



## **OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REMOTE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**February 2, 2022**

The Boston School Committee held a remote meeting on February 2, 2022 at 5 p.m. on Zoom. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee), email [feedback@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:feedback@bostonpublicschools.org) or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

### **ATTENDANCE**

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Jeri Robinson; Vice Chairperson Michael O’Neill; Dr. Stephen Alkins; Brandon Cardet-Hernandez; Lorena Lopera; Rafaela Polanco Garcia; and Alternative Student Representative Tiffany Luo.

School Committee Members Absent: Quoc Tran; and Student Representative Xyra Mercer.

### **DOCUMENTS PRESENTED**

[Agenda](#)

[Meeting Minutes: January 26, 2022](#)

[English Language Learners Task Force Nominations Memo](#)

[FY23 Superintendent's Budget Memo to School Committee](#)

[FY23 Proposed Budget Presentation](#)

[FY23 Budget Proposal Presentation Equity Impact Statement](#)

[Additional FY23 Budget Documents](#)

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## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Jeri Robinson called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. Mr. Tran and Ms. Mercer were absent. Mr. O’Neill and Ms. Lopera joined the meeting immediately after roll call. All other members were present.

Ms. Robinson said that tonight’s meeting was being streamed live on Zoom. It will be rebroadcast on Boston City TV. It will also be posted at [bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee](http://bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee) and on YouTube. She announced that simultaneous interpretation services were available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cabo Verdean, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin and American Sign Language (ASL). The interpreters introduced themselves and gave instructions in their native language on how to access simultaneous interpretation by changing the Zoom channel. Translated meeting documents were posted at [www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee) prior to the start of the meeting.

## **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

**Approved** – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the January 26, 2022 School Committee meeting.

## **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

*As prepared for delivery.*

Thank you, Madame Chair, and thank you all for joining us tonight. We have officially entered into the BPS Budget Season, which will be the core focus of our presentations this evening. I will preview and introduce the proposed FY23 BPS Budget later in my report. I will first share a few updates and highlights. However, I will begin with the acknowledgement of two BPS educators gone too soon.

It is with great sadness that I announce the passing of Marion Fahey, former Boston Public Schools Superintendent. During Ms. Fahey's tenure as superintendent, she played a critical role in implementing the desegregation of the Boston Public School system, a noble task laying the foundation for the equity based educational opportunities we endeavor to increase today. Ms. Fahey most recently served as the former Director and Clerk of the Hingham Institution for Savings from 1992 through 2015 when she retired. She was instrumental in the effort by the present management group to establish control at Hingham, ensuring that the Bank would remain independent and run for the benefit of its owners and its community over the next thirty years. The Boston Public Schools and South Shore communities have lost an education and access champion. Ms. Fahey passed away peacefully in her home on January 11 at the age of 96. She will be missed.

I learned earlier this week that one of our greatly revered, retired BPS teachers had passed away. Anna Mae Dancy made her transition on Saturday, January 15, 2022 at the age of 90. She was, as

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her children describe her “the epitome of an Educator and Coach”. She taught History, Health and Physical Education to thousands of young people from Mississippi to Missouri to Massachusetts. In Massachusetts, she began her tenure with BPS in 1967 as a substitute teacher, later moving into a permanent educator role at many of our schools including the Martin Luther King School, the Solomon Lewenberg Middle School, Boston Technical High School and Madison Park High School. She retired in 1998 after a 31 year BPS education career. In the summer months, she oversaw the operation of youth programs at the Norfolk and Almont Parks in Mattapan. During this time, she instilled in countless youth the importance of self-love, social etiquette and education. She also taught social etiquette classes at the Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts in Roxbury, Massachusetts as well as engaged in several political campaigns. In 1956, she married James Dancy Sr., and of that union seven children were born, who all went on to become Educators, Lawyers and Public Servants. Some of whom also went on to work for the district, including former Madison Park High School headmaster, Dr. Deborah Dancy. She reared her children to be responsible, respectful, strong, to appreciate life and to have dignity. Although I did not have a chance to meet Mrs. Dancy, I am aware of her affect on so many of our educators and the BPS community at large. I would like to send my sincere condolences to the Dancy family, and all of those touched by her life. My thoughts and prayers are with you as you remember and celebrate this wonderful woman who taught and cared for so many of our children. I will now move on to the highlights portion of my report.

The month of February represents the kick off of many national observances across the United States. Many of us participate in Valentine's Day, showing love and affection toward those closest to us. Others consider Super Bowl Sunday a major observance, cheering on their favorite team on to success. In the same vein of celebration, February also begins the observance of Black History Month. I'd like to share a bit about its origins. Black History Month, also known as African American History Month, is a month-long observance in the US, and is considered a chance to celebrate Black achievement and provide a fresh reminder to take stock of where systemic racism persists, giving visibility to the people and organizations creating change. The precursor to Black History Month was created in 1926 in the United States, when historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History announced the second week of February to be "*Negro History Week*". This week was chosen because it coincided with the birthday of Abraham Lincoln on February 12 and that of Frederick Douglass on February 14, both of which dates black communities had celebrated together since the late 19th century.

It is important to note that February may have also been chosen for Black History Month as National Freedom Day is recognized, marking the signing of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which outlawed slavery on February 1, 1865. Passed in a bill by our U.S. congress in 1947, and signed into law by President Harry S. Truman in 1948, February 1 is an officially designated observance in America for Black Americans. Black History Month was first proposed by black educators and the Black United Students at Kent State University in February 1969. The first celebration of Black History Month took place at Kent State a year later, from January 2 to February 28, 1970. If there are any educators and students listening tonight, I want you to know that you have the power to create ideas that will change the world for years to come. Six years later, Black History Month was being celebrated all across the country in educational institutions,

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centers for Black culture and community centers, both great and small, when President Gerald Ford recognized Black History Month in 1976, during the celebration of the United States Bicentennial. He urged Americans to "*seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.*"

I would like to wish each person of African descent living in America, a Happy Black History Month. Although the Black experience in the U.S. has been filled with strife and struggle, it is also an experience filled with rich heritage and resilience. I am proud to be a representative of that heritage, and I look forward to sharing in the many events that we will host within BPS and Central Office this month, including students from the Orchard Gardens K-8 School who will be performing short video biographies of important figures in Black History to be played on Boston 25 News with Crystal Haynes throughout February.

Also, the Office of Equity, Strategy and Opportunity Gaps is hosting two Black History Month events this month for students, families and the entire BPS Community as shown on your screen, with two events occurring on Thursday, February 10 and a fireside chat with our Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley on February 17. If you are interested in joining any of these events, please email [strategy@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:strategy@bostonpublicschools.org). Lastly, be sure to mark your calendars for another event on Thursday, February 17th at 7pm, when [www.bpsarts.org](http://www.bpsarts.org) will be a livestream tribute to Black History Month featuring dance from the Boston Arts Academy, the DEAFinitely Dance Crew from the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the O'Bryant High School Hip-Hop Collective, the English High School Step Team and more!

February 1 also marks the beginning of another celebration and season of cultural observance. To all celebrating members of the Asian and Pacific Island Diaspora, I wish you a Happy Lunar New Year! This year celebrates the Year of The Tiger, a beautiful animal that is known for its extreme competitiveness, courage and ambition. While tigers are ambitious, they are also very generous animals with a drive to help others. These last two years have been extremely tough on all of us individually and collectively. My hope is that you will step into this Lunar New Year with the ambition to continue pushing forward through such challenging times, and with the courage to show up as your best and unique self each and every day. While Tigers are very independent animals, they are also part of the larger animal kingdom and rely on others to survive. As we embark on this new year, remember to lean on your peers and your many wonderful and brilliant educators as much as you need to. As I always say, we are all better together! It is perfect that we are celebrating an animal such as the Tiger this year, because I would like to ask each and every one of you to go into this new year courageous and with lots of ambition, while also remembering to be kind and generous to your peers, teachers and loved ones. Let's all be Tigers this year, and live unapologetically with the courage, strength and ambition to continue getting through these uncertain times. I am looking forward to hearing about and seeing the photos and videos of all the celebrations that take place across BPS between now and February 15, filled with some of our amazingly talented performers. I am especially looking forward to seeing a video of the beautiful, traditional lion dance. We will share photos and videos of these Lunar New Year celebrations on our various social media platforms as they come in. We have already shared videos of the celebrations at the Mather School, and look

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forward to the videos from the Josiah Quincy School. Again, wishing a joyous Lunar New Year to all who celebrate. Wishing you all happiness and prosperity in the Year of the Tiger!

This next highlight personifies the power of persistence and laser focus on a single goal, despite your personal circumstance. Mohamed Abanoor is an alumnus of the Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the school's Class of 2019 Valedictorian! Mohamed's goal was to become a police officer with the City of Boston. Unfortunately, not everyone believed he could do it because he is Deaf. However, like most people who have their heart and mind set on an outcome, Mohamed saw his goal through to the end. I am so happy to announce that he was recently hired by the Boston Police Department as a Police Cadet! His success resulted from his unwavering faith in his abilities and extraordinary effort despite others' limiting beliefs. Mohamed, I am so proud of you. Mohamed's story is an inspiration to us all and reminds us that no matter what obstacles stand in our way, we should never give up on our dreams. To our incredible BPS staff who encourage our students to achieve their dreams, I thank you for your efforts to cultivate generations of young people who are not just dreamers, but achievers. Continue to blaze a trail, Mohamed, and thank you in advance for protecting us and the City of Boston in your new role! I will now move on to district updates.

As you might have seen, the media has written about our graduation data over the past few years based on audits from the City. The issue dates back to 2014 and focuses on the specific paperwork that is required to be filed when a student leaves the district. Graduation rates are calculated based on a cohort of students who enter in the 9th grade of a given year. Over their four years of high school, students come and go in that cohort, for a variety of reasons, such as when they transfer between schools and districts, or move between states and countries. If a student leaves for any reason from the cohort, the District must have documentation on file - paperwork uploaded and kept on record at the school site. The threshold for what is accepted as acceptable documentation is set at a very high level, which can make it practically difficult to produce. It can be challenging finding students who have exited the district. It takes a constant watch, good phone numbers, and a lot of follow up to get the records from other school districts.

My team has been working to address this issue by issuing additional guidance and technical assistance for school leaders and tracking the issues to ensure the data we collect and report is accurate. We are committed to following the law and to holding ourselves accountable for accurate reporting. The auditors review a small sample of records each year – roughly 50 to 60 students out of the typical 4,000-student graduation cohort. The sample is not intended to be statistically valid. Auditors have identified issues for a low of 7 students to a high of 32 students in any given year. Because graduation rates are based on a cohort of students who enter 9th grade together, and we have seen students move in and out of a cohort, it can be difficult to extrapolate how missing paperwork for a handful of students would impact a graduation or dropout rate. I am grateful to the school leaders, educators, and staff who work so closely with our students to keep them engaged and find pathways to graduation with each individual student. BPS reaches out to every student to discuss their plans and work with them to stay in school and on their path to graduation. During the pandemic, this work took on extra importance and I am proud of the extended efforts so many educators put in to reach students and support them reaching the finish

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line. We recognize the hard work of our students and educators and I am still proud of every one of our students who earned their diplomas.

As you already know, athletic and performing arts activities have resumed since the temporary pause we had to observe as we were going through the Omicron surge. As of Monday, January 31, we progressed to allow limited spectators at athletic events. There will be a limit of two spectators allowed per student athlete for all athletic events in BPS facilities until we receive further guidance making allowance for increased spectator capacity. We continue to make progress in the midst of the pandemic as the aftermath of the Omicron variant begins to wane. We will continue to update you with guidance as it becomes available. I'd like to recognize another update in the realm of athletics. Today is National Girls, Women and Sports Day! National Girls, Women and Sports Day celebrates the achievements of girls and women in sports, and advocates for equal access and opportunity. This year marks the 50th Anniversary of Title IX (9), which opened the doors for girls and women's participation in sports. As a woman athlete myself, I am always proud to see the competitive drive and camaraderie of women identifying athletes in a field that has historically excluded us. Additionally, the Winter City Championship Season started yesterday with Indoor Track & Field and BPS was victorious!

Congratulations to the 2022 Indoor Track & Field City Champions

- The Girls track and field team from Boston Latin Academy
- The Boys track and field team from the O'Bryant

I am so proud of you! Continue to make BPS proud! As a last athletics update, the Swimming City Championship is tomorrow, Thursday Feb 3 at 3:30pm at Mandela Athletic Complex, shared by the Madison Park and O'Bryant high schools. The championship will be recorded and posted at a later date. We wish all of our participating students great luck. Bring home the trophy!

I will now move onto school based updates. BPS has extended its priority school registration deadline for grades K0, K1, 6, 7, and 9 to this Friday, February 4. We came to this decision to extend the deadline after reviewing and taking into consideration the absence rate and necessary recovery time due to the Omicron variant-driven surge that hampered some collection efforts in the first few weeks of January. This additional time will be used to follow up with families and staff, ensure equitable access, and so that new BPS families may also continue to make registration appointments with our Welcome Centers. The Priority Round for grades K0, K1, 6, 7, and 9 will be extended by one week, through February 4, to ensure that we are able to collect all school choice forms from our schools. Additionally, we sent written correspondence directly to our families about our extended registration deadline last week, and anticipate this extension will yield the responses we expect and are hopeful to see progress.

In last week's report, I reported on the delay of the implementation of the City of Boston's new COVID-19 vaccine requirement on January 15. A day after my last report, we learned that the Massachusetts Appeals Court issued a temporary stay, delaying the full implementation of this mandate while a final decision is made. This means, all City employees, including BPS staff, are currently reporting to work, regardless of vaccination status. We await the final decision from the

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court, and will remain in negotiations with our union partners regarding the Vaccine Policy. For those employees who are not yet vaccinated, we do still have the weekly testing requirement in place. I remain thankful for the 94% of our workforce who have received their vaccine, which is still an important step to ensuring the health and safety for our students and staff. As mentioned last week, we will continue to work with any employee who needs more information or support accessing a vaccine. We value our workforce and will provide and support any employees who are still hesitant. We are here for you.

As members will recall, we report our confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 to the state on Wednesdays and update our public dashboard on Thursdays. We continue to see positive movement as the number of cases reported this week is 431 total, including 331 students and 100 staff members. That is down from a high of 1,787 total cases during the week of January 6. I am excited to announce additional investments in our students' learning and access to technology. Mayor Wu and Senator Markey announced an investment of over \$12 million to bring digital equity and inclusion to nearly 23,000 Boston public housing residents, library users, and school-age families. This new funding provides free access to wireless broadband service and devices to help public housing seniors and residents get online, and will also provide additional Chromebooks for our students to extend access beyond the classroom.

This is another reminder that BPS IS HIRING! Please visit our website at [bostonpublicschools.org/jobs](https://bostonpublicschools.org/jobs) for a full list of our available roles and opportunities with the district. We are also working to simplify the application process, write more approachable job descriptions, and to promote openings via our social media channels. Please email [infoRCD@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:infoRCD@bostonpublicschools.org) with any questions.

Now the moment you all have been waiting for. Tonight, we are here to present and preview the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget. The BPS Finance team has been diligently working with me, our Executive Team, and our partners at the City to present a budget that prioritizes our students, promotes excellence and equity and makes good on our plan to RETURN strong, RECOVER well, and REIMAGINE education in an ever changing world. The Fiscal Year 2023 budget for the Boston Public Schools is guided by the belief that every child, in every classroom, in every school deserves the same, and for some historically under-served students, even greater opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. As we strive to ensure equity of opportunity and enact anti-racist decisions, we are called upon to maintain focus on our values and how those values are demonstrated through our budgets.

The budget we are proposing includes an increase of \$40 million from this year, for a total of a little more than \$1.3 billion. As we enter into the FY 23 budget season, we are incredibly fortunate to have the leadership of Mayor Wu and her administration. The Mayor has expressed her commitment to ensure our students have the teaching and support services they need to reach their full potential. I am grateful to the Mayor and her leadership team for their belief in and dedication to our students, and their partnership in developing a budget that will address the immediate needs of schools, with a solid plan for long-term and sustained success for all of our students, families, and staff. I am also grateful for the partnership of former Mayor Walsh who first believed in my vision for our schools and the strategic plan of the school committee-

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initiating a first ever three-year \$100 million commitment and Mayor Janey, who maintained the historic investments, and now Mayor Wu who will hopefully continue this practice of providing certainty to the school district on its funding, especially the next several years during our recovery. I also want to thank the full City Council who has every year passed the BPS budget and supported our students. I look forward to working with all of the councilors this year, especially, our new Chair of Education Councilor Julia Mejia and New Chair of Ways and Means Taina Anderson Fernandez, to pass this budget that makes major investments in our students' recovery. This budget builds on two years of increases that go directly to our students. This funding is above all cost increases and salaries. It also represents the final installment of the three-year commitment - a \$110 million dollar increase overall these past three years. That's the funding that schools need to ensure we get our students what they need.

Last year, we introduced a framework anchored in three guiding principles: Return, Recover, Reimagine. This continues to be the lens through which we organize our support for students and schools. Our district staff and incredible leaders have worked exceedingly hard to Return well. We must also continue to invest in how our students and schools Recover strong. Academic recovery for our students - with a special focus on those who are most in need - is one of our main priorities of the FY23 budget. We will also continue to focus on social and emotional wellbeing and development, recognizing that students will need time, care, and attention in order to succeed academically. As educators we have long balanced the immediate needs of our students with a forward thinking look to a brighter future. Therefore, we will continue to adapt and evolve to ensure better outcomes for all our students. We will listen to our stakeholders and learn from this pandemic, and we will apply what's worked to our strategy and Reimagine new possibilities, opening up greater opportunities for our students. We can't go back to the pre-pandemic world, and with good reason: the system just didn't work for too many students.

We will make progress towards these goals with new investments from Mayor Wu and the City of Boston. We have leveraged our City's unparalleled financial support to build our "Quality Guarantee." Using a three-year, \$100 million operating investment, we are working to guarantee a baseline of services across all schools through a high-quality experience regardless of school, program, or neighborhood. This quality guarantee will grow to include Student and Family Supports, rigorous curriculum and academics, 21st century facilities, and many enrichment opportunities for all students.

**Student and Family Supports:** We launched our investment in student and family supports with the allocation of a full time nurse at every school in SY20. We built on this foundation in SY21 as we returned to in-person learning with the addition of Family Liaisons to cultivate trust and provide needed support to our families; and we added at least one full-time Social Worker at every school to support the social-emotional needs of students. These investments started before the pandemic, but have only proven to be more crucial to our overall effort to Return strong and Recover well.

To add to this support team we've been building, this year, we are investing in school-based academic counselors. We are investing to support all schools Pre-K to 12 in understanding the post-pandemic profile of our learners is not limited to one grade span, but is necessary across all



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grades. School leaders need our ongoing support coordinating the recovery through our student support teams, our success plans, and providing for our students social emotional needs, including: individual learning plans, special education IEPs, working with Panorama to monitor and hold ourselves accountable to the success plans, and reviewing our English learner data to make sure our students are meeting their academic goals and their needs are met. We believe that these new positions will round out the network to support principals with their school's Student Support Teams.

Curriculum and Academics: Our goal is to create high-quality, rigorous, ethnically and culturally responsive curriculum and instruction that is robust and leads to strong academic pathways. Our team's work is to reconfigure the district to unlock resources and respond to declining enrollment. This year, we have made the difficult decision to close three schools as part of the School Committee's approved plan to streamline the number of school configurations in order to reduce the number of transitions students need to make over the course of their academic careers in BPS. We have also reconfigured 15 elementary schools to add 6th grade and expanded three additional high schools to include 7th and 8th grades. This work builds on the 17 K-6 and 3 other 7-12 expansions over the last 3 years which needs to continue in future years as we progress towards our goal of one point of transition for our students.

In the meantime, we are working with school leaders during this budget season to deliver on access to MassCore at the secondary level and access to more counselors, particularly at the 9th grade level where we have lowered the national student to teacher ratio by 100 students to 1:150, instead of 1:250 to give the right amount of support needed after this pandemic to reach these new and higher graduation standards. We've also added more physical education, art, music, and academic enrichment within student schedules. This is the work we will collaboratively engage in with school leadership teams to review each school's existing allocation and how they schedule students. I am especially proud of this work to standardize the graduation requirements across all high schools and set the bar high to college and career readiness as we strive toward our strategic goals of accelerated learning and an equitable opportunity for all.

Facilities: Our FY23 budget will continue to invest in facilities repairs through our Operating Budget and will make critical investments in new facilities through our Capital Budget. Our quality guarantee will bring more gyms, libraries, and auditoriums where they don't already exist. Through new buildings, we add critical spaces that are missing from our existing facilities: nursing, counseling, sensory and therapeutic spaces, and outdoor learning, gardens and play spaces. We are laying the groundwork for these investments but recognize it takes multiple years and sustained focus to achieve the results our students deserve.

Extended learning and Enrichment: The final area of our quality guarantee is extended learning and enrichment. In our operating budget, we will expand access to quality library collections. As we expand our high school redesign, we will continue to invest in athletics at the elementary, middle and high school level.

Finally, I want to address the issue of enrollment. It is challenging that we continue to experience declines in enrollment across our schools. This is largely due to broader demographic trends;

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there are fewer students living in Boston and entering our school district as the birth rate declines and cost of living continues to rise. Our plan is to continue to support schools through this period of instability with soft landing funding. We know this is only a short-term solution. We need to make bigger, system-wide adjustments —and with your courageous help, we will over time. Therefore, as we did last year, we provided additional funding outside of weighted student funding to maintain programs and services to students. In FY22, total soft landings for schools was \$27.4 million; in FY23, we are providing \$54.1 million in soft landings (an increase of \$26.7 million). We know that this soft landing is important for us this year as we continue to recover from the pandemic, but we also know it's not sustainable long-term. As a district we will continue to support our schools, while also understanding what future budgets will look like.

While the ever-evolving pandemic continues to challenge us, it has also spurred enormous creativity and innovation in the way we think about our student's needs and the way we do our work. This budget offers a unique opportunity to partner with the Mayor, City Council and this committee to make progress towards our goal of equity and excellence for all students. I look forward to working alongside all of you to make these goals a reality. Thank you in advance for your partnership and your commitment to our students. I will now turn it over to our School Committee members to respond to any questions about my report, and then later you will hear from our Chief Financial Officer, Nate Kuder, Deputy Chief Financial Officer David Bloom, Deputy Superintendent of Academics Drew Echelson and myself, who will present the official FY23 Budget proposal.

That is my Superintendent's Report for this evening.

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Mr. Cardet-Hernandez spoke about the graduation data issue, emphasizing the importance of earning and maintaining public trust. He requested that the Superintendent and her team provide a statistically significant sample of the graduation data in an effort to rebuild trust with families. The Superintendent said that she has proposed and funded a Risk Management Office that will address compliance and auditing issues. She said that hiring for those positions has been challenging, citing labor shortages, but said that it is a priority for her administration. Mr. Cardet-Hernandez encouraged central office staff to provide support to schools that are having trouble obtaining necessary documentation.

Ms. Luo asked if additional funding will be provided to schools that are expanding grade configurations. The Superintendent explained that under the Weighted Student Funding formula, the funding follows the students.

Mr. O'Neill said that he is sensitive to the challenges of tracking documentation and requested clarity about the scale of the problem. Senior Executive Director of the Office of Data and Accountability Monica Hogan explained that the state's audit did not look at a statistically valid sample, making it difficult to extrapolate what the percentage of a larger cohort would be. Mr. O'Neill echoed Mr. Cardet-Hernandez's comments about the importance of trust and transparency. He urged the district to immediately hire the Risk Management positions and encouraged the Superintendent to collaborate with the members of the former Internal Audit

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Task Force to find qualified candidates. Chief of Technology Mark Racine clarified that the issues flagged in the audit do not mean that the wrong withdrawal code was used, only that the documentation provided was insufficient.

Ms. Lopera asked what support the district is providing to the King and Trotter Elementary School communities to support transitions due to their planned grade reconfigurations. She asked about if the schools would be adding early childhood seats. The Superintendent said that the school leaders have identified a transition coordinator who is working directly with the Office of Welcome Services and meeting with families about their choices for next school year. Senior Advisor Megan Costello said that the schools are hosting meetings with families. Mr. Kuder said that the district is not planning to add K0 seats at those schools this fall.

Ms. Robinson encouraged the district to engage with families at the Trotter and King Schools.

Ms. Luo encouraged the district to engage with student leaders at Burke High School about the impact of that school's expansion.

*Approved* – On roll call, the Committee unanimously approved the Superintendent's Report.

## GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people advocated for the grade expansion of the P.A. Shaw Elementary School:

- Franchesca Jeanty, Dorchester resident and Shaw student
- Adriana Wade Smith, Mattapan resident and Shaw student
- Claire Malcolm, Dorchester resident and Shaw parent
- Darius Anderson, Mattapan resident and Shaw parent
- Navon Anderson, Mattapan resident and Shaw student
- Claudia Fernandez, Dorchester resident and Shaw parent
- Dominique Alston, Dorchester resident and Shaw parent
- Sabine Ferdinand, Stoughton resident and Shaw teacher
  
- Mike Heichman, Dorchester resident and Boston Education Justice Alliance member, testified regarding a number of educational issues.
- Edith Bazile, Dorchester resident and advocate, testified regarding support for Black students and educators
- Sharon Hinton, Hyde Park resident and advocate, Black Teachers Matter, testified regarding the Memorandum of Understanding between the Boston Public Schools and the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Cheryl Buckman, South Boston resident and BPS parent, testified regarding the COVID health and safety protocols.

## REPORTS

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***English Language Learners Task Force Nominations*** - Ms. Robinson nominated Committee member Rafaela Polanco Garcia to serve as co-chair of the Committee's English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force alongside long-time co-chair Suzanne Lee. Ms. Polanco Garcia will fill the leadership role formerly held by Ernani DeAraujo whose School Committee term expired in January. Ms. Robinson nominated Roxi Harvey, chair of the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpEdPAC), to serve as a member of the ELL Task Force.

Ms. Polanco Garcia is BPS parent and immigrant with a background in law and bilingual advocacy. Her activism on behalf of the Latinx community in education includes working on the No on 2 campaign in 2016, helping to pass a sanctuary schools resolution, and passing the Student Opportunity Act. Since 2015, she has served as the Director of Parent Engagement and Organizing at St. Stephen's Youth Programs in the South End. Ms. Harvey is a BPS parent who has served as chair of SpEdPAC since 2019, representing more than 10,000 BPS students with disabilities. She has been participating in ELL Task Force meetings as a member of the public for over a year, bringing her vast knowledge of special education issues.

Established by the Boston School Committee in 2009, the ELL Task Force serves as a monitoring body and thought partner that supports BPS in addressing the needs of our increasingly multicultural and multilingual district. Nearly one in every two students speaks a language other than English at home and students come from 139 different countries.

Ms. Polanco Garcia said that she is honored to serve on the Task Force. Speaking in both English and Spanish, Ms. Lopera congratulated Ms. Polanco Garcia and thanked her for her willingness to take on this role. Dr. Alkins described it as an opportunity to empower marginalized communities and strengthen native language support. Ms. Luo spoke about her experience as an English learner and congratulated Ms. Polanco Garcia. Mr. O'Neill thanked Ms. Harvey for her service. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the ELL Task Force appointments on February 15, 2022.

**Superintendent's Preliminary Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Budget Recommendation** - The Superintendent presented to the School Committee her Preliminary Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Budget Recommendation totaling approximately \$1.3 billion, an increase of \$40 million over the current fiscal year budget. Chief Financial Officer Nate Kuder, Deputy Superintendent of Academics Drew Echelson, and Deputy Chief Academic Officer and Interim Assistant Superintendent for the Office of English Learners Farah Assiraj co-presented with the Superintendent.

The proposed budget, which will undergo a weeks-long public review process, represents the largest appropriation to BPS ever made by the City of Boston and features targeted investments in:

- Developing and implementing a Quality Guarantee Framework - \$37.8m
- Supporting accelerated academic outcomes for students - \$26.7m

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- Resources to fully adopt the MassCore curriculum - \$9.4m

The funding is aligned to the five-year BPS Strategic Plan and remains focused on academic recovery for BPS students - with a special focus on those who are most in need. The budget continues plans to focus on the social-emotional wellbeing and development of students, recognizing that each student needs time, care, and attention to succeed academically.

BPS is projected to receive an increase of \$40 million, representing an 11% increase over last year's allocation. Per-pupil funding will increase next year by almost \$2,200 per pupil and has increased by almost \$6,400 (31%) over the last 3 years, from approximately \$20,700 in FY20, \$21,700 in FY21, and \$24,900 in FY22, to \$27,100 in FY23.

Investments for equitable recovery will continue to directly support students who have been most impacted by the pandemic. Additionally, federal funding will continue to bolster future reimagining of BPS, guide implementation of the Strategic Plan, support BPS' commitment to being an antiracist district, and advance equitable outcomes for all students, particularly students of color, English learners, students with disabilities, and students experiencing poverty.

BPS launched its investment in student and family supports with the allocation of a full time nurse at every school in SY20, providing additional support in SY21 as students and staff returned to in-person learning with added Family Liaisons to cultivate trust and to provide needed support to families. Since then, BPS has also added full-time social workers at every school to support social and emotional needs of students. These investments started before the pandemic, but have proven crucial in the overall effort to Return strong and Recover well for BPS. With the FY23 budget, BPS makes plans to continue building upon this support team by investing in school-based academic counselors to help round out the support network to assist principals with their schools' Student Support Teams.

The Boston Public Schools strive to create a high-quality, rigorous, ethnically and culturally responsive curriculum supplemented by instruction that is robust and leads to strong academic pathways. This budget season, BPS is working with school leaders to deliver on access to MassCore at the secondary level, and access to more physical education, art, music, and academic enrichment within student schedules. \$6.2M of the FY23 budget is being allocated to support all high schools in implementing MassCore in 9th grade to set the bar high for college and career readiness as BPS strives towards the strategic goal of accelerated learning and an equitable opportunity for all.

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The FY23 budget will also continue to invest in facilities repairs through the operating budget, and BPS will make critical investments in new facilities through the capital budget. The Quality Guarantee Framework aims to build more gyms, libraries, and auditoriums, and will add critical spaces that are missing from existing facilities. Additionally, the budget will push forward the BPS Quality Guarantee Framework through the expansion of access to quality library collections. As BPS continues to expand high school redesign work, there will be continued investments in athletics at the elementary, middle and high school levels to ensure further learning and enrichment.

Key investments in the proposed FY23 budget include:

Quality Guarantee

- \$7.8M for expanded access to libraries
- \$7.2M to expand Social Emotional Supports
- \$22.8M investments in high quality facilities

Academic Outcomes

- \$5M for Bilingual Supports and Native Language Programming
- \$10M to expand K-8 Academic Counseling
- \$6.7M to reimagine schools, practices, and structures for students with disabilities
- \$5.9M investments in Equitable Literacy

MassCore Participation

- \$6.2M to support all high schools' implementation of MassCore in 9th grade
- \$3.2M for additional 9th grade guidance counselors

Since FY20, BPS has seen an increase of \$2 million in enrollment based funding, \$49 million in soft landings for schools, and \$44 million in positions allocated through the Quality Guarantee Framework. The soft landing funds are directed to schools that are experiencing enrollment declines to prevent a reduction in services. These increased investments, combined with the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, give BPS an incredible opportunity to further invest in student success.

BPS has launched an exciting new project to reimagine what school funding models look like, ensuring the model is reflective of the priorities of students and families, while equitably supporting the unique programming at schools and ensuring a quality guarantee at every school. The development of a more equitable funding formula will support unique programming at schools, allow schools to fund non-compliance positions and programming, enable schools to provide a robust educational experience for students regardless of declining enrollment, and propel high needs students to the forefront.

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The School Committee and Superintendent will also host three remote budget hearings and opportunities for the public to get involved:

- Thursday, February 10 at 5 p.m. — Budget hearing focused on school budgets
- Tuesday, March 1 at 5 p.m. — Budget hearing focused on central office budgets
- Wednesday, March 16 at 5 p.m. — Budget hearing for the Finance Team to address questions on the final FY23 proposal
- Wednesday, March 23 at 5 p.m. — School Committee meeting and FY23 Budget Vote

Dr. Alkins asked about the district's long-term strategy to support programs that are being funded by ESSER funds, as well as future enrollment predictions. Mr. Kuder said that ESSER funding strategy is focused on pandemic recovery efforts and that those investments should not be needed going forward. Ongoing costs should be part of the district's operating budget and not for staffing. Mr. Kuder said that BPS anticipates multiple years of enrollment decline.

Mr. Cardet-Hernandez asked clarifying questions about ESSER investments. Mr. Kuder clarified that some ESSER funding is being spent on staffing positions to support student recovery from the pandemic. Mr. Cardet-Hernandez requested a headcount of positions funded by ESSER funds. He asked how BPS is planning for enrollment declines. Mr. Kuder said that the district is adjusting school-based capacity where appropriate. He spoke about the challenges of adjusting for enrollment capacity, adding that the district will have to engage in difficult conversations in the future.

Ms. Lopera asked about the district's strategies to increase enrollment in the early grades. Mr. Kuder said that the Office of Welcome Services is leading that effort. He said that BPS needs to better communicate its quality guarantee. Ms. Lopera encouraged the district to better communicate its enrollment strategy and really engage with the community. The Superintendent spoke about the district's communication and marketing strategies.

Ms. Lopera and Mr. Cardet-Hernandez spoke about the challenges of navigating the BPS registration process.

Mr. Kuder said that Chief of Accountability Eva Mitchell will provide the Committee with an ESSER update.

Ms. Polanco Garcia expressed support for MassCore investments. She suggested including community organizations in the planning process.

Ms. Luo asked about student transitions. Mr. Kuder explained the district's grade reconfiguration strategy and the transitional support that the district provides to families. He said that he and his team plan to meet with the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) to discuss the FY23 budget proposal.

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Dr. Alkins asked how the district is preparing for the end of ESSER funding. Mr. Kuder said that the budget team will discuss ESSER funding at the March 1st budget hearing focused on central budgets.

Mr. Cardet-Hernandez encouraged the district to be more explicit about what families can expect as part of the quality guarantee. He asked about social-emotional screening and support. The Superintendent said that she would share the results of the BPS Youth Risk Behavior Survey when it's available.

Ms. Luo encouraged the district to strengthen its communication about the social-emotional resources that are available for students. She spoke about the importance of social workers and providing guidance for students who do not want to follow the traditional college path. The Superintendent spoke about the opportunities provided at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School and the important role of guidance counselors. She said that she would follow up with information about the racial and linguistic diversity of new hires.

Mr. O'Neill thanked the Superintendent for securing \$100 million in funding from the City over three years. He expressed concern about potential ESSER funding cliffs in the future, adding that making cuts is extraordinarily painful. He said that the district's budget projections may be a bit conservative, adding that the Council of Great City Schools is cautiously optimistic that there will be increases in Title I funding.

Ms. Robinson noted that the district's use of soft landings has grown significantly in the past two years. She requested an analysis of which schools have received multiple soft landings in recent years. She said that the district funding should support student impact, not buildings.

Mr. Kuder explained that the district provides schools with soft landings to mitigate the impact of small enrollment fluctuations. He said that the increase in soft landings is an intentional strategy to support schools recovering from the disruption caused by the pandemic. He offered to share more information about soft landings at the February 10th budget hearing, along with a warning list of schools.

Ms. Robinson asked if school budgets and pathways are created using the Racial Equity Planning Tool. Mr. Kuder and Mr. Bloom spoke about the role of school-based equity roundtables in the budget planning process, adding that there are certain cases when the district will use a racial equity analysis on specific targeted decisions. They emphasized the importance of the foundation for quality guarantee in supporting the district's equity agenda.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON REPORTS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**



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None.

**ADJOURN**

At approximately 9:35 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan  
Executive Secretary