

March 25, 2015

Chairperson and Members of the Committee:

Tonight, I present to you for your consideration a final recommended budget for the Boston Public Schools (BPS) in Fiscal Year 2016. When we first presented our preliminary budget to this Committee in February, we did not yet know our full appropriation from the City of Boston, but rather that our appropriation would increase between 3 and 4%. With great appreciation to Mayor Martin J. Walsh, I am pleased to announce to you tonight that the city has committed to increasing the BPS appropriation at the highest end of that range. Tonight we submit to you a balanced budget totaling \$1,013,500,000.

The budget before you represents intentional investments in the areas in which we received guidance from the School Committee and other key stakeholders that allow us to meet our goals of closing achievement gaps and creating conditions for success for all students. Reaching these goals plays out in several key initiatives that are included in this budget recommendation, including:

- Expanding inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities;
- Ensuring BPS has excellent teachers in every classroom;
- Creating conditions that support a commitment to a diverse workforce;
- Increasing the number of schools offering Expanded Learning Time for students;
- Providing support and accountability for all schools through the network structure;
- Increasing access to K1 seats throughout the city and;
- Maximizing our resources to schools through an increase to Weighted Student Funding.

I have mentioned to you on many occasions that our school district is faced with a structural imbalance that must be reconciled. The cost of doing business is increasing each year, far outpacing our revenue growth. This is driven by our compensation structure, our transportation commitments, and our financial structure for food services. Further, we must align our programmatic offerings and our facilities with our total enrollment and the needs of the students we serve.

This budget represents recommendations that take a first step in addressing each of these areas, recognizing that as a city, we need to have a longer term conversation that shifts from our current practice of stretching our resources too thin to one that invests in strength.

I have shared with you the strategies that allowed us to present to you a final recommendation that is balanced, including proposals that allow for significant changes in our transportation and food service operations; revised recommendations on school closures that were presented to you at the last budget hearing, and; tight management of



the number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees in our district and our central support structure.

Planning forward, should the School Committee approve this budget, we will take steps to secure space for Margarita Muniz Academy. It currently shares a building with the Mission Hill K-8 in Jamaica Plain. Both of these schools deserve their own space. We would move ahead with a plan to relocate the Muniz Academy to the Rogers School building in the fall of 2016. We would use the next school year as an opportunity to complete some much needed renovations at the building. We will present a formal recommendation to you at the next meeting.

Additionally, in order to identify the best partner to serve the students currently attending Middle School Academy, I am directing my team to issue a request for proposals for services that meet the needs of these students.


In many ways, this budget will set a foundation for our new Superintendent, Dr. Tommy Chang, creating the opportunity for the conditions for success for all schools to exist.

Through this process we have heard from students and families, teachers and staff. They have testified at hearings, written us emails, and even tweeted us, to voice their opinion. They have helped shape this recommendation. Over the past several weeks, and again tonight, we have provided you with answers to many questions raised by members of the committee. I particularly want to bring to your attention the persistence and performance analysis of the impact on students directly affected by our school closures in 2010. In addition, I want to bring to your attention the response that we provided you today that clarifies the overall increased investment for the English Language Learner student population in an amount of \$8.2 million.

I am grateful for the dedicated service of the staff who have helped us arrive at this point. Our finance team, school leaders, school site councils, and department heads deserve a great amount of appreciation.

I respectfully request the School Committee approve this budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John A. McDonough". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

John McDonough
Interim Superintendent