its commitment to serving students at Middle School Academy and Community Academy, explaining that all options are under consideration.

**School Committee Meeting and Budget Hearing**  
Edward Winter Chambers

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School Committee members asked a number of clarifying questions, all of which were answered by the Superintendent and the presenters. Mr. Loconto requested a list of schools that are slated to receive soft-landings. Dr. Coleman stressed the need for a comprehensive master facilities plan so that the Committee can make well-informed decisions. Several members expressed frustration at the difficult trade-offs presented in the budget. The Committee will vote on the Superintendent's final budget recommendation on March 25.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

Jack Sinnott, BPS parent and board member, SpedPac, testified regarding the Middle School Transportation Program Update.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**ADJOURN**

At 10:25 p.m., the School Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan  
Executive Secretary