



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE FY15 BUDGET HEARING AND MEETING

March 12, 2014

The Boston School Committee held a Fiscal Year 2015 budget hearing at 5 p.m. on March 12, 2014 at the Edward Winter Chambers, 26 Court Street, Boston, Massachusetts. At 6:55 p.m., the Committee began its regular meeting.

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 February 26, 2014 School Committee Meeting

Grants for Approval Totaling \$1,004,114

- i3 Turnaround with Increased Learning Time - \$482,827
- Alternative Education State Grant: Education Pathways to Support Students Most at-Risk of Not Graduating from High School - \$20,000
- Community Academy of Science and Health Work and Learning Program - \$25,000
- Farm to School Implementation Grant - \$50,000
- Scaling Up Diplomas Now - \$336,565
- STARTALK Arabic Summer Academy - \$89,722

International Travel Request: Boston Green Academy – Canada, April 6-13, 2014

International Travel Request: Boston Latin Academy, Boston Community Leadership Academy, Boston Latin School, and Muriel Snowden International School at Copley– Italy and France, April 16-23, 2014

International Travel Request: TechBoston Academy – Europe, May 16-28, 2014

International Travel Request: The Muriel Snowden International School at Copley – Costa Rica, April 18-May 2, 2014

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School Committee Memo: Superintendent Search Update/Search Firm Recommendation, March 12, 2014

Report: Proposed Transportation Policy Changes

Report: Fiscal Years 2014-15 Budget Update

ATTENDANCE – BUDGET HEARING

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael O’Neill; Vice-Chairperson Claudio Martinez; Meg Campbell; Dr. Hardin Coleman; and Michael Loconto.

School Committee Members Absent: Margaret McKenna; Rev. Gregory G. Groover; and student representative Ayomide Olumuyiwa.

SPEAKERS FOR FY15 BUDGET HEARING

The following speakers testified regarding the Superintendent’s FY15 budget recommendation:

Councilor Tito Jackson, Boston City Council
Councilor Michelle Wu, Boston City Council
Estafany Pujols, student, Re-Engagement Center
Celsa Jaramillo, student, Re-Engagement Center
Jonathan Valdez, student, Citizen Schools
Roxanne Longoria, network coordinator, Boston Youth Service Network
Abdi Abdullahi, student, ABCD University High
Susanne Bartlett, parent, Clap Innovation School
Ellen Pierce, parent, Mendell Elementary School
Elsa Flores, parent, Otis Elementary School
Fernando Membrero, student, Otis Elementary School
Alma Rodriguez, Otis Elementary School/East Boston Early Education Center
Erika Sanchez, BPS parent
Cheryl Kennedy, parent, Lyndon K-8 School
Katie Ehresmen, coordinator, Adult Education
Jennette Douglas, parent, Adult Education
Dolores Morales, parent, East Boston High School
Miguel A. Pena, parent, Adult Education
Daina Amazon, student, Re-Engagement Center
Jose Maldonado, parent, Edwards Middle School
Segun Idowa, assistant to Boston City Councilor Charles Yancey
Kyle Robidoux, parent, Orchard Gardens K-8 School
Julio Lanzo, member, Sociedad Latina
Orman Mendez, member, Sociedad Latina
Isahiah Erilus, member, Sociedad Latina
Samuel Pierce, Boston resident
Jonathan Rodrigues, member, Sociedad Latina

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Robert Damon, parent, Philbrick Elementary School
Raymond Fuller Sr., BPS parent
Ayele Shakur, chair, Education Committee, NAACP
Claudia Green, English for New Bostonians
Dominic Avellani, director, East Boston Adult Education Center
Noreen Power on behalf of Nilfa Villalona, parents, Curley K-8 School
Ramon Suarez, student, Adult Learning
Ivan Classene, student, Adult Learning
Judy Rouse, parent, IWD

ATTENDANCE – MEETING

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael O’Neill; Vice-Chairperson Claudio Martinez; Meg Campbell; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Michael Loconto; Margaret McKenna; and student representative Ayomide Olumuyiwa

School Committee Member Absent: Rev. Gregory G. Groover.

CALL TO ORDER

At 6:55 p.m., Mr. O’Neill called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. He 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 26, 2014 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

The Fiscal Year 2015 budget challenge, caused by significant declines in state and federal funding and rising costs, presents an opportunity to construct new approaches to providing services and to focus on the core work of eliminating achievement gaps and ensuring success for every child.

Weighted student funding allows the District to fund schools more equitably by funding the needs of students but it also depends significantly on the accuracy of enrollment projections as well as on decisions around strands and program development. The Superintendent thanked everyone in attendance for advocating for equity and quality.

Earlier this week, the District released a report that demonstrates the impact BPS programs have on children’s lives. According to an analysis of DIBELS data, children who participated in a BPS K1 program arrived in kindergarten far more ready-to-learn than those who did not. K1 students living in poverty performed better than students who arrived new-in-K2 who do not live in poverty. The same patterns held true for African-American and Latino students, and for children

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with disabilities. The District is adding approximately 100 K1 seats next year with a goal of adding more in the years to come. Last week a delegation from Seattle visited BPS K1 programs because they are considering putting a similar program in place.

On March 11th, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan visited Orchard Gardens to celebrate the President's Turnaround Arts program. In 2012, Orchard Gardens was one of eight schools chosen nationwide to be part of Turnaround Arts, a signature program of The President's Council on Arts and Humanities, to bring intensive arts education resources and expertise into high-poverty, low-performing schools. Turnaround Arts helps schools in the early to mid-stages of school reform to use the arts to narrow the achievement gap, increase student engagement, and improve the culture and climate of the school. The District has applied for additional BPS schools to participate in the Turnaround Arts Program.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recently released its preliminary recommendations for the District's two Level 5 schools, the Dever and the Holland Elementary Schools, which include the elimination of the Dever's dual-language program. The District will engage in discussions with DESE about the proposal and options for families moving forward.

BPS recently open-posted about one thousand teaching positions as part of the District's effort to attract, retain and develop a diverse team of highly-qualified teachers. Last weekend, BPS kicked off a new mentoring program that provides executive coaching for BPS male educators of color to support them in influencing education in Boston.

The BPS Annual Citywide Science Fair was held at Northeastern University on March 1.

Later this spring, Dr. Linda Nathan will present an update to the Committee on her work around school autonomy.

On February 27th, the Boston Celtics and Southern New Hampshire University visited Umana Academy to celebrate the school's newly renovated technology lab.

The Superintendent congratulated the New Mission boys and girls basketball teams who will both compete in the Division 2 state championships.

Several Committee members expressed concerns reading DESE's decision to eliminate the Dever's dual-language program. Mr. O'Neill requested an update on the District's response to DESE's recommendations at the March 26th School Committee meeting.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The following speakers testified regarding the Superintendent's FY15 budget recommendation:

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Dave Demerjian, parent, Curley K-8 School
John St. Amand, vice-chair, Boston Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SpedPac), and parent, Mary Lyon School
Elaine Meehan, parent, Mary Lyon School
Nora Blake, parent, Mary Lyon School
Peggy Wiesenber, former BPS parent
Keisha Copeland, BPS parent

Gene Gorman, chair, Clap Innovation School Governing Board, testified in favor of the school's expansion

Melody Comrie-Picou, parent, Clap Innovation School, testified in favor of the school's expansion

ACTION ITEMS

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent grants in the amount of \$1,004,114.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Boston Green Academy to travel to Canada from April 6-13, 2014.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from Boston Latin Academy, Boston Community Leadership Academy, Boston Latin School, and Muriel Snowden International School at Copley to travel to Italy and France from April 16-23, 2014.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from TechBoston Academy to travel to Europe from May 16-28, 2014.

Approved – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee approved by unanimous consent an international travel request for students and chaperones from the Muriel Snowden International School at Copley to travel to Costa Rica from April 18-May 2, 2014.

REPORT AND ACTION ITEM

Selection of Search Firm for Superintendent of Boston Public Schools – Superintendent Search Committee Co-Chairs Dr. Hardin Coleman and Robert Gallery presented Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) as the Search Committee's unanimous recommendation to assist with the BPS superintendent search process. The Search Committee sent a "Request for Indications of Interest" to 21 search firms and conducted face-to-face interviews with three firms before identifying HYA as the strongest candidate.

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School Committee members asked questions about the Search Committee's selection process and HYA's track record, all of which were answered by the presenters. Ms. Campbell stated that she did not have enough information about HYA's experience to support the proposal.

Approved – On roll call, the School Committee approved the Superintendent Search Committee's recommendation of Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA), for the purpose of assisting in the superintendent search process. The order was approved by the following vote:

Ms. Campbell – No
Dr. Coleman – Yes
Rev. Groover – Absent
Mr. Loconto – Yes
Ms. McKenna – Yes
Mr. Martinez – Yes
Mr. O'Neill - Yes

REPORTS

Transportation Policy Proposals – Transportation Director Carl Allen presented three transportation-related proposals that could save the District approximately \$11 million: provide MBTA passes instead of yellow buses for 7th and 8th graders with corner-to-corner bus service; reduce MBTA “shuttle” service to BPS high schools within one mile of a major MBTA hub; and develop a more transparent transportation structure by asking schools to budget and pay for certain “a la carte” services.

School Committee members requested numerous pieces of data regarding safety, attendance, tardiness and special education students, which the District agreed to provide prior to the scheduled March 26th vote. Mr. Martinez urged the District to consult students prior to presenting any policy proposal to the Committee.

Fiscal Years 2014-15 Update – Chief Financial Officer Donald Kennedy presented a budget update for Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015. The District is currently experiencing an FY 14 shortfall of approximately \$8 million due to several factors, including increased transportation costs for homeless students and off-target enrollment projections. The District is taking a variety of steps to close the shortfall before the end of the fiscal year.

The Superintendent and his team are in the process of finalizing the District's FY15 budget recommendation which is scheduled for a School Committee vote on March 26th. Departments that are facing significant reorganizations are meeting with the Superintendent to review the proposed changes. Mr. Kennedy also noted that a high percentage of Adult Education students who attend day-time classes are BPS parents, and that Round One registration notice will be mailed to families shortly.

School Committee members asked a number of clarifying questions about the FY14 and FY15 budgets. The District agreed to follow up with additional information on a number of topics,

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including school site councils and parent councils, early childhood enrollment data and projections, and grants. Several members expressed concern about the proposed cuts to adult education. Dr. Coleman called for more transparent enrollment projections. Several members thanked parents for lobbying city and state officials for additional revenue.

BPS is holding a series of public hearings throughout March to solicit feedback on the proposed FY15 budget. Complete details are available online at www.bostonpublicschools.org/budget.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent, testified regarding the Superintendent's FY15 budget recommendation.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was introduced.

ADJOURN

At 9:34 p.m., the School Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary