



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REMOTE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE FY 22 BUDGET HEARING

March 9, 2021

The Boston School Committee held a remote FY22 budget hearing on March 9, 2021 at 5 p.m. on Zoom. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee, email feedback@bostonpublicschools.org or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Vice Chairperson Michael O'Neill; Dr. Hardin Coleman; Ernani DeAraujo; Jeri Robinson; and Quoc Tran.

School Committee Member Absent: Dr. Lorna Rivera.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

FY22 Budget: Central PowerPoint, March 9, 2021

Superintendent's Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Preliminary Budget Recommendation PowerPoint, February 3, 2021

FY22 Budget Recommendation Equity Impact Statement, February 3, 2021

Superintendent's Letter to Boston School Committee re: FY22 Budget Recommendation February 3, 2021

FY22 Budget Basics

FY22 Budget Recommendation (Excel Version)

1. By Account and Fund
2. By Program and Fund
3. By Department and Fund

Weighted Student Funding

1. WSF: District Table
2. WSF: Reserve Table
3. WSF: Historical Comparison of Weights FY12-FY22
4. WSF: School by School Comparison
5. Individual School Allocation WSF One-Pagers

School Allocations

1. Total Allocations to Schools
2. Supplemental Funding to Schools
3. Individual School Allocation One-Pagers

Background Documents

1. Budget Basics
2. Overview of Proposed Reserve Accounts
3. Grant Projections
4. Overview of Title I
5. Turnaround Schools and School Improvement Grant Funding

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Oliver-Dávila called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. Ms. Sullivan called the roll. All members were present with the exception of Dr. Rivera.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila said that tonight's hearing was being streamed live on Zoom. It will be rebroadcast on Boston City TV. It will also be posted at bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee and on YouTube. She announced that simultaneous interpretation services were available 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. Meeting documents were translated into all of the official BPS languages and publicly posted at www.bostonpublicschools.org/schoolcommittee.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila made the following statement:

As many of you know, my life's work is centered on student voices. I became a school committee member because this work is personal to me and I believe in our students and their wisdom with all my heart, and most especially our Boston students. So as students shared their stories over the past few days, I was heartbroken to hear the pain in their voices as they talked about their experiences. And I want to unequivocally say that this School Committee, and the Superintendent are committed to working with our students to address all of the concerns that were raised and to find a path forward together.

The Superintendent and her team have spent the last several days talking with students and we will continue to talk with students and hear their concerns. The information recently shared by students is serious and needs to be fully reviewed. We must make sure that there are safe places where students can share, and supportive and confidential processes in place for how we handle their concerns.

As the Superintendent has announced, BPS has suspended its relationship with Youth on Board pending an external investigation and discontinued all aspects of the Re-Evaluation Counseling offered by Youth on Board. These are important steps to make Boston Public Schools-a place where all students feel welcome and safe, where they can explore their greatest dreams and face down their biggest fears. I want Boston Public Schools to be a place where all students shine and I know we have a lot of work to get there. I am committed to this work. The entire School Committee is committed to this work. And most importantly, The superintendent is committed to this work.

This has been a really long and hard year. All of us, but especially our young people, have had to take on more, quickly pivot to the moment, with little certainty. We all know someone who was directly impacted by the pandemic. This year has taught us that things can change in an instant, but here is what I have learned from every challenge in my life: It does get better. We will be ok. Together, one day at a time, we'll keep pushing for a better tomorrow.

The Superintendent echoed Ms. Oliver-Dávila's comments. She reaffirmed that BPS values student voice and is committed to work together with students. She said that her team is working with school leaders to make sure students have the support they need. BPS staff has contacted all of the families of Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) members personally and offered students behavioral health support.

FY22 BUDGET: CENTRAL

FY22 Budget: Central - Chief Financial Officer Nate Kuder and BPS Budget Director Miriam Rubin presented a report on the Superintendent's preliminary Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) \$1.3 billion operating budget recommendation with a focus on the central budget. The student-focused budget is framed with the guiding principles of *Return, Recover, and Reimagine*. The recovery budget is heavily focused on improving student outcomes, advancing equitable recovery, and promoting the whole school community's health and wellness amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Co-presenters included Director of Grants & External Funds Yvonne Macrae; BPS Business Manager Naveen Reddy; BPS Chief of Student, Family and Community Advancement Monica Roberts; BPS Assistant Superintendent of Student and Community Impact Ilyitch Tabora; BPS Chief Information Officer Mark Racine; BPS Chief Equity & Strategy Officer Charles Grandson; and Senior Director of Health Services Djenny Lobo Lopes.

The FY22 budget, the largest appropriation to BPS ever made by the City of Boston, features targeted investments in academic, health and wellness, and community supports. These investments align with the five-year BPS Strategic Plan. The proposed funding remains focused

on prioritizing the lowest-performing schools while directing funds to strategies with a demonstrated ability to improve outcomes for the district's highest-need students.

BPS is fortunate to have the steadfast commitment from the City of Boston to maintain the \$80M investment in BPS for this fiscal year. BPS projects to receive \$36M, which represents a 7% increase over last year's allocation, at a time when many other interstate and national districts are facing budget cuts. Per-pupil funding will increase by almost \$1,700 per pupil, from approximately \$21,800 in FY21 to \$23,500 in FY22. BPS intends to repair the damage inflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic by working to understand better where students are, assess their learning, target interventions, add support, and align expectations with outcomes.

Initial investments will support a successful reopening of schools and promote a restart of initiatives and projects paused due to the COVID-19 emergency. Investments for equitable recovery will directly support students who have been most impacted by the pandemic. Finally, federal funding will vastly bolster our future reimagining of BPS, guide implementation of the Strategic Plan, support our 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 received \$32.3M in supplemental funding as part of the CARES Act for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund. This funding provides local districts with emergency relief funds to address the impact of COVID-19. We expect to allocate approximately \$5M to private and parochial schools based in Boston per federal requirements. Additionally, we will utilize CARES Act funding for summer learning opportunities, personal protective gear, and health equipment. In addition, BPS will receive approximately \$123M of funding from the ESSER II Fund due to the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA). BPS plans to use these additional funds to address critical needs within the community due to the pandemic. BPS will hold community engagement sessions on ESSER II funding and likely ESSER III in April and May; develop application to DESE in June and July (application is due on July 30th); and the School Committee will vote to approve ESSER II funding in August.

Key investments in the proposed FY22 budget include:

- \$1.4M for additional daytime custodial staff, investing in building condition and cleanliness
- \$18.5M to support schools experiencing enrollment declines;
- \$10M to elementary social workers for a multi-tiered system of support for students;
- \$6.8M to multilingual family liaisons.

The recovery budget proposal includes an expansion of the FY21 investment in social workers and family liaisons. Seventy-eight percent of social workers hired in FY21 were persons of color and coordinated services and support staff to serve students more effectively. Social workers also contributed to developing a whole-school approach to ensure all of the adults work together to remove barriers to student success, identify struggling students early, and intervene quickly.

Family liaisons help to build relationships with students, families, and school communities. Ninety-eight percent of the family liaisons hired in FY21 were persons of color, who reflect the cultures and speak the languages of the communities they serve. Throughout this challenging period, family liaisons supported outreach to families and students with inconsistent or low online attendance rates to identify the barriers to participation and connected families with community resources for needs like housing, food access, counseling, and more.

Boston Community Hub Schools present an opportunity to reimagine schools and partnerships that offer liberating educational opportunities that transform the lives and outcomes of students, communities and the city.

Hub Schools will provide:

- Shared decision-making and transfer of power to the people
- Family and community partnership and empowerment
- Culturally & linguistically sustaining teaching and curriculum
- Comprehensive anti-racist services, programs, and supports
- Integrated and strategic school-community partnerships
- Restorative & Healing Practices
- Community organizing
- Full-time, dedicated Community Hub School staff member to support the work
- Ongoing, comprehensive Assets & Opportunities Assessments to drive action
- Welcoming schools filled with joy, love and community

BPS is partnering with the YMCA of Greater Boston to pilot Boston Community Hub School Pilot for SY 2021-22. The pilot will serve schools in the Grove Hall Alliance, Gardner Pilot Academy, and dual language schools.

Academic programming and summer planning are underway. BPS is partnering with Boston After School and Beyond and My Brothers' Keeper Initiative to provide culturally and linguistically sustaining academic tutoring and mentoring programs for over 6,000 students across the city. BPS will be running five unique initiatives in the summer of 2021, serving over 16,000 students.

BPS will ensure that all procurement processes and decisions include vendors who are people of color and/or women.

FY22 budget documents are available online at bostonpublicschools.org/budget. The next remote budget hearing will take place on Wednesday, March 17th at 5 p.m., immediately followed by a School Committee meeting. The Committee will vote on the Superintendent's final FY22 budget recommendation on March 24th.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Jason Dias, student, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, and member, Sociedad Latina, testified regarding ethnic studies.

- Ari Rodriguez and Jesiel Alvino, BPS students and members, Sociedad Latina, testified regarding school safety and social-emotional support for students.
- John Mudd, advocate, testified regarding teacher diversity, professional development, and the budget.
- Tarina Harrison, BPS parent, testified regarding the budget.
- Ymaris Matias, parent, Orchard Gardens K-8 School, testified regarding the school's proposed budget.
- Sharon Hinton, member, Black Teachers Matter, testified regarding the proposed budget.
- Ursula Allson, parent, Orchard Gardens K-8 School, testified regarding the school's proposed budget.
- Dorys Gonzalez, parent, Blackstone Elementary School, testified regarding the school's proposed budget and facility conditions.
- Lucy Perez, parent, Blackstone Elementary School, testified regarding the school's proposed budget.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Mr. DeAraujo expressed support for the Hub Schools pilot and said he looks forward to its expansion. He praised the district's strategic investments to improve student outcomes and encouraged the district to measure their impact. Mr. Kuder said that Dr. Grandson and the Opportunity Gaps Office will track the district's progress and report back to the Committee.

Ms. Robinson asked how students will be chosen for summer learning opportunities. The Superintendent said that the planning is currently underway, adding that she will present a full report on summer learning at the March 17th School Committee meeting. Ms. Robinson asked what percentage of students attending Grove Hall-area schools live in Grove Hall. The Superintendent agreed to follow up with the information. Ms. Robinson advocated for the Office of Opportunity Gaps to have sufficient staffing and resources to support the important many gap-closing strategies being led by the district. Ms. Robinson suggested that the district explore reducing class sizes. The Superintendent said that reducing class size for general education students would come with great expense. She spoke about the district's efforts to expand inclusive practices and provide a multi-tiered system of support.

Mr. Tran asked about possibly opening schools as vaccination sites. The Superintendents spoke about the district's efforts to vaccinate BPS employees, noting that BPS will open a clinic for BPS employees at the Gallivan Community Center on March 14th. She said that an approved vaccine for children is not yet available.

Mr. O'Neill asked the Superintendent for her thoughts on state guidance issued earlier that day calling for the return to in-person learning five days a week starting in April. The Superintendent said that it would be difficult for a large, complex system such as Boston to pivot so quickly. She said that she and her team will work with union partners and school leaders to work towards a full reopening, hopefully in the fall. Mr. O'Neill cautioned the district not to spend additional federal funding in a manner that could necessitate cuts later. He asked how the district plans to address facilities concerns raised during public comment. Mr. Kuder spoke about the district's

plans to address deferred maintenance. Mr. O'Neill expressed enthusiasm and support for the Hub Schools model which will provide students with wraparound services.

Ms. Robinson asked about 15 approved waivers granted to schools that are referenced on slide 29. Ms. Tabora said that the majority of waivers increased the allocation of school psychologists for the schools and most included a social worker.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila thanked the City of Boston for providing BPS with a significant funding increase. She said that she looks forward to conversions about ESSER II funding and praised the district's efforts to ensure that all procurement processes and decisions include vendors who are people of color and/or women. She agreed with Mr. O'Neill's earlier comments that the district should not spend money on positions or initiatives it cannot sustain.

ADJOURN

At approximately 7:36 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn the budget hearing.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary