



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

**June 18, 2014**

The Boston School Committee held a meeting at 6 p.m. on June 18, 2014 at the Edward Winter Chamber, 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**

Minutes of the June 4, 2014 School Committee Meeting

Grant for Approval: MA 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program – Continuation Grants - \$128,846.

Superintendent's Memo: Council of Great City Schools Membership Dues 2014-2015

Superintendent's Memo: International Travel Request – Josiah Quincy Upper School - Canada

School Quality Working Group Memo: School Quality Working Group Preliminary Recommendations

Superintendent's Memo: Acceptable Use Policy

Report: Private School Applications:

- The Toritt School
- Yeshiva Ohr Yisreal
- Bais Yaakov High School for Girls

Report: Eliminating the Achievement Gap

Report: Office of Academics Update

Report: Improving Student Achievement through Human Capital

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## **ATTENDANCE**

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

School Committee Member Absent: Margaret McKenna.

## **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) and would be rebroadcast at a later date.

Mr. O’Neill recognized representatives from the offices of Boston City Councilors Tito Jackson, Matt O’Malley and Michelle Wu.

## **MEETING MINUTES**

The School Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the June 4, 2014 School Committee meeting.

## **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

The Superintendent and Mr. O’Neill attended Madison Park Technical Vocational High School’s graduation on June 12<sup>th</sup>. The Superintendent recently established an intervention team to develop recommendations that will allow the school to move forward with successful implementation of its innovation plan. He will provide the Committee with a more detailed update in the near future.

BPS is re-posting its request for proposals (RFP) for food services. Whitson’s will provide summer meal for 11,000 young people each day at 120 sites beginning June 30<sup>th</sup>. The Superintendent reaffirmed the District’s commitment to providing students with locally-sourced, fresh, healthy meals.

Earlier this week, the District released an update on its educator hiring initiative for the 2014-2015 school year. BPS has made offers for about 75 percent of the available positions, a dramatic leap over previous years. The process is being led at the school level by school leaders who are able to make their own hiring recommendations based on interviews with educators. Last week, Mayor Walsh joined Mr. O’Neill and District leaders in speaking with a group of nonprofit, philanthropic and business leaders in an effort to raise external support for BPS’s comprehensive human capital strategy.

The Boston City Council will hold a second hearing this week on the District’s policy to provide MBTA passes to about 4,500 7th and 8th grade students. The Superintendent reaffirmed the District’s commitment to ensuring student safety and on-time service. The new policy will reduce

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the growth of transportation spending by \$8 million per year. Even with these savings, the BPS transportation budget will reach \$105 million next year, the highest per-capita cost of any urban school district in the nation. The District's transportation costs increase every year and continue to put pressure on school budgets as state and federal resources decline.

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, Mayor Walsh, District officials and community partners will participate in a ceremonial groundbreaking at the Dearborn School in Roxbury. The Massachusetts School Building Authority is providing funding demolition of the current building and the construction of a new one that with a focus on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The new facility is expected to open in the fall of 2017.

Last week, Red Sox legend Tim Wakefield helped cut the ribbon at the unveiling of the Hurley K-8 School library makeover courtesy of Target and the Heart of America Foundation. Each student received several books from the dual-language library.

EdVestors recently released a report as part of the BPS Arts Expansion Initiative, which is in its fifth year. In that time, the percent of students in grades pre-K to 8 who receive weekly, year-long arts education has risen from 67 percent to 87 percent. At the high school level, the rate has risen from 26 percent to 57 percent. EdVestors has secured commitments for more than half of the \$2.5 million needed to support the BPS Arts Expansion through 2018.

The Superintendent made the following personnel announcements:

Kavita Venkatesh will serve as Executive Director of Instructional Research and Development. In this role, she will coordinate the work of the IR&D departments, work with the Office of English Language Learners and the Special Education office, and support professional development at the district, network, and school levels. She is a doctoral candidate in the Curriculum and Instruction department at the Boston College Lynch School of Education. Her areas of research include Universal Design for Learning, teacher preparation, social justice, and bilingual learners.

Catherine Carney has been named Executive Director for the District's Academic Turnaround and Transformation group. Catherine came to the BPS as a literacy coach after teaching English as a Second Language for seven years to middle and high school students. She left the district briefly to work as a program manager with Diploma Plus where her primary responsibility was to support the New York City Department of Education in creating four schools to serve the city's 10,000 ninth grade repeaters. Catherine was a House Leader at English High School, a BPS Principal Fellow at Boston Community Leadership Academy, and spent five years as the Chief Academic Officer at East Boston High School. Catherine has served this year as the Assistant Chief Curriculum and Instruction Officer.

Students at the Condon staged a "flash mob" to say goodbye to retiring Principal Ann Garofalo last week.

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Deputy Superintendent for Operations Joseph Shea is retiring this summer after 44 years with BPS. Mr. Shea has served in a variety of positions, including teacher, principal, and Assistant Superintendent for elementary schools.

Bak Fun Wong, former principal of the Quincy Upper and Quincy Elementary schools, is also retiring. He has also held many positions within BPS, including cluster leader and deputy superintendent.

Today the Roosevelt K-8 School community dedicated a “Buddy Bench” in memory of former custodian Tony Ferreira, who passed away unexpectedly in January. Buddy Benches are places where students can sit down at a Buddy Bench and signal to everyone else that they’d like to have a buddy. Buddy Benches help students build friendships and break down barriers. They serve as examples of how effective and powerful BPS can be when people stand together.

Mr. O’Neill requested the School Committee receive a copy of the inspirational speech delivered by Sedny Alves, valedictorian of Madison Park Technical Vocational High School.

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

#### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Kevin Andrews, senior advisor, Boston Charter Alliance, testified regarding charter school attrition rates.

Fran Smith, Boston resident, testified regarding the retention of black male teachers.

John St. Amand, vice-chair, Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPac), testified regarding inclusion.

Kenny Jervis, parent, Clap Innovation School, testified regarding the school’s Innovation Plan.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee unanimously approved a grant in the amount of \$128,846.

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee unanimously approved \$41,793 in membership dues for the Council of Great City Schools for school year 2014-2015.

**Approved** – As part of the consent calendar, the School Committee unanimously approved an international travel request for students and chaperones from the Quincy Upper School to travel to Montreal, Canada from July 20-26, 2014.

**Approved** – On roll call, the School Committee unanimously approved the School Quality Domains and Policy Statement recommended by the School Quality Working Group.

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**Approved** – On roll call, the School Committee unanimously approved the Acceptable Use Policy governing the use of technology by BPS students and staff.

## **REPORTS**

**Private School Applications** – Jill Conrad, Senior Advisor for Human Capital Strategy, presented three private school applications for the Committee’s consideration: The Toritt School; Yeshiva Ohr Yisreal; and Bais Yaakov High School for Girls. State law requires that the School Committee approve private schools seeking to open within city limits. After reviewing the applications and conducting site visits, the District recommends School Committee approval of all three schools.

School Committee members asked clarifying questions about the review process, which were answered by Ms. Conrad. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the private school applications on July 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Eliminating the Achievement Gap** - Dr. Eileen de los Reyes, Deputy Superintendent of Academics, Dr. Kamal Chavda, Chief of Data and Accountability, and Tanisha Sullivan, Chief Equity Officer, presented several initiatives that the District is undertaking to eliminate the achievement gap between Black and Latino students and their White and Asian peers. Areas of focus include defining a turnaround and transformation strategy for the lowest-performing schools, strengthening and expanding early childhood education, researching best practices, and expanding dual language and inclusive programs. The District will provide the Committee with regular updates on its work to eliminating the achievement gap, which will be overseen by the Office of Equity.

Committee members asked questions about dual language expansion and support for school leaders and teachers, all of which were answered by the Superintendent and the presenters. Mr. Martinez requested additional racial and socio-economic data, which the District will provide. Mr. O’Neill and Rev. Groover requested that every report and policy recommendation presented to the Committee be tied to eliminating the achievement gap.

**Office of Academics Update** – Dr. Eileen de los Reyes, Deputy Superintendent of Academics, provided an update on the transformation of the Office of Academics to become more nimble, data-driven, and project-based. The District’s academic work focuses on three simultaneous transformational changes: eliminating the achievement gap and opportunity gap, successfully implementing Common Core standards and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) testing, and increasing fully inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities.

School Committee members praised the report and encouraged the research and sharing of best practices. Mr. Loconto requested more information on the network support structure. Rev. Groover stated that the District should encourage Horace-Mann In-District Charter Schools to be active participants in the network structure. Mr. O’Neill said he’s received great feedback from school leaders about the network structure but added that reporting lines should be clarified.

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***Improving Student Achievement through Human Capital*** – Dr. Ross Wilson, Director of the Office of Human Capital, presented an update on the District’s efforts to recruit, retain and develop a high-quality, diverse teaching force that reflects the student population. BPS has implemented a comprehensive, two-phase effort to ensure that all students are taught by effective teachers: reform performance evaluation and transform recruitment and hiring. The District’s early teacher hiring initiative has yielded impressive results, with 81 percent of hiring for the 2014-2015 school year complete. The District has also greatly expanding its diversity recruitment efforts through community outreach, career fairs and advertising. In the past four years, BPS has also dramatically increased the number teachers who receive evaluations.

Committee members praised District’s progress to date and echoed Dr. Wilson’s statement that much work remains to be done. Ms. Campbell urged the District to raise the number of Black male teachers in elementary schools. Mr. Loconto suggested that BPS collaborate with other city agencies in its outreach efforts and requested a follow up report. Mr. O’Neill called for a collaborative process with the Boston Teachers Union.

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

No speakers.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. O’Neill noted that Mr. Olumuyiwa is wrapping up his first year as student representative to the School Committee and thanked him for his advocacy.

Rev. Groover said he was greatly impressed with the students he met at the recent Rogers Middle School graduation ceremony. He also had high praise for the O’Donnell Elementary School Multicultural Festival, which brought the school together with the larger East Boston community.

Mr. O’Neill announced that he will represent the District at a Males of Color event sponsored by the Council of Great City Schools the following week in Washington D.C. (*This event was later postponed.*) BPS recently joined many other large urban school districts around the nation in a pledge to eliminate achievement gaps.

#### **ADJOURN**

At 9:40 p.m., the School Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan  
Executive Secretary