



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE'S  
PUBLIC HEARING ON THE MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL CHOICE PLAN AND MEETING**

**May 27, 2015**

The Boston School Committee held a meeting at 6 p.m. on May 27, 2015 at the Bruce C. Bolling Building, 2300 Washington Street, second floor, Roxbury, 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**

Personnel Appointments 2015-2016 School Year (Updated May 27, 2015)

Massachusetts School Choice Plan, School Year 2015-16

English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force Proposed 2015-2016 Priorities in Relationship to Task Force Goals

ELL Task Force: ELL-SWDs Subcommittee Report, May 27, 2015

Memo to Dr. Tommy Chang from Boston School Committee's English Language Learners Task Force Re: Time Sensitive Actions Items for the New Superintendent, April 28, 2015

Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPac) Update

Office of Special Education and Student Services Update

**ATTENDANCE**

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

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School Committee Members Absent: Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman; Meg Campbell; and student representative Ayomide Olumuyiwa.

## **MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL CHOICE PLAN PUBLIC HEARING**

The School Committee held a public hearing concerning Boston Public Schools' participation in the Massachusetts School Choice program for the 2015-2016 school year. There were no speakers.

**Approved** – On roll call, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn the hearing and begin the regular School Committee meeting.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

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

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Mayor Walsh, the School Committee and Boston Public Schools (BPS) hosted the 17th Annual Valedictorians Luncheon at the Boston Harbor Hotel on May 26. This year's group includes students who will be the first in their family to attend college, as well as recent immigrants from Somalia, Haiti, China, Vietnam, Albania, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, many of whom had to learn a new language. Many have earned full scholarships to prestigious universities. The Superintendent congratulated students, as well as their family members, teachers, coaches and other adults who have helped guide them on their path to a promising future.

On May 21, the Superintendent joined the Celtics to honor 1,100 BPS middle schoolers who participated in the team's Stay-in-School program, one of several great projects the Celtics sponsor to help kids succeed in school. While some 450 BPS students were acknowledged for achieving perfect attendance for a single school year, there was a select group of 25 students who were inducted into Celtics' elite "3-year Club." During their three years of middle school, these dedicated youngsters never missed a single day of school, much less arrived late. Talk about perseverance. Celtics guard Avery Bradley also met with the students. The Superintendent thanked the Celtics for being an extraordinary friend to BPS.

Today financial firm Natixis hosted a jazz workshop at the John Winthrop Elementary School in Dorchester led by a Stanford Professor and a quartet of student musicians from the Berklee College of Music. Since joining the BPS "Adopt-a-School" program in 2012, and teaming up with the Winthrop, Natixis has greatly improved the school's technology by supplying 55 classroom computers, 25 laptops, 10 iPads, 9 LCD cameras, 2 Smartboards and one mobile laptop lab. Forty-five of its employees visit the school weekly for "Power Lunches" to serve as mentors, read with students and build meaningful relationships. Many of them have been with the same student for three years. And its Frosty Friends gift project ensures that every Winthrop student has a present to open during the holidays.

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The Boston Arts Academy's Spiritual Ensemble won the grand prize in WGBH's first New England Choir Competition, Sing That Thing!

The West Roxbury Academy baseball team narrowly defeated Latin Academy to win the Boston City League Championship..

The Superintendent introduced the following school leaders who were recently appointed to new positions:

- Dawn Lewis, principal, Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School
- Glenda L. Colon, interim principal, Alighieri Montessori School
- Kathleen Sullivan, principal, Haley School
- Geoff Rose, principal, Perry K-8 School
- Mistie Parsons, principal, UP Academy Boston

Mr. O'Neill thanked the many local colleges and universities that provide scholarships to BPS students, including Northeastern University which has awarded full scholarships to several valedictorians.

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

## **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Paula Lima-Jones, racial justice program manager, YWCA Boston, testified regarding community dialogues on race and ethnicity.

Jewel Cash Jr., former BPS student and former student representative to the School Committee, testified regarding student engagement.

Jewel Cash Sr., former BPS parent, testified regarding parent engagement.

Sharon Hinton, BPS parent and teacher, testified regarding the link between BPS and charter schools.

The following people testified regarding the state of History in BPS:

Justin Kim, teacher, Dever McCormack School  
Neema Avashia, teacher, Dever McCormack School  
Leila Quinn, Generation Citizen  
Lena Papagiannis, teacher, John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science  
Jonathan Rodriguez, Boston Teachers Union  
Kalise Osula, student, Boston Community Leadership Academy

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Randi Ellingboe, parent, Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School, testified regarding identifying facilities that will accommodate the school's growing student population.

Camelia Toussaint, parent, Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School, testified regarding identifying facilities that will accommodate the school's growing student population.

Carolyn Kain, chair, Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPac), testified regarding the district, families and partners working together to support English Language Learners with special needs.

## **ACTION ITEM**

**Approved** – On roll call, the Committee approved a motion for the District to withdraw from the Massachusetts School Choice Plan for the 2015-2016 school year.

## **REPORTS**

**English Language Learners Task Force Reconstitution** – Dr. Miren Uriarte, co-chair of the ELL Task Force, presented a brief summary of the group's recent work and recommended that the Committee authorize the reconstitution of the Task Force as a monitoring body for another year. The ELL Task Force recently met with Incoming Superintendent Dr. Tommy Chang regarding its work to date and current areas of focus. Dr. Uriarte was joined by Task Force members Suzanne Lee and Dr. Maria Serpa, chair of the English Language Learner (ELL)-Students with Disabilities (SWD) Subcommittee. Nearly 3,500 students have both language learning and special needs. The Task Force is recommending that the Office of English Language Learners and Office of Special Education and Support Services work more collaboratively to address the needs of those students.

Ms. Regina Robinson stressed the importance of parental engagement for students with special needs and learning needs.

**Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPac) Update** – Boston SpedPac Chair Carolyn Kain and Vice-Chair John St. Amand presented an update on the group's work over the past year. SpedPac advises the School Committee and Superintendent on matters that pertain to the education and safety of district's nearly 11,000 students with disabilities. Ms. Kain praised the district for eliminating the waiting list for evaluations and services for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and early childhood. SpedPac's priorities going forward include increasing quality inclusion programs, reducing the number of students in substantially separate settings and strengthening transition services for young people ages 14-22. Ms. Kain stressed the importance of all stakeholders working in close collaboration to improve services for students with disabilities. For more information about Boston SpedPac, visit [www.bostonspedpac.org](http://www.bostonspedpac.org).

School Committee members asked a number of clarifying questions, all of which were answered by the presenters.

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***Office of Special Education and Student Services Update*** – Deputy Superintendent of Special Education and Related Services Eileen Nash and Assistant Director Cindie Neilson presented an update on the district’s work on behalf of students with disabilities. Accomplishments over the past year include the expansion of inclusive opportunities, an increase in ABA services, professional development and capacity building, and a reduction in out-of-district placements. Goals moving forward include the continued expansion of quality inclusion programs and improving the quality of special education services for all.

Several School Committee members thanked Ms. Nash, who recently announced her retirement from BPS, for her many years of hard work and dedication to students in Boston.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

No speakers.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Regina Robinson requested that an upcoming report on the Achievement Gap include more information from the YWCA about its racial justice programs.

**ADJOURN**

At approximately 9:10 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan  
Executive Secretary