



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

June 24, 2015

The Boston School Committee held a meeting at 6 p.m. on June 24, 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, email feedback@bostonpublicschools.org or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

School Committee Meeting Minutes: June 10, 2015

Grants for Approval Totaling \$1,963,259

Coordinated Family and Community Engagement - \$837,700

National Endowment for the Arts – Arts Education Collective Impact Grant

Title III English Language Acquisition – Summer Grant - \$94,059

USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program - \$931,500

UP Academy Boston Charter Renewal

Boston Green Academy Charter Renewal

Boston Green Academy Charter Amendment Request Cover Sheet: Mission

Boston Green Academy Charter Amendment Request Cover Sheet: Schedule

Memo from Michael O'Neill, Chairperson, and Hardin Coleman Vice-Chairperson to Boston School Committee Members Re: Opportunity & Achievement Gaps Task Force Charge, Goals and Leadership, June 12, 2015

Letter from Simon Hess, Designee, Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School, Board of Trustees to Boston School Committee re: permanent change to 8-hour school day, June 15, 2015

Budget Update

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Human Capital Update

Overview of OELL: Accomplishments, Challenges & Next Steps

Educational Options Boston Alternative School Experience Sites (BASES)

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael O'Neill; Vice-Chair Dr. Hardin Coleman; Meg Campbell; Michael Loconto; Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; Dr. Miren Uriarte; and student representative Ayomide Olumuyiwa.

School Committee Members Absent: None.

CALL TO ORDER

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

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

The Boston Latin School a cappella group *The Wolftones*, under the direction of Paul Pitts and Ryan Snyder, performed in honor of Superintendent McDonough's retirement after more than 40 years of service to the Boston Public Schools.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the June 10, 2015 School Committee meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

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

- Troy Henninger, headmaster, Boston Latin Academy
- Michele Pelham, headmaster, Another Course to College
- Shawn Shackelford, headmaster, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School
- Laura Miceli, principal, Dever Elementary School
- Karen Cahill, principal, Everett Elementary School

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- Andrew Vega, interim principal, Bates Elementary School
- Samantha Varano, interim principal, Edison K-8 School
- Claudia Gutierrez, interim principal, Umana Academy

Presenting his Superintendent's report to the School Committee for last time, Superintendent McDonough thanked his supporters, including the Committee, Mayor Menino, Mayor Walsh and former superintendents Dr. Thomas Payzant, Michael Contompasis and Dr. Carol Johnson, as well as his cabinet and leadership team.

The Superintendent highlighted some of the transformative changes he's led over the past two years, such as expanding early childhood education, increasing opportunities and access to inclusion, developing capacity within the district to intervene more aggressively in underperforming schools, and differentiating support for schools based on performance. The BPS graduation rate is at an all-time high, while dropout rate is at an all-time low. The Superintendent emphasized the much work remains to be done. He also expressed optimism about the future of BPS and called for support of incoming Superintendent Dr. Tommy Chang.

The Superintendent concluded his report by thanking the BPS employees who work tirelessly to ensure that students are ready for college and career.

The School Committee members led a standing ovation for the Superintendent, thanking him for his forty plus years of service to the district.

Mr. O'Neill provided a brief update on pending federal legislative action that could drastically impact funding for urban school districts. Citing a legislative update from the Council of Great City Schools, Mr. O'Neill explained that this week, both the House and Senate appropriations subcommittees reported their education spending bills for federal Fiscal Year 2016 (school year 2016-17). Both bills reduced or eliminated funding for a number of key education programs, and both bills cut funding for the U.S. Department of Education overall. The severity of the cuts to some programs, as well as the overall number of programs seeing reduced funding, are a direct result of the budget caps that congressional appropriators were given and the limited allocation of funds available to programs for Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. An overall deal to raise the budget cap set by Congress in previous years will be necessary to increase or restore funding for education programs. Mr. O'Neill urged people to reach out to Senator Warren and Senator Markey asking them to protect funding for urban school districts.

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

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GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeffrey Klug, parent, Boston Latin Academy, testified regarding school start times.

Corina Rangel, staff, Boston Green Academy, testified in favor of the school's charter renewal.

Jeff Becker, assistant headmaster, Boston Green Academy, testified in favor of the school's charter renewal.

Natalya Betzig, teacher, UP Academy Charter School of Boston, testified in favor of the school's charter renewal.

Carrie Moore, parent, UP Academy Charter School of Boston, testified in favor of the school's charter renewal.

Lori Brooks, parent, UP Academy Charter School of Boston, testified in favor of the school's charter renewal.

Maria Roges, parent, Henderson K-12 Inclusion School and Boston Latin School, testified regarding the Boston Alternative School Experience Sites (BASES) presentation.

Sandra McIntosh, retired BPS employee, testified regarding the Opportunity & Achievement Gaps Task Force.

ACTION ITEM

Dr. Coleman requested an annual end-of-school year report measuring the goals of the grants approved during the year.

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$1,963,259.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved UP Academy Charter School of Boston's Five Year Charter Renewal.

Approved – By a vote of 6-0-1, the Committee approved Boston Green Academy's Five Year Charter Renewal. Dr. Coleman abstained, citing the partnership between his employer, Boston University, and BGA.

Approved – By a vote of 6-0-1, the Committee approved Boston Green Academy's charter amendment related to the school's mission statement. Dr. Coleman abstained, citing the partnership between his employer, Boston University, and BGA.

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Approved – By a vote of 6-0-1, the Committee approved Boston Green Academy’s charter amendment related to the school’s schedule. Dr. Coleman abstained, citing the partnership between his employer, Boston University, and BGA.

REPORTS

School Committee Discussion on Opportunity & Achievement Gaps Task Force Charge, Goals and Leadership – Mr. O’Neill and Dr. Coleman presented to the Committee for its consideration a draft charge, six priority goals and leadership for the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force (OAGTF). The proposed co-chairs are Jeri Robinson, School Committee member and early education expert; Ayele Shakur, regional executive director, BUILD Greater Boston and chair, NAACP Education Committee; and Samuel Acevedo, executive director, Boston Higher Education Resource Center.

The Committee engaged in a robust discussion about the proposed priority goals. Several members emphasized the need for the OAGTF to include a strong, broad membership, suggesting representation from the City of Boston, the English Language Learners Task Force, and BPS.

Dr. Uriarte stated that the OAGTF should be charged with examining how the district’s existing Achievement Gap Policy has been implemented – highlighting successes (“the bright spots”) and challenges/barriers.

Mr. Loconto noted that eliminating the Achievement Gap is one of the School Committee’s five strategic goals, suggested that it be noted in the charge. He also urged the OAGTF to study all available reports on the subject.

Committee members thanked former School Committee Chair Rev. Gregory G. Groover, the Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts (BEAM) and Massachusetts Advocates for Children (MAC) for pushing the School Committee on this important issue.

The Committee is scheduled to vote on the OAGTF membership, charge and goals on July 15.

Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School Minor Charter Amendment Proposal: Length of School Day – Simon Hess, member of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School Board of Trustees presented a minor charter amendment proposal to permanently change the school’s schedule to an eight-hour school day. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the proposal on July 15.

FY 2015 Budget Update – Interim Chief Financial Officer Erika Giampietro presented a budget update, announcing that BPS will close the fiscal year on budget for the 25th consecutive year. Last October, BPS was facing a deficit of approximately \$16 million, which it closed by implementing a spending and hiring freeze on non-classroom positions and non-school budgets. Following a series of hearings, the Boston City Council today approved the district’s FY16

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General Funds Budget of \$1.013 billion. Ms. Giampietro explained that the district is working to determine the impact of the state's new "economically disadvantaged" metric.

Dr. Uriarte expressed concern about the potential impact of the new student poverty measurement, asking district leaders to follow the issue closely.

Human Capital Update – Dr. Emily Qazilbash, Executive Director of the Office of Human Capital (OHC), presented an update on the district's Human Capital work, which consists of recruitment, staffing and hiring, evaluation and professional development. BPS is hiring more high quality, more ethnically diverse teachers through its early hiring initiative. The district is has also strengthened its professional development portfolio by supporting lead teachers, hosting cultural competence training, and providing peer assistance and review. In school year 2014-15, 120 excessed teachers were placed in suitable professional capacity, often in co-teaching positions. As of June 23rd, 77 percent of principal evaluations had been completed by network superintendents; Dr. Qazilbash expressed confidence that all principal evaluations will be completed by the district's June 30th deadline.

Committee members asked a number of questions about the teacher excess process, early hiring initiative and mentoring opportunities, all of which were answered by Dr. Qazilbash and the superintendent. Ms. Jeri Robinson asked that the data presented on the proportionality of under-performing rating by ethnicity include whites. Dr. Uriarte requested data on the demographics of teachers hired over the past five years. Mr. O'Neill expressed disappointment that all school leaders have not yet been evaluated, adding that he expects all principal evaluations to be completed by the end of the month.

Office of English Language Learners Update – Kim Tsai, Interim Assistant Superintendent for the Office of English Language Learners (OELL), presented an update on the district's ongoing efforts to meet the needs of more than 15,000 ELL students. BPS has developed a long-term strategy that aims to increase access to ELL services and increase the quality of ELL instruction to close the achievement gap. OELL has worked diligently during the 2014-15 school year address key challenges in the areas of ELL program implementation, improving student achievement and compliance. Ms. Tsai noted that a new "flat panel" view of compliance allows the district to identify areas of concern and apply specific remedies. Chief Information Officer Mark Racine presented a brief overview of the district's efforts to improve school reporting of ELL services compliance using technology.

Dr. Uriarte praised Ms. Tsai and Mr. Racine for bringing about rapid improvement in the district's ELL data reporting. Ms. Regina Robinson stressed the importance of parental engagement, particularly the families of ELL and special education students. Ms. Jeri Robinson requested data on ELL teacher evaluations, which Ms. Tsai agreed to provide.

Educational Options Boston Alternative School Experience Sites (BASES) – Freddy Fuentes, Executive Director of Educational Options presented a proposal that students be coded as part of a constellation campus called Boston Alternative School Experience Sites (BASES). The change will allow all alternative programs to have one set of graduation requirements, simplify entry and

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placement in/within programs and allow for a cohesive and flexible approach to program redesign and development to respond to the changing needs of students. BASES enrollment is expected to fluctuate between 334-450 students annually and will be funded by both central office and weighted student funding.

Committee members asked questions about family and student engagement, partnerships and accountability and oversight, all of which were answered by Mr. Fuentes and the Superintendent. Mr. O'Neill stated that a "one-size fits all" approach is not effective when it comes to alternative education and said that different options are needed to carry out this critical work. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the proposal on July 15th.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

Kathy Hamilton, Boston Private Industry Council, testified regarding the Boston Alternative School Experience Sites report.

Megan Wolf, BPS parent and member, Quality Education for Every Student, testified regarding the District's new calculation of low-income students.

John Mudd, education advocate, testified regarding the Opportunity & Achievement Gaps Task Force.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

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

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary