



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

March 26, 2014

The Boston School Committee held a meeting at 6 p.m. on March 26, 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 March 12, 2014 School Committee Meeting

Revised International Travel Request: Jeremiah E. Burke High School – Panama and Costa Rica, April 11-23, 2014

Transportation Update: MBTA Passes for 7th and 8th Graders

Superintendent's Memo: Fiscal Year 2015 Recommended Budget

Report: School Quality Working Group Update

Report: Fiscal Year 2015 Capital Budget Update and Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Statements of Interest:

- Blackstone Elementary School
- Curley K-8 School
- Excel High School
- Rogers Middle School
- Umana Academy
- Urban Science Academy

March 26, 2014

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael O'Neill; Vice-Chairperson Claudio Martinez; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Rev. Gregory G. Groover; Michael Loconto; Margaret McKenna; and student representative Ayomide Olumuyiwa.

School Committee Member Absent: Meg Campbell (*Ms. Campbell recused herself from the meeting to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest*).

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. O'Neill called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. He announced that interpretation services were available in Spanish. The meeting was 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. Press Pass TV, a local non-profit, also filmed the meeting.

Mr. O'Neill announced that Ms. Campbell had recused herself from the meeting to avoid the appearance of a potential conflict of interest in light of the scheduled action items. He recognized Boston City Councillors Michelle Wu and Tito Jackson and Boston Teachers Union President Richard Stutman, who were in attendance.

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The School Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the March 12, 2014 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The Superintendent extended his thoughts and prayers to the Boston Fire Department following the Back Bay fire that killed Boston Fire Lt. Ed Walsh and Firefighter Michael Kennedy.

The Superintendent requested the School Committee's approval of the Fiscal Year 2015 recommended budget and thanked all of the parents, students and community partners who have offered their feedback throughout the budget process. The proposed budget allows the District to invest in major priorities, including preparations for Common Core standards and online Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments; extending hiring autonomy to all schools; investing in additional K1 seats; as well as investments in extended learning time and acceleration academies. The proposed budget also increases the District's total weighted student funding allocation to schools.

The Superintendent noted that he has been profoundly impressed by the level and quality of discussion in the community about the challenges facing the district and stated that he has made some changes to his preliminary budget recommendation based on community feedback.

March 26, 2014

The City has made some revisions to BPS's budget projection based on account costs associated with revisions to the Administrative Guild contract and slightly higher projections for electricity and health insurance, increasing BPS's allocation to \$974.93 million, up from the \$973.27 million. Unfortunately this increase does not come with additional flexibility.

BPS has, however, been able to adjust its budget projections for certain areas next year, giving the District the ability to restore \$823,000 to the budget for Adult Education. The Re-Engagement Center will also retain the same level of staffing next year as in FY14, and the District will maintain its partnerships with alternative education providers.

The District is engaged in conversations with the Mary Lyon School community about how to adjust weights in future years to improve overall funding for the model it supports. The Superintendent is committed to reaching a resolution by June. Any changes to the funding formula would apply to FY16 and beyond.

Today the Boston City Council voted to recommend that the School Committee postpone its vote on providing MBTA passes to 7th and 8th grade students. The Superintendent and his team testified before the City Council about safety issues related to the transportation proposal earlier this week. More than 1,800 7th and 8th grade students already ride the MBTA to and from school every day. Students who ride the MBTA are more likely to be present and on-time each day than students who walk to school and students who ride the bus. Among 8th graders, students who ride the MBTA are present 93.3 percent of the time. Those who ride yellow buses are present 91.2 percent of the time. Those who walk are present 92.1 percent of the time. For 7th grade students, those taking the MBTA are present 94.7 percent of the time. Students who walk to school are present 92.3 percent of the time, and yellow bus riders are there 91.4 percent of the time.

The Superintendent acknowledged concerns about the operational and safety issues related to the proposal, announcing plans to establish a multi-stakeholder working group to develop a Safe Transport Implementation Plan. Comprised of school leaders, community members, safety experts, parents and students, the group will study best practices from schools already using the MBTA and leverage community resources such as the federal Safe Routes to Schools program, Operation Stopwatch, BPS school safety personnel, Boston Police, the MBTA and others.

The MBTA is proposing to expand the 5-day BPS student pass to a 7-day pass for \$26 a month, allowing BPS to offer unlimited 7-day passes during the school year to students at no cost to them.

Eleven schools have expressed interest in offering MBTA passes to their 6th graders, with parent or guardian approval. Any potential savings is not part of the Superintendent's budget projection for next year.

School assignments from the First Registration Round have been released: 73 percent of incoming K2 families received one of their top three choices, which is slightly lower than last year. For K1, in the number of families who received a top choice rose by six percent, up to 66 percent, but 577 students remain unassigned. The data confirms the high demand for our K1 programs - which are not mandated by the state but which are successful at eliminating achievement gaps.

March 26, 2014

The new assignment data also indicates the average distance a K2 student must travel to school will fall by 18 percent next year. The District has shared the data with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's School Effectiveness and Inequality Initiative, which helped us develop the Home-Based plan, to compare actual performance against what was expected.

The DiscoverBPS website has won first place in the "International Design for Experience Awards," which is a global competition for excellence in digital design.

Mayor Walsh, the Superintendent and Boston Teachers Union President Richard Stutman recently announced an intervention at Madison Park Technical/Vocational High School. The District is following the intervention model available within the BTU contract, which allows a seven-person team to evaluate the school and make recommendations.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has decided not to continue the dual-language program at the Dever School. Teams from Welcome Services will be at the Dever next week to advise parents on their options for dual-language programs in other schools, as well as their other school choices if they would like to make a change. The Superintendent's Office is making plans to meet with the co-chairs of the Dever Parent Council to hear their concerns and to explore potential options. The Superintendent noted that dual-language programs are popular and academically-effective. The new School Choice Plan calls for the expansion of dual-language programs across the city. BPS has already started this expansion for next year through the launch of a dual-language program at the Umana Academy in East Boston. A dual-language advisory committee will meet next month to plan for additional expansion.

Last week, Mayor Walsh visit the Mildred Avenue K-8 School to announce the delivery of 10,000 Chromebook laptop computers. Mayor Menino was instrumental in building the groundwork for this "technology surge." The Chromebooks will allow teachers to embed advanced technology in every aspect of student learning.

PARCC field tests are underway in many schools, and MCAS assessments are also proceeding this week.

On March 27th, BPS will host a Diversity Career Fair, inviting potential teachers and school leaders to talk about the opportunities that are available next year.

Mr. Avery Esdaile will begin his position as the new BPS athletic director on April 5. He previously served for 12 years as the associate athletic director at Wellesley College.

Christy Jestin, a student at the Beethoven/Ohrenberger School, took first place at the 2014 Citywide Spelling Bee. He is the first winner ever from that school and will head to Washington, DC to compete nationally.

Today the Massachusetts School Building Authority approved a grant of up to \$37.3 million to build a new Henry Dearborn STEM/Early College Academy in Roxbury. The new school, which

March 26, 2014

will host and educate grades six through twelve, will be the first of its kind in the state to instruct middle and high school students exclusively in a STEM curriculum.

Mr. Martinez requested that students who are impacted by the proposed transportation changes serve on the Multi-Stakeholder Working Group.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people testified regarding the Superintendent's FY15 final budget recommendation:
Boston City Councillor Tito Jackson

Upon learning of the deaths of two Boston firefighters, the Committee held a moment of silence in their honor.

Boston City Councillor Michelle Wu
Gary Bechtold, teacher, Otis Elementary School
Michael Heichman, Boston Truth Coalition
Carolyn Kain, chair, Boston Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SpedPac)
Sandra McIntosh, staff, The English High School
Liza Stearns, parent, Curley K-8 School
Delia Devito, parent, Lyndon K-8 School
Andrew Tuite, principal, Jackson-Mann K-8 School
Corey Allen, community liaison, TechBoston Academy
Heshan Berents-Weeramuni, parent, Curley K-8 School
Roxanne Jones, parent, Mendell Elementary School
Mary Jo Hetzel, Coalition for Equal Quality Education
Emily Royce
Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent
Margaret Witham, instructor, Bunker Hill Community College
Frank Neiser, Coalition for Equal Quality Education
Vonretta Owens, student, Adult Learning Center
Chantel, bus driver and BPS parent
Heather Cochran, BPS parent
Karen Kast-McBride, parent, Irving Middle School
Deidre Sherman, teacher's aid
Ayele Shakur, advocate, NAACP
Christina M. and Kianna R. student council representatives, West Roxbury Academy
Maureen Skehan, BPS parent
Susan Fung
Angela Tang
Fred Floreal, bus driver
Megan Wolf, BPS parent and member, QUEST
Ronald Johnson, BPS parent

March 26, 2014

Gary Fisher, teacher, Timilty Middle School
Michael Tooke, Boston Leaders for Education
Kenny Jervis, parent, Clap Innovation School

The following people testified regarding the standardized testing:

Kiara Taylor, student, Boston Youth Organizing Project (BYOP)
James Braddy, student, BYOP
Imani Jiles, student, BYOP
Julissa Mendez, student, Boston Community Leadership Academy
Ryan Elizabeth Jaco, teacher, Tobin K-8 School
Phoebe Bustamante, teacher
Bernadine Lormilus, teacher, J.F. Kennedy Elementary School
Laura B. on behalf of Garret Virchick, teacher, Brighton High School
Sherry Jackson, teacher, Boston Latin Academy
Delores Wood, teacher, West Roxbury Academy
Laurelee Johnson, BPS occupational therapist, Condon, Everett and Taylor Elementary Schools
Sherri Neasman, teacher, Murphy K-8 School

ACTION ITEMS

Approved – The School Committee approved by unanimous consent a revised international travel request for students and chaperones from the Jeremiah E. Burke High School to travel to Panama and Costa Rica from April 11-23, 2014.

Transportation Director Carl Allen and Chief Operating Officer for Programs and Services Kim Rice presented details of the Superintendent’s proposed transportation policy modifications. Mr. O’Neill recommended adding three provisions to the draft motion requiring the District to work with stakeholders to closely monitor the implementation of the transportation changes. Committee members expressed support for the provisions. The Superintendent explained that if the Committee failed to approve the proposed transportation modifications, funding for a number of other programs would be put at risk.

Approved – On roll call, the School Committee unanimously approved the following transportation policy modifications: 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. In addition, the District must take the following actions: create a Multi-Stakeholder Working Group; develop a Safe Transport Implementation Plan; report back to the School Committee with an implementation planning update within 60 days; and provide quarterly updates to the Committee.

Approved – Following extensive discussion, the School Committee unanimously approved by roll call the Superintendent’s final Fiscal Year 2015 budget recommendation in the amount of \$974,928,600.

March 26, 2014

REPORTS

School Quality Working Group Update – Dr. Hardin Coleman, co-chair of the School Quality Working Group, presented a brief update on the group’s work to date. Over the past 10 months, the Group has examined research on school quality indicators, looked at example quality metrics from BPS and other districts and developed a draft framework on the components of a quality school. The Community Engagement subcommittee concluded a series of nine community meetings with more than 150 attendees. Additional targeted meetings with parents and teachers are planned. The SQWG plans to present recommendations to the School Committee no later than June 2014.

Fiscal Year 2015 Capital Budget Update and Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Statements of Interest – Carlton Jones, Executive Director of Capital and Facilities Management, presented a high-level overview of the district’s \$62.1 million capital plan. The district’s capital needs exceed its capital budget.

Mr. Jones also presented Massachusetts School Building Authority Statements of Interest (SOIs) for the following schools: Blackstone Elementary School; Curley K-8 School; Excel High School; Rogers Middle School; Umana Academy; Urban Science Academy.

The Committee is scheduled to vote on the SOIs on April 9th, the same day that the Superintendent presents the District’s complete capital plan. Mr. O’Neill and Mr. Loconto requested that the April 9th presentation include information on the full scope of the district’s capital needs and how it prioritizes capital projects. Mr. Martinez repeated an earlier request for the City to issue bonds to fund capital projects.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent, testified regarding the Capital Plan Update
Ayele Shakur, advocate, NAACP, testified regarding the School Quality Working Group Update

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. McKenna stated that she was disappointed that protestors outside the Winter Chambers made it difficult to hear students giving testimony.

ADJOURN

At 10:24 p.m., the School Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary

School Committee Meeting

Edward Winter Chambers

March 26, 2014