

# THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** School Committee Members  
Dr. Tommy Chang, Superintendent

**FROM:** Michael D. O'Neill, Chair  
Dr. Hardin Coleman, Vice-Chair

**SUBJECT:** Commonwealth Charter Cap Lift and Draft Resolution

**DATE:** September 21, 2016

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Tonight Boston Public Schools Chief Financial Officer Eleanor Laurans, together with City of Boston finance officials, will present a report on the financial impact of raising the cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools, which as you are aware, is a ballot question in the November election. If passed, this issue could have a significant impact on BPS enrollment and finances; therefore it is incumbent upon us as a Committee to closely review the data, engage in a robust discussion, and strongly consider taking a position as the policy-making body representing the district's 57,000 students.

We would like to present for your consideration the attached draft resolution. We look forward to receiving your feedback at tonight's meeting. If the Committee comes to an agreement around the language, we would ask that the Committee vote on a final resolution at our October 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

*In School Committee*

October 5, 2016

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION**  
**AGAINST LIFTING THE CAP ON COMMONWEALTH CHARTER SCHOOLS**

*ORDERED*, That the School Committee hereby approves the following resolution:

**Resolution Against Lifting the Cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools**

WHEREAS, free public schools available to all students regardless of income, ability, need or English language proficiency are foundational to our democracy; and

WHEREAS, public education was meant to be a place where students from varied socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, and lived experiences could come together and help build a stronger nation and a meaningful democracy; and

WHEREAS, all of our students deserve high-quality public schools that teach the whole child, providing enrichment and addressing social and emotional needs in addition to core academic subjects; and

WHEREAS, accountability for our public schools is necessary to ensure that schools are responsive to the needs of their communities; and

WHEREAS, Massachusetts charter school finance draws from the state financial aid to the City of Boston not the average per pupil amount of aid, but the average total-cost per pupil expenditure from the total Chapter 70 state financial assistance, which fiscally undermines the ability of the Boston Public Schools to support the cost of a quality educational program to its students, exacerbated by the state's failure to fund the charter reimbursement, and

WHEREAS, general public schools and charter public schools in Boston already seek to operate to the mutual benefit of each other, sharing their best practices and creating the next generation of Bostonians as a community, and

*In School Committee*

WHEREAS, the Citizens of Boston want to act in good faith to ensure that students with special needs students, in economic disadvantage, and who are English language learners all receive quality educational options and

WHEREAS, our focus as a state and as a city should be on creating excellent public schools for all students and striving to achieve the primary mission of public education—educating all young people to be effective citizens in a democracy; and

WHEREAS, lifting the current cap on charter schools by ballot question is a poor alternative to working collaboratively with the General Court, Boston School Committee, Boston City Council and stakeholders toward reasonable reforms in the areas of finance, recruitment and retention, educator preparation, facilities, parent engagement, public oversight, and approval of new institutions within our municipality and all of the divisive factors that keep us from working as a community to improve schools for all students,

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Boston School Committee opposes the ballot question that would raise the cap on Commonwealth charter schools.

On roll call, the order was approved by the following vote:

YEAS –

NAYS –

ABSENT –

Attest:

Elizabeth A. Sullivan  
Executive Secretary