



## **OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**May 8, 2013**

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on May 8, 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, contact the office of the Boston School Committee: [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:feedback@bostonpublicschools.org) or 617-635-9014.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

Superintendent's Memo: International Travel Request – Boston Community Leadership Academy, Community Academy of Science and Health and Excel High School – Senegal – June 20-28, 2013

Superintendent's Memo: International Travel Request – West Roxbury Academy – China, June 22-29, 2013

Report: Boston Scholar Athletes Program Update

Report: BPS Staffing Update

Report: BPS Quality Working Group Update

*Note: The report by the Council of Great City Schools regarding the search for a new superintendent was an oral presentation.*

### **ATTENDANCE**

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

School Committee Members Absent: None.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

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.

**May 8, 2013**

## **CITATIONS**

The School Committee and Superintendent presented citations to the following Boston Public Schools (BPS) athletic teams:

- Brighton High School Boys Basketball Team – City and State Champions
- Fenway High School Girls Basketball – State Champions
- John D. O’Bryant School of Mathematics and Science Girls Basketball Team – City Champions

## **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

The Superintendent announced the 2013 BPS Educators of the Year:

- Janira Arocho, a 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade biology teacher at Boston International high School
- Neema Avashia, an 8<sup>th</sup> grade history and civics teacher at the Dever-McCormack
- Erik Berg, a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher at the Philbrick
- Renee Borrero, a community field coordinator at the Hernandez
- Linda Cruz, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade SPED teacher at the Ellis
- Carmen Davis, a 10<sup>th</sup> grade geometry teacher at Urban Science Academy
- Seamus Foy, an 11<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher at ACC
- Cynthia Hairston, a college and career counselor at BAA
- Ester Louis-Jeudi, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade inclusion and ELL teacher at the Holmes
- Marlayna McDuffie, a Kindergarten para at the Higginson-Lewis
- Carmen Calderon O’Hara, a guidance counselor at the Kennedy Health Careers Academy
- Seth Peterson, an 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher at Snowden International
- Amy Piacitelli, an 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade history teacher at Charlestown High
- Cynthia Soo Hoo, a K-5 math teacher at the Quincy.

A celebration will be held in their honor on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

On May 6<sup>th</sup>, the Superintendent partnered with Teach Plus to hold a Superintendent+Teacher Share event, hosted by City Year. The discussion focused on how the District can better support great teachers through performance evaluations and professional development.

To date, BPS educators and evaluators have collected nearly 43,000 separate pieces of evidence toward the four standards and educators’ goals as part of the District’s new evaluation system. More than 9,400 observations have taken place which represents more than 8,000 total hours spent this year observing and providing feedback. In addition, more than one thousand teachers have completed a survey about the areas where educators and schools need additional support.

Educators have indicated that they would like more support developing well-structured lessons, meeting the needs of diverse learners, using data to inform instruction, and parent and family engagement. Ross Wilson, Assistant Superintendent for the Office of Educator Effectiveness,

**May 8, 2013**

and his team are leading this effort and organizing opportunities for educators to learn more in these areas of growth. The Superintendent expressed concern regarding data which show that teachers of color may be more likely to be placed on a support track than others. She pledged to ensure that the performance evaluation system is fair, equitable and consistent across every school and classroom.

Tanisha Sullivan has been named Chief Equity Officer. Ms. Sullivan is a graduate of the University of Virginia who earned her doctorate and Business Administration degrees from Boston College. She is an attorney who was recently awarded the “Next Generation Leadership Award” from the Boston branch of the NAACP.

Orchard Gardens K-8 School was recently featured on NBC Nightly News in a story about the school’s turnaround effort.

On May 7<sup>th</sup>, Orchard Gardens K-8 School principal Andrew Bott and Scott Given, CEO of Unlocking Potential, joined Mayor Menino and the Superintendent at the State House for a hearing on education reform. The Mayor has proposed legislation that would extend Level 4 flexibilities and resources to Level 3 schools and lift the in-district charter school cap. BPS is also seeking the ability to assign English Language Learners and students with disabilities to in-district charter schools as it currently does for traditional district schools, as well as for the ability to set geographic boundaries other than citywide status for charters.

Last week, the School Quality Working Group held its first meeting, co-chaired by Meg Campbell and Dean Harden Coleman. Carleton Jones presented on the new student assignment plan and Nate Kuder from our Accountability Office spoke about the District’s work on a school quality index and a school opportunity index.

Actor Mark Whalberg was a special guest at last week’s Boston Scholar Athlete Gala at the TD Garden which raised \$1.7 million.

Earlier today the Counsel General of Japan joined the Fish Family Foundation at the Timilty Middle School for a cherry tree planting ceremony. This event was part of a five-year project, which began last year, to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the gift of more than 3,000 cherry trees from Japan to Washington, DC in 1912. The Timilty was selected because the school is expanding its Japanese language program.

The Superintendent congratulated high school students Antonio Stroud of Boston Day and Evening Academy, Iliana Mendez of Brighton High School and Derek Lindesay of Codman Academy Charter Public School who competed in the National Finals of the August Wilson Monologue Competition at Broadway's August Wilson Theatre. The students were the top three finalists of the Huntington Theatre Company-sponsored Boston round, which was held on March 16.

The Nathan Hale Environmental Explorers Club has received the Secretary's Award for Excellence in Energy and Environmental Education from the Massachusetts Executive Office of

**School Committee Meeting**  
Edward Winter Chambers

**May 8, 2013**

Energy and Environmental Affairs. Ms. Hashimoto-Martell, science teacher, and club members will attend a formal ceremony at the Massachusetts State House in the Great Hall on May 13<sup>th</sup>. They have also been awarded a \$1,000 efficiency grant from National Grid to help the school become more energy efficient.

The Superintendent congratulated Irma Camacho of Boston Day and Evening Academy, BPS Assistant Superintendent for English Language Learners Eileen de los Reyes, Margarita Muñiz Academy Headmaster Dania Vázquez and Boston School Committee member Claudio Martinez for being named *El Planeta's* Powermeter 100 Massachusetts Most Influential People for Latinos. The honorees will be recognized at the annual Powermeter reception on May 21<sup>st</sup> at the Museum of Fine Arts.

Ms. Campbell noted that she attended the August Wilson Monologue Competition and was impressed with the caliber of talent among BPS students. She thanked the Superintendent for her commitment to expanding the arts.

Ms. Tamer congratulated Ms. Campbell for winning the 2013 Lewis Changing People's Lives Award, the highest honor presented by the Grand Circle Travel Foundation.

Mr. O'Neill thanked former Citizens Bank CEO Larry Fish for the Fish Family Foundation's donation of Japanese trees to the Timilty Middle School and expressed hope that other BPS schools will also receive trees.

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

#### **APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

The School Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the April 24, 2013 School Committee meeting.

#### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Carolyn Kain, Chair of the Special Education Parents Advisory Council, and John St. Amand, Vice Chair of SpedPAC, testified regarding special education issues.

Angelina Samuel, Bridgewater resident, testified regarding Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee unanimously approved an international travel request for students and chaperones from Boston Community Leadership Academy, Community Academy of Science and Health and Excel High School to travel to Senegal from June 20-28, 2013.

**May 8, 2013**

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the Committee unanimously approved an international travel request for students and chaperones from West Roxbury Academy to travel to China from June 22-29, 2013.

## **REPORTS**

**Boston Scholar Athletes Program Update** – The mission of the Boston Scholar Athlete program (BSA) is to support academic achievement through athletics. Rebekah Splaine, Executive Director of the BSA, presented an update on the organization’s recent achievements and outlined the challenges and goals that lie ahead. Students who participated in the BSA College Readiness Initiative improved their SAT scores by 140 points between the first and second practice tests. In athletics, BSA has raised scholar-athlete participation from 4,250 to 4,800 and supported new teams in soccer and wrestling, along with funding athletic equipment and offering a range of programming for students.

School Committee members asked questions about the students who are served by the BSA and how the organization calculates academic gains, all of which were answered by Ms. Splaine. Mr. Martinez encouraged the BSA to expand its outreach to students who are struggling academically, as well as English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Mr. O’Neill, Ms. Harris and Rev. Groover praised the BSA for its important work. Mr. O’Neill requested a breakdown of racial and ethnic data on BPS student athletes.

**BPS Staffing Update** – Ann Chan, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, presented an update on staffing at schools. BPS currently has approximately 587 vacant teacher positions, which the district is working to fill through a number of sources, including the excess pool, teacher preparation programs, provisional teachers and both internal and external teaching candidates. The District is also pursuing multiple strategies to increase the diversity of the teaching force. The Office of Human Resources is working closely with Network Superintendents to fill a number of principal and headmaster vacancies.

Tim Nicolette, Chief of Staff to the Superintendent, then presented an update on the restructuring of BPS central office into a network model. The model aims to improve the services that schools receive from central office through the use of network liaisons who provide comprehensive and aligned support to schools within each network. The model will be fully implemented by July 1.

School Committee members asked questions about the new educator evaluation system and diversity recruitment efforts, all of which were answered by the presenters and the Superintendent. Several Committee members expressed concern that BPS is missing out on talent because of its hiring timeline. Mr. O’Neill requested a full presentation in the near future on the evaluation system for teachers and principals.

**Council of Great City Schools Presentation: Procedures for Appointment of Search Committee for Superintendent of Schools** – Michael Casserly, Executive Director of the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS), presented an oral report on best practices for the search

**May 8, 2013**

of a large urban school district superintendent. Ms. Casserly described the process for hiring a search firm and assembling a search committee. He encouraged the School Committee to begin by first articulating its shared vision for the district. He also emphasized the need for the School Committee to maintain a sense of unity throughout the process, which should begin soon. Mr. Casserly praised BPS and the School Committee for its national reputation as a leader in urban education and predicted that the superintendent search will attract a large pool of high caliber candidates.

Several Committee members expressed their desire to begin the search process immediately, starting with the appointment of an Interim Superintendent.

***BPS Quality Working Group Update*** – Meg Campbell, Co-Chair of the BPS Quality Working Group, presented a brief update on the panel’s work to date. Ms. Campbell presented a list of members as well as the agenda for the one meeting that has been held to date. The School Committee is expected to take a vote confirming the establishment and membership of the Quality Working Group as its next meeting.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

Karen Kast-McBride, parent, Irving Middle School, testified regarding the superintendent search process and the BPS Quality Working Group.

Megan Wolf, BPS parent and member of Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), testified regarding the BPS Quality Working Group.

Mary Battenfeld, BPS parent and member of QUEST, testified regarding ensuring equity with the Home-Based Student Assignment Plan.

John Mudd, advocate, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, testified regarding the superintendent search process and the BPS Quality Working Group.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

The Superintendent stated that her team continues its search to identify additional classroom space for next school year. She will present an update to the School Committee in the near future.

#### **ADJOURN**

At 10:12 p.m., the School Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan  
Executive Secretary