

March 17, 2021

Dear School Committee Members,

On Wednesday, March 24th, 2021, the School Committee will vote on the FY22 budget for the Boston Public Schools. The total general fund budget for your consideration is \$1,294,719,861.

We are incredibly proud of this budget and view it as a ray of hope during this period of uncertainty, representing a unique opportunity to invest in our students and achieve our vision of *ensuring all of our students get what they need to succeed*.

Today, our final proposal for your review (in the form of the attached budget tables) is being posted online and shared with School Committee members. This memo summarizes the changes reflected in this proposal versus the original budget proposed on February 3rd of this year.

### **Allocation of soft landings for lower performing schools**

For the last few years we have provided soft landings for low performing schools. In a typical year, this funding is represented in the initial budget proposal as a reserve to be allocated to schools as we moved through the budget process. This updated proposal would then reflect changes to school budgets made for this purpose over the last two months.

As we have highlighted throughout the process: this year is different. From the beginning, we worked to identify schools needing additional support and had already allocated \$18.5M to support schools experiencing enrollment declines in the budget we presented February 3rd. That budget proposal included allocations that would typically be part of the soft landings for lower performing schools. The result is that this updated proposal includes less school-level changes than you would see in a typical budget year.

### **Other changes to School Budgets**

Every year, the initial proposed budget contains a number of additional reserves that we intend to partially liquidate throughout the budget process. These reserves are held in the Budget Office and are eventually transferred to school budgets. Below is a summary of those changes for this year. While we are still holding some reserves that will be liquidated during the summer and fall, the following funds have moved from central reserves onto school budgets:

- Updates to school supplements for declining enrollment: \$587,704
- Adjustments to Social Worker FTEs based on school feedback and waiver: \$154,689
- Transition support for classroom changes: \$429,134

Across these three areas, school budgets have increased by a total of \$1,171,527 since the original proposal. Thirteen schools have seen increases in their individual budgets since February 3rd: seven from an school supplement update, three from Social Worker FTE adjustments, and three from transition support for classroom changes.

### **Changes to Central Budgets**

There have been a number of small changes to the proposed budget for central departments. These are more limited in scope and represent transfers between central departments and between account types within a department.

The only meaningful change to central budgets involves the Equity and Strategy division leadership moving from their original budgeted location in the Opportunity Gaps budget into the Strategy department budget. This change does not reflect a reduction in either budget, but simply a move for improved internal budget management.

I would be remiss if I didn't end this letter by thanking the dedicated staff who helped develop this budget, including our school leaders, school site councils, finance team and department heads. They represent the very best of BPS and embody our commitment to our students, our families and our community.

Sincerely,



Dr. Brenda Cassellius  
Superintendent