

March 15, 2023

Dear School Committee Members,

On Wednesday, March 22nd, 2023, the School Committee will vote on the FY24 budget for the Boston Public Schools. The total general fund budget for your consideration is **\$1,445,729,446**.

As we plan for the end of ESSER and continue to review the reports and plans that guide and recommend where we must focus to create systems and lasting change, FY24 serves as a critical transitional budget to address some immediate needs while we also begin to plan for FY25 and beyond.

Through the FY24 proposed budget, we are investing in opportunities for quality, **inclusive education, bilingual education, restorative justice practices** and **social-emotional supports** to ensure our young people have the tools they need to recover and heal from the pandemic and succeed in life. We are also deepening our investment in our **equitable literacy strategy** and **expanding our Early College and Career Pathways programming** to help students explore and gain valuable skills and experiences while also earning the college credits they need to graduate and make their dreams a reality. Our mission overall is to create learning environments where **all students have a sense of belonging, feel valued, supported, and empowered** to reach their full potential. Our proposed FY24 budget lays the foundation to do so.

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 1st of this year.

Increase to Appropriation for Collective Bargaining

Our proposed FY24 appropriation has increased by the following amounts for union contracts that were finalized after our initial budget submission.

- Safety Specialists: \$275,387
- Custodians: \$1,972,529
- Bus Monitors: \$3,221,985
- Administrative Guild: \$1,228,880

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:

- Collaborated with schools to identify current, school-based ESSER investments aligned to our strategy; It is necessary to secure these positions beyond ESSER. This impacted a total of \$15M, including 69 FTE, at 114 schools. The changes aligned to the following key strategies and included positions such as:
 - Inclusion Strategy: inclusion coaches and specialists, inclusion paraprofessionals
 - Office of Multilingual and Multicultural Education Strategic Plan: supplemental SEI paraprofessionals and ESL teachers
 - Equitable Literacy: reading specialists, high quality and standard-aligned curriculum materials
- Shifted hold-harmless support from the general fund to ESSER. This approach means that schools will not be required to make cuts to services or support to students in FY24. This impacted a total of \$30.7M, including 253 FTE, at 95 schools. We had included an estimated \$27.9M in the original budget proposal, so this final budget includes a change of \$2.8M more moving from General Funds to ESSER.
- There were a number of changes to enrollment projections and Weighted Student Funding:
 - Inclusion Expansion:
 - Converted several general education classrooms to inclusion in order to serve an increased number of K1 inclusion students at the Dever, Harvard-Kent, Edison, East Boston EEC, Condon and Blackstone.
 - Added 9th grade inclusion to two schools: Fenway and the Muniz.
 - Additional changes related to special education capacity were made at the Channing, Eliot, East Boston EEC, and the Manning.
 - Added an additional SLIFE class to the Edison.
 - Increased projections at the Sumner and Mildred Ave to accommodate additional BLS students.

Across these three areas, school budgets have increased by a total of \$12,795,800 since the original proposal.

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 work we've continued

to do since this budget process began is review and plan for what immediate work can begin as a result of the systemic improvement plan, council of great city schools reports on special education, transportation, and school safety and finally, our OMME strategic plan. In our updated presentation you'll see more details on where we plan to focus immediately and some of the work we're looking at for future budgets. As I have said before- the central office must be in support of our schools so our schools can be in support of our students and families.

I want to thank 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. I also want to thank the school committee for always pushing us to think in different ways and for the work you'll do to hold us accountable. It's been a hard few years, but we are building on the things that are working and strengthening the areas that need support so that going forward BPS will be the stable, high functioning District our students, families and staff need and deserve.

Sincerely,

Mary Skipper
Superintendent