

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
METCO Headquarters, Roxbury, MA
October 18, 2022

**RECEIVED
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BELMONT, MA**

DATE: November 2, 2022
TIME: 2:34 PM

Present: Ms. Meghan Moriarty, Chair
Ms. Amy Checkoway, Secretary
Ms. Kate Bowen
Mr. Michael Crowley
Mr. Jeffrey Liberty
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Chon'tel Washington, DEI Director
Mr. Michael McAllister, Human Capital Director

Absent: Mr. Jamal Saeh

OPENING BUSINESS

Chair Moriarty called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm, welcomed the Boston Belmont Public Schools families in attendance, and announced that agenda would proceed directly to the major business items.

MAJOR BUSINESS

Welcome from METCO, Inc. President/CEO Milly Arbaje-Thomas

Ms. Arbaje-Thomas welcomed everyone to the new METCO headquarters building and presented a detailed overview of the history of METCO from 1963, using the visuals on the walls of the room as a guide. Belmont joined METCO in 1970.

Updated from METCO Director Rosa Innis

Ms. Innis provided an update on the METCO program in Belmont and her focus this year.

This year, the Belmont METCO program comes from more Boston communities, including Brighton. Between last year and this year, 5% of METCO students moved out of Boston because of cost of living and other circumstances. To increase METCO enrollment, Belmont has been accepting students across multiple grades versus historically only accepting students in kindergarten. Historically there have been 10 students per cohort/grade, but this year some grades have 2-3 students. There is a desire to balance cohorts and increase METCO enrollment; Belmont is below its historical enrollment for this program.

This year, Ms. Innis is chairing the high school equity committee and involved in the Wellington equity committee, new district recruitment/retention committee, and amplifying student voice through small focus groups and larger group conversations facilitated by a consultant. Ms. Innis is also focused on how to improve operations such as transportation challenges/experiences and communication. New student bus monitors have been hired who will be paid. She is seeking parent input about the best way to communicate.

The district will also be thinking about what reconfiguration means to the METCO program and how to allocate resources across all schools. She is also focusing on access to higher-level courses for students, particularly access to compact math in 7th grade and how to increase enrollment in AP/honors classes using a cohort model so METCO students feel more comfortable. She is also thinking through opportunities at the lower schools for additional programs.

Superintendent's 2022/23 Update

The Superintendent shared an update on priorities for the Belmont Public Schools this year. He shared that there are 87 METCO students, and the goal is to have 120-130 so there is a need for additional recruitment to fill available slots.

The district has added a high school bus, METCO paraprofessionals, district and building level equity committees, partnerships with community organizations, and the SC equity subcommittee.

The Superintendent and SC members reiterated that Boston parents are Belmont Public School parents, and their participation and input is desired. METCO director Rosa Innis should be the first contact for parents.

DEI Director, Chon'tel Washington, spoke briefly about some of the DEI work taking place in the district this year.

Several members of the public provided comments and updates including Chenery PTO member Caleb Collins and a Wellington METCO PTO member, Ingrid.

Member Liberty asked a couple of questions about the reason why a family who moves out of Boston is not able to remain enrolled in Belmont Public Schools and more data about the number and pattern of bias incidents taking place.

Presentation from Belmont Against Racism

Angela Middleton and Kim Haley-Jackson presented the School Committee with a gift of \$8,000 from BAR for the METCO Support Fund

Chair Moriarty moved to accept this donation and Member Bowen seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (5-0)

Chair Moriarty adjourned the meeting at 8:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

