



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

September 18, 2013

The Boston School Committee held a meeting on September 18, 2013 at 6 p.m. at the Edward Winter Chambers, 26 Court Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

For more information about any of the items listed below, please contact the office of the Boston School Committee: feedback@bostonpublicschools.org or 617-635-9014.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Superintendent's Memo: Grants for Approval Totaling \$22,641,349

- Academic Support Services – School Year Program - \$450,392
- Full-Service Community Schools Initiative - \$500,000
- Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps - \$960,000
- Special Education - \$18,009,517
- Teen-Pregnancy Prevention: Partners for Youth Success - \$96,620
- Title III – English Language Learners Acquisition - \$2,624,820.

Report: Boston Green Academy Charter Amendments

Report: Building Academic Systems, Structures, and Processes

Report: Budget Update: Fiscal Year 2013 Year End

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael O'Neill; Dr. Hardin Coleman (*Note: Dr. Coleman arrived while the Superintendent's Report was in progress*); Rev. Gregory G. Groover; Claudio Martinez; Mary Tamer; and student representative Ayomide Olumuyiwa.

School Committee Member Absent: Meg Campbell.

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.

September 18, 2013

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Approved – The School Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the August 27, 2013 School Committee Strategic Planning Workshop and the September 4, 2013 School Committee meeting.

Approved – The School Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the following executive sessions:

- January 16, 2013
- February 27, 2013
- March 27, 2013
- June 5, 2013

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Two Boston Public Schools (BPS) Turnaround Schools, Orchard Gardens K-8 and the William Monroe Trotter Elementary, will move to Level 1, state officials announced today. Three other schools – the William Blackstone, the John F. Kennedy Elementary and the Harbor Middle School – are also expected to exit turnaround status and become Level 3 schools. Governor Patrick, Massachusetts Secretary of Education Matt Malone and Commissioner of Education Mitchell Chester, Chairperson O’Neill, Mary Tamer and Superintendent McDonough joined principals and teachers at Orchard Gardens this morning for the announcement. The Superintendent praised the school communities for their tireless work and pledged that the district will continue to support these schools to ensure their continued success.

The state is considering moving the Paul A. Dever Elementary and the John P. Holland Elementary Schools from Level 4 to Level 5 status (state receivership). BPS has created a bold plan that, if successful, will prevent any school in Boston from falling to a designation of Level 5. The Superintendent thanked Dr. Hardin Coleman, Andres Alonso, Andy Hargreaves and Kevin Andrews, as well as EdVestors, for providing the district with significant guidance in this area.

BPS has completed criminal background checks on all 9,200 current employees. The Superintendent praised the Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Review Panel for accomplishing in eight months a review process that is typically on a three-year cycle. The panel identified 34 employees, all of whom are support staff, for further review. Three have since been cleared for service. Fourteen have been placed on administrative leave and 17 are no longer employed by BPS. The district cannot elaborate further due to confidentiality concerns regarding personnel information and CORI records. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Department of Criminal Justice Information Services will soon require all school districts to conduct national, fingerprint-based background checks of all employees.

Today 91 percent of our BPS buses arrived before the school bell; 96 percent arrived within five minutes; and 98 percent were there within ten minutes. The district will continue striving to improve on-time performance.

September 18, 2013

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) field tests will take place in several BPS schools this spring.

Mayor Menino, Governor Patrick and Massachusetts Secretary of Education Matt Malone recently honor the Harbor Middle School for their receipt of the Best Buddies Outstanding Chapter Award.

The Superintendent recently kicked the ceremonial first ball at the Junior Varsity soccer match between TechBoston Academy and Boston International/Newcomers Academy.

BPS Chief Equity Officer Tanisha M. Sullivan received the *Boston Business Journal's* "40 Under 40" Award.

Several School Committee members congratulated the school communities who are exiting Level 4 Turnaround status. Ms. Tamer requested afternoon transportation data, which the Superintendent agreed to provide in the near future. Mr. O'Neill stated that the district work aggressively to bring rapid improvement to underperforming schools.

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

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

John St. Amand, Vice-Chair, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, testified regarding special education issues.

John Mudd, education advocate, testified regarding the superintendent search and BPS goals and priorities.

The following people testified regarding creating a two-way bilingual program in East Boston:
Elsa Flores, parent, Otis Elementary School
Erika Sanchez, parent
Naeema Hernandez, Massachusetts Advocates for Children

ACTION ITEMS

Approved – The Committee unanimously approved grants totaling \$22,641,349.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee voted unanimously to close nominations for the office of Vice Chairperson. Ms. Tamer nominated Mr. Martinez; Rev. Groover seconded the nomination. No other nominations were offered.

Approved – On roll call, the Committee elected Mr. Martinez Vice-Chair of the School Committee by the following vote:

Dr. Coleman: Yes

Rev. Groover: Yes

September 18, 2013

Mr. Martinez: Abstain

Ms. Tamer: Yes

Mr. O'Neill: Yes

Approved – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the establishment of a School Committee Inclusion Task Force, co-chaired by Ms. Tamer.

REPORTS

Boston Green Academy (BGA) Charter Amendments – BGA Interim Co-Headmasters Natalie Jaeger and Matthew Holzer requested School Committee approval for two changes to the school's charter: amend the leadership structure from a single headmaster to a co-headmaster model; delay the addition of a 6th grade and the expansion of the school to September 2014.

School Committee members asked questions about community engagement and student body makeup, all of which were answered by the presenters. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the proposal at its October 2nd meeting.

Building Academic Systems, Structures, and Processes – Deputy Superintendent of Academics Eileen de los Reyes and Chief of Curriculum and Instruction Linda Chen presented the district's academic agenda for the 2013-14 school year. Key areas of focus include: eliminating the achievement gap; implementing Common Core standards and preparing for PARCC assessments; and expanding inclusive learning opportunities. Dr. de los Reyes emphasized that all schools must achieve at high levels in order for the district to be successful.

Dr. Coleman requested assessment data from the district and state levels in addition to the national data provided in the presentation. Rev. Groover asked how the district will ensure consistency and high levels of achievement among all schools given that BPS schools vary greatly in structure and autonomy. The Superintendent responded that Linda Nathan, former headmaster of Boston Arts Academy, has been charged with reviewing the issue, and promised to return to the Committee with further analysis. Members also asked questions about PARCC testing, interventions for Turnaround Schools and student support, all of which were answered by the Superintendent and presenters. Ms. Tamer urged the district to sustain its support of Turnaround Schools.

Budget Update: Fiscal Year 2013 Year End – Chief Financial Officer Donald Kennedy presented an update on the previous, current, and upcoming fiscal years. Last year, FY2013, BPS ended the year within budget for the 23rd consecutive year. During the current fiscal year, BPS is maintaining and increasing investments in key academic areas, including Turnaround Schools, inclusion, and teacher support, while managing several additional costs. In the next fiscal year, the district faces the challenge of managing rising costs and the continued decline of federal funding.

School Committee Meeting
Edward Winter Chambers

September 18, 2013

Mr. O'Neill encouraged Mr. Kennedy to try to identify areas to reduce costs while being fair and respectful, upholding the high standards of his predecessor, former CFO and current Interim Superintendent John McDonough.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS

No speakers.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. O'Neill announced that the School Committee will soon post its meeting agendas for the remainder of the calendar year at www.bostonpublicschools.org.

ADJOURN

At 8:41 p.m., the School Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary