

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: School Committee Members

FROM: Tommy Chang
Superintendent

DATE: February 3rd, 2016

SUBJECT: FY17 Budget Proposal

Tonight our team will share a proposal for how to balance the FY17 budget. As we head into a series of conversations and public engagement in the coming two months, I would like to reflect on the values that have guided the recommendations reflected in this proposal.

It is always our goal to budget for the success of all youth. To do so, we are guided by our values of equity, innovation and coherence.

In Boston we are fortunate to benefit from extraordinary public commitment to education. Our city proudly invests more per pupil than most other large districts. We received guidance from the City that our expected FY17 appropriation will be \$1.027B, an increase of \$13.5M versus the current school year, an amount that will go up when the next round of Collective Bargaining is negotiated. This represents the largest appropriation in the history of BPS.

And yet some challenges remain. As you know, like many other large urban districts, we face a structural deficit, where our costs are growing each year faster than our revenues. To address this challenge, we have identified efficiencies and will propose reductions. But our values also require that we look ahead, and ask ourselves: How do we innovate in Boston so that every single child has equitable opportunity and access to high quality education?

For this reason, we will also propose a select number of carefully considered investments. We believe these dollars will be instrumental in pushing forward the goals embodied by the Opportunity and Achievement Gap Taskforce, which remain so central to how we all seek to lead this school system.

For instance, one of the priorities you will see in our proposal is an investment in Early Childhood. Research has proven just how vital such services can be to closing the opportunity and achievement gap, which has been well documented to start before kindergarten. This year, we are proposing an incremental \$4M towards building and operating new K1 seats. We estimate this will help us open 200-300 new seats. One of the ways we will pay for this investment is by scaling back our surround care at EEC and ELC locations. While we would like to see such services continue, and we are still investigating other possible funding avenues or partnerships, we believe our system becomes more equitable and better serves our shared goals when we are able to offer the core academic service to a greater number of young children.

Another area of proposed investment is a new pilot program aimed at 4th through 6th graders. This new investment will bring the opportunities for high level work and enrichment to a wide and diverse set of students. In FY17 we will learn and experiment through the pilot, seeking to understand what new models can offer.

As we look toward next year, I know that our schools and community will rally together to continue to support all students. But as a leader of this organization, my responsibility is to put on us on a better path for next year. That is why we continue to focus on our Long Term Financial Plan, where we aim to tackle the structural issues that require bolder change than is possible in any one budget cycle. I am optimistic that the efforts that we have already launched will set BPS up for future success.

Once again, thank you for your continued support and guidance as we strive to serve the students of Boston with equity, coherence and innovation. We look forward to engaging with you on the proposal.