



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE HYBRID BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

November 5, 2025

The Boston School Committee held a hybrid meeting on November 5, 2025, at 6.00 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington Street, School Committee Chamber, Roxbury, Massachusetts. The meeting was also live-streamed on Boston City TV and Zoom. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit.

bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee, email lpavex@bostonpublicschools.org, or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Jeri Robinson; Vice Chairperson Michael D. O'Neill; Stephen Alkins; Rafaela Polanco Garcia; Rachel Skerritt; Quoc Tran; and Student Representative Mah Noor.

School Committee Members Absent: Brandon Cardet-Hernandez.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

[Agenda](#)

[Meeting Minutes: October 29, 2025](#)

[Grants for Approval](#)

[Opportunity and Achievements Gaps \(OAG\) Task Force Memo](#)

[OAG Task Force Membership PowerPoint](#)

[Exam Schools Admission Policy Recommendation Memo](#)

[Exam Schools Admission Policy Recommendation PowerPoint](#)

[Secondary Schools Policy Update Memo](#)

[Competency Determination Policy Class of 2026 and 2027 Policy](#)

[Career & Technical Education Recruitment, Admission, and Retention Policy](#)

[Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy](#)

[Secondary Schools Policy Update PowerPoint](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Jeri Robinson called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. She said it will be rebroadcast on Boston City TV and the video will be posted at bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee and on YouTube. She announced that simultaneous interpretation services were available virtually in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cabo Verdean, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin and American Sign Language (ASL). Translated meeting documents were posted at www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee prior to the start of the meeting.

Dr. Alkins arrived after the meeting had begun. Mr. Cardet-Hernandez was absent.

SUPERINTENDENT's SNAP UPDATE

Superintendent Skipper provided an update on the district's efforts to support families affected by the federal government shutdown and delayed SNAP benefits, noting that about 70% of BPS families qualify for some form of state or federal assistance, including SNAP and Medicaid. All students will continue receiving free breakfast and lunch. The District is also expanding food access through afternoon meal programs at 64 school sites, the weekend "617 Sunday Wellness" program, and food drives at 11 schools and centralized sites in partnership with local food banks, including the Greater Boston Food Bank and Fair Foods. Families may visit boston.gov/SNAP, bostonpublicschools.org/SNAP, or call the BPS Helpline at 617-635-8873 for assistance. The newly established BPS Emergency Food Council will continue coordinating these efforts.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Approved – The Committee approved by unanimous consent the minutes of the October 29, 2025, meeting, with Mr. Michael O'Neill abstaining (not present at the October 29, 2025, meeting).

REPORT

Opportunity and Achievements Gaps (OAG) Task Force Membership Proposal - OAG Task Force Co-Chair Ayele Shakur and Senior Advisor for Strategy and Opportunity Gaps Dr. Colin Rose gave an overview of the charge of the Task Force and explained the nominating process.

Ms. Shakur said that the OAG Task Force is a diverse group of educators, school leaders, funders, university partners, nonprofits, and community advocates reflecting the Boston Public Schools community that helps BPS turn the OAG Policy into actionable goals with a clear Implementation Plan, tracks progress and makes recommendations to the School Committee, partners with BPS departments and schools on initiatives to increase opportunity and eliminate gaps, and assesses existing policies to ensure the OAG Policy remains strong and relevant. She said the Task Force, focusing on students of color, students with disabilities, multilingual

learners, and low-income students, has spent the past year gathering input to revise the 2016 OAG Policy that will be presented and voted on by the Committee, and aligned with the district's strategic plan, overseen by Dr. Rose.

The slate includes eight new members and three student reps from BSAC, nominated for their expertise and experience supporting BPS students.

Nominees for a 3-Year Term (SY2026 - SY2029)

1. Dr. Stephen Alkins (School Committee Member and New Task Force Co-Chair)
2. Dr. Brandy Brooks
3. Pamela Leins
4. Dr. Ambrizeth Lima
5. Dr. Harold L. Miller, Jr.
6. Devin Morris
7. Lea Serena
8. BSAC Representatives: Amor Reed (Boston Latin School), Kevin Lewis (John D. O'Bryant School), and Nyla Hicks (Community Academy of Science and Health)

Existing Members Continuing for a 2-Year Term (SY2026-SY2028)

9. Ayele Shakur (Task Force Co-Chair)
10. Rev. Willie Bodrick
11. Dr Lisa Gonsalves
12. Dr. Gil Noam
13. Dr. Carline Pignato
14. Marinell Rousmaniere
15. Filberto Santiago

Chair Robinson said that she will continue to serve as the Co-Chair of the Task Force until January. Dr. Alkins will join the Task Force if approved and, if re-appointed to the School Committee, will take over as the co-chair in January.

Ms. Skerritt thanked the team for reviewing the slate and noted its expertise, diversity, and student representation. Vice-Chair O'Neill thanked the members' for their service and Ms. Shakur for her leadership. Ms. Polanco Garcia thanked the members for their dedication to all students, especially multilingual and Black and Brown students. The Chair thanked the team and new members for their enthusiasm and commitment, noting the work is far from done.

BSAC REPRESENTATIVE

The new Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) representative, Mah Noor, a junior at Brighton High School, introduced herself, shared her background, and said she was thankful for the opportunity to represent all BPS students and learn from the committee. The Superintendent and the Chair welcomed her to the Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following speakers testified regarding various aspects of the Exam Schools Admission Policy recommendation:

- Travis Marshall, Roslindale resident, Community Advocate, English HS and Bates Elementary School parent
- Rosann Tung, Jamaica Plain resident, Community Advocate, Coalition for Equity in Exam Schools
- Krista Magnuson, Jamaica Plain resident, Parent, Community Advocate, Massachusetts Education Justice Alliance
- Deirdre Manning, Dorchester resident, Boston Collegiate Charter School parent
- Sharon Hinton, Hyde Park resident, Teacher, Community Advocate, Black Teachers Matter Inc
- Jillie Santos, Quincy resident, Community Advocate
- Peggy Wiesenbergs, Jamaica Plain resident, Community Advocate, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), Citizens for Public Schools
- Vernee Wilkinson, Community Advocate, SchoolFacts Boston
- Mike Heichman, Dorchester resident, Community Advocate
- Cheryl Buckman, South Boston resident, Parent, Community Advocate, Save the Dever Movement/FamCosa
- Emma Yashar, Charlestown resident, Eliot K-8 Innovation School parent
- Simel Rodriguez, Roxbury resident, Blackstone parent,

The following speakers testified in favor of a Citywide Catchment for Bilingual Schools:

- Loni Nguyen, Quincy resident, Mather School teacher
- Vivianne Dao, Dorchester resident, Mather School student
- Alex Nguyen, Dorchester resident, Mather School student
- David Tran, Dorchester resident, Mather School student
- Nhi Ngo, Dorchester resident, Mather School student
- Chun-Hei Chan, Dorchester resident, Josiah Quincy Elementary School teacher
- Vicky Lo, Quincy resident, Josiah Quincy Elementary School teacher
- Kim Chi, Nguyen, Quincy resident, Community Advocate, Mather School family engagement specialist
- Charlene Situ, Charlestown resident, Josiah Quincy Elementary School parent
- Shuai Wang, South Boston resident, Josiah Quincy Elementary School parent
- Xiaomei Zeng, Mission Hill resident, Baldwin Early Learning Center parent
- Yuetong Yu, Chinatown, Josiah Quincy Elementary School student
- Meichen Li, East Boston, Josiah Quincy Elementary School student
- Yunhao Huang, Chinatown resident, Josiah Quincy Elementary School student
- Haomin Yu, Chinatown resident, Josiah Quincy Elementary School student
- Xintong Yu, Chinatown resident, Josiah Quincy Elementary School student

The following speakers testified regarding the Exam Schools Admission Policy recommendation and the need for more bilingual schools:

- Dora Sandoval, Roxbury resident, Hurley K–8 School parent

- Carolina Soto, Dorchester resident, Trotter School parent
- Maria Elena Pereira, Dorchester resident, Trotter School parent

Ana Baez, Dorchester resident, Sociedad Latina member, Margarita Muniz Academy student, testified regarding teens and technology.

ACTION ITEMS

Approved - The Committee approved by unanimous consent grants for approval totaling \$257,810.76

Superintendent Skipper said the updated Exam Schools admission changes aim to fix issues in the current policy while keeping what works, creating a clearer, more stable, and predictable system. The policy will remain for at least three cycles to track trends. The district also seeks to focus on improving all high schools, not just exam schools.

Proposed Changes :

- Remove school-based points
- Reduce housing points from 15 to 10 points, reflecting actual score differences.
- Addition of a citywide round: first 20% of seats at each school awarded to students with highest composite scores (GPA + MAP), no additional points. Distribute the remaining 80% across four socioeconomic tiers.
- BPS maintains the current four socioeconomic tier structure where the tiers are sized by population, as opposed to number of applicants.

Mr. Tran said that after hearing both support and opposition to the revised school admissions policy, he believes the changes represent an improvement toward greater equity. He emphasized the importance of diversity, inclusion, and equity in the process and stated that he would vote in favor of the revised policy.

Dr. Alkins said the Committee must act to give families clarity and acknowledged the district's extensive work on exam school data. He stressed that all students who attend the exam schools are deserving and eligible, and that the focus should remain on ensuring equitable access to high-quality education across all schools. He said the proposed changes could reduce representation of marginalized students and stated that he would not vote in favor of the revised policy.

Ms. Polanco García thanked the community for their feedback on the proposed exam school policy. She said the proposed change aims to balance merit and equity but that its implementation depends on equitable support and investments in K–8 schools. She noted that English learners face additional challenges and urged the district to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate resources, greater family engagement, and stronger support for all high schools, not just exam schools.

Ms. Skerritt thanked the community for their feedback and testimony over the years. She said that the 2021 policy improved representation in exam schools, but gaps remain in race, socioeconomic status, Individualized Education Program (IEP), and language level. She said that

the exam schools serve 25% of high school students with a rigorous, college-prep curriculum, and while not every student will follow that path, all must be prepared to succeed. She noted that the proposed policy preserves the tier system, addresses inequities in school-based points, and adds a citywide allocation to ensure fair access, while emphasizing that true equity requires strong instruction and opportunities across all BPS schools.

Mr. O'Neill thanked community members and colleagues for their feedback and described the superintendent's proposed exam school admissions policy as a compromise that balances access, diversity, and fairness. He supported the plan for promoting diversity, addressing concerns about high-achieving students, and improving transparency. He also commended the inclusion of expanded enrichment and exam school preparation programs for grades 4–6 and expressed his support for adopting the policy.

Chair Robinson thanked members and the public, noting the difficulty of the decision and emphasizing that the real issue is student preparation, not admissions. She said students need to be ready and have the right school options and that, despite some reservations, the committee must move forward for families' sake.

Approved -On roll call, the Committee approved the Exam Schools Admission Policy Recommendation. Dr. Alkins and Ms. Polanco Garcia voted no. All other members voted yes.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the OAG Task Force Membership. Dr. Alkins abstained.

Ms. Skerritt asked for aligning communication about CTE and high school options, so students could see all available pathways presented together to better understand their choices. Ms. Dickens said they've worked to align school options through a website, coordinated policies, and an upcoming webinar with the Office of Family and Community Advancement, noting the five schools now follow a mostly common timeline. She also added that integrating the middle school policy into the MyCAP framework from 4th grade will give students career exposure, helping them make informed choices by grades 6 or 8.

Ms. Skerritt asked if there could be a single webpage showing descriptions of all secondary schools together, rather than by type, to make it easier for parents to see their options. Ms. Dickens said all school types and profiles are in one presentation with a handbook, webinar, and December showcase to help families understand their options. Superintendent Skipper said 6th–8th graders are being guided in school choice through information and involving families, teachers, and visitors. Dr. Alkins asked if BSAC was involved to engage with students. Superintendent Skipper said BSAC isn't currently involved but could be a useful extension of student support.

Ms. Skerritt wanted to confirm that the competency determination for the classes of 2026 and 2027 temporarily replaces the MCAS graduation requirement for juniors and seniors, does not equal a diploma, and is only one part of the requirements for earning a BPS diploma. To earn a BPS diploma, students must complete MassCore, which includes four years of study. Superintendent Skipper confirmed that a BPS diploma requires completing MassCore (22 credits), with waivers for some multilingual and special education students; alternative schools require 18 credits, and future requirements may be updated for classes after 2027.

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Competency Determination Policy Class of 2026 and 2027

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Career & Technical Education Recruitment, Admission, and Retention Policy

Approved - On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy

PUBLIC COMMENT (*CONTINUED*)

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Tran urged discussion of solutions or policy changes to address the demand for more bilingual programs. Superintendent Skipper said a memo on bilingual programs will be shared with the members before the next meeting.

ADJOURN

Approved - At approximately 8.50 p.m. the Committee unanimously approved a motion by roll call to adjourn to the meeting.

Attest:



Lena Parvex
Executive Secretary