

February 3, 2021

Dear School Committee Members,

The Fiscal Year 2022 budget for the Boston Public Schools presented here delivers a strong statement to our students, families, and staff and serves as a reminder that we are invested in their collective success. The budget I am proposing includes an increase of \$36 million from this year for a total of \$1,294,719,861.

The significance of an increase in our budget in the midst of a pandemic and declining enrollment is worth pausing to recognize. This is a truly unique moment in our history and this budget invests in the recognition that in order to assess and address learning loss and creatively rethink what it takes to deliver instruction and support for students requires a new approach and resources to deliver success.

As with all of our work, we have been and remain guided by the belief that ***Every child, in every classroom, in every school*** deserves the same, and sometimes, for some historically under-served students, even greater opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. As we strive to ensure equity and enact anti-racist decisions, we are called upon to think dramatically different about our values and how those values are demonstrated by our budget.

The five-year strategic plan is our roadmap to that success. The budget is the guide to carry out that vision. Through our goal to develop into an actively antiracist school district, we know this work is not only structural and systemic, but also adaptive. We need to change minds, change policies, and then resource the work.

To that end, this budget is anchored in three guiding principles: **Return, Recover, Reimagine**

Return - get all students and staff back into buildings when it is safe to do so, and then get back to the work that we love and return even stronger.

Recover - repair the damage done by Covid by better understanding where students are, assess their learning, target interventions, add support, align expectations with outcomes.

Reimagine - come back as the district we need to be for all students. There is no going back to the pre-2020 world, and with good reason, the system wasn't working for too many students, especially students of color, we do not seek to get back to normal, we seek to disrupt normal and transform into the school district students need and deserve.

At a time when [other Mayors are expecting dramatic cuts to school budgets](#), we will progress towards these goals with new investments from Mayor Walsh and the City of Boston. For many districts across the nation, this health crisis has led to a financial crisis. Boston stands apart as a city that is committed to filling the gaps in federal and state funding while continuing to invest. It is remarkable that during a time of great uncertainty that the Mayor would step up with additional investments for Boston Public Schools and take the step beyond a maintenance budget to increase our support - over and above last year's \$80 million increase. Despite declining enrollment and decreasing salary and operational costs, our per pupil budget will increase by almost \$1,700 per pupil - from approximately \$21,800 per pupil to \$23,500.

Ninety-six percent of this proposal represents direct services to students and schools through direct funding to schools. Combined with our proposals for in school services budgeted centrally, **100% of this proposal will see an immediate and direct impact in our schools.** Among those investments is a commitment that **guarantees a social worker and family liaison in every school.**

For too many years in a row, our budget conversations have started by discussing enrollment declines. The change is real: we have experienced the largest single-year decline in enrollment in the last 15 years. Our team is committed to supporting students through this transition so that we can come back stronger. So this budget invests **\$18.5M to support schools experiencing enrollment declines**, ensuring our students' experience is not changed for next year.

Tonight, we are kicking off our public discussion of the FY22 Budget and I am looking forward to a robust conversation. By placing students at the center and measuring everything in student success, I'm confident this budget will ensure students access the teaching, support, and services they deserve to have the same opportunity to achieve the greatness within them as anybody else.

Sincerely,



Dr. Brenda Cassellius
Superintendent