

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Boston School Committee Nominating Panel**

Mon., November 27, 2023, 4:15–6:05 p.m., continued on Wed., November 29, 2023, 5:00-6:45 p.m.
Meeting by remote participation via Zoom

Members Present:

William Thomas, Boston High School Heads Association, Panel Chair
Neema Avashia, Boston Teachers Union
Angelina Camacho, Boston Parent Organizing Network
Joanne Freeman, Citywide Parents Council
Dr. Mary Grant (for Commissioner of Higher Education)
Jerry Howland, Mayoral Appointee
Charlie Kim, Special Education Parents Advisory Council
Natalie Rivkin McSwain, Mayoral Appointee
Rhoda Schneider (for Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education)
Rachel Skerritt, Mayoral Appointee
Marty Walz, Interim President, Boston Municipal Research Bureau

Staff Assistance: Sky Flores, Policy Assistant, Office of Mayor Michelle Wu, City of Boston

1. Call Meeting to Order

Will Thomas, Chair of the Boston School Committee Nominating Panel, called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. He welcomed Natalie Rivkin McSwain, a new mayoral appointee to the Panel, noting she is a Boston Public Schools parent and teacher with 23 years of experience in BPS. Members introduced themselves.

Chair Thomas said the Panel will interview four applicants for the two posted School Committee seats, with two interviews today and two on November 29. He said the meeting will not adjourn today but will be suspended to continue on November 29 so the Panel can conclude the interviews and deliberate on nominations. Chair Thomas took a roll call to determine members' availability on November 29. Members were unanimous that they would attend. At Chair Thomas's request, Ms. Flores said she would post the notice that today's meeting would continue on November 29.

2. Approval of Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes of the November 20, 2023 meeting. On a motion duly made and seconded, the Panel **voted** to approve the minutes. The vote, by roll call, was 10-0-1, with Ms. Freeman abstaining.

3. Interview Applicants

The Panel reviewed the list of applicants to be interviewed for the two School Committee seats. Chair Thomas thanked Ms. Flores for arranging simultaneous translation for the interviews. The Panel interviewed Ignacio Chaparro, took a 15-minute break, and then interviewed Rafaela Polanco. Chair Thomas informed each applicant that the Panel would interview additional applicants on November 29 and then deliberate on nominations to present to Mayor Wu. Chair Thomas suspended the meeting at 6:05 p.m., to resume on Wednesday. The meeting resumed on Wednesday, November 29, at 5:00 p.m. and the Panel interviewed Chantal Lima Barbosa and Kabrillen Jones.

4. Discussion and Deliberation

After the interviews concluded, the Panel discussed the four applicants and by consensus determined that three scored highest. Members commented on the small number of applicants, noting that historically the pool tends to be small when incumbents are applying for reappointment.

Members noted the significance of service on the School Committee and suggested it would be good to discuss outreach, recruitment, and ways to support those who volunteer for this important public service. Chair Thomas said he would add this as a discussion topic when the Panel meets in the fall.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the Panel **voted** to submit the following names to Mayor Wu for her to consider for appointment to the two open School Committee seats¹:

Seat A

Chantal Lima Barbosa
Rafaela Polanco Garcia
Kabrillen Jones

Seat B

Chantal Lima Barbosa
Rafaela Polanco Garcia
Kabrillen Jones

The vote, by roll call, was 10-1-0. Mr. Kim voted in opposition.

A motion was made and seconded to add the fourth applicant to both lists. By roll call vote, the motion failed 4-6-1. Chair Thomas said he would submit the nominations to Mayor Wu ahead of the deadline, which is the first Monday in December.

5. Public Comment

Chair Thomas invited comments from members of the public attending the meeting. Victoria Mitchell commented favorably on the meeting.

6. Adjournment

Members thanked Mr. Thomas for chairing the Panel and Ms. Flores for her staff assistance. Mr. Thomas thanked the members for their commitment to this work. There being no further business, the Panel **voted** unanimously to adjourn its meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rhoda E. Schneider

¹ The City Law Department advised in November 2015 that when more than one seat is open, (1) the Panel must submit a list of 3-5 names for each seat, consistent with the statute, and (2) the Panel may include the same names (one, some, or all) on each list, if it so chooses.