



CITY OF BOSTON • MASSACHUSETTS

MARTIN J. WALSH  
MAYOR

April 6, 2020

TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Dear Councilors:

I transmit herewith an appropriation order for the Boston Public Schools (BPS) for Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21), in the amount of \$1.259 billion, submitted pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 224 of the Acts of 1936, as amended by Chapter 190 of the Acts of 1982, as further amended by Chapter 701 of the Acts of 1986, Chapter 613 of the Acts of 1987, and Chapter 108 of the Acts of 1991.

The FY21 BPS budget comes at an unprecedented time for our school district, as we respond to the needs of our students and school communities amidst the coronavirus pandemic. Instead of being in their classrooms, our students, teachers, and staff are at home practicing social distancing and implementing distance learning. I am so proud of the entire BPS community that has rallied together to ensure the safety, health, and wellbeing of our students during this uncertain time. From computers and meals, to wraparound services, our students are getting the support and education they need to keep learning and thriving. This collective effort to support our students has been all-encompassing and will continue for as long as it takes. But we must also look ahead to our work beyond this crisis.

Providing a high-quality education to all of our young people is key to closing opportunity gaps and lifting families up. That's why at my State of the City address this year, I talked about BPS being a tale of two districts and the urgent need for us to become one great district for every student, in every school and every neighborhood. That driving principle led me to announce a historic three-year, \$100 million funding commitment to BPS in brand new additive funding that is over and above standard cost increases. This is a transformational level of investment in BPS that will translate into new services, programs, and support felt directly in our schools.

Prior to making that announcement, much had already changed over the past year in public education here in Boston and the Commonwealth. For starters, we hired our new superintendent, Dr. Brenda Cassellius, who hit the ground running and has brought new energy to the Boston Public Schools. In her first few months here she visited every school in the district and met with teachers, parents, and stakeholders about the needs they identified to address longstanding, systemic barriers in the district. This culminated in a new strategic plan, crafted in true partnership with the Boston School Committee and BPS community. This plan will accelerate the district's efforts to offer excellent, equitable, high-quality education for every student in every neighborhood in Boston.

The other major change had been decades in the making, and was truly the result of a statewide, grassroots movement of cities, advocates, and legislators. This past fall, the State passed a generational and transformative

piece of education finance reform legislation, the Student Opportunity Act. The law when fully implemented will provide new funding back to the district, reversing over two decades of declining state support. I was proud to fight for that legislation because it helped provide long term financial stability to the district and spurred my bold new funding plan for BPS.

The nearly \$1.3 billion proposed FY21 BPS budget fulfills the first year of that plan. This overall increase of \$80 million or 7% includes the initial \$36 million of my \$100 million commitment of new additive funding. The magnitude of this increase in one year is unprecedented in BPS history, and opens the doors for new investments that students and parents will feel in the classroom this fall.

Of the \$36 million in new funding, 100 percent of it will go into schools and classrooms and will be targeted towards our lowest performing schools. We know that both the need and opportunity are greatest in those schools. New supports include:

- \$15 million towards raising the bar on student learning with new high-quality materials, resources, and improved environments;
- \$12 million to increase teachers' skills through coaching, feedback, and developing high-quality curriculum; and
- \$9 million to provide our students and families a strong foundation for success with more support to connect them to wraparound services, resources, and information.

Over the past six years, we've made progress in BPS through targeted investments in universal pre-kindergarten, longer school days, free community college, nurses in every school, and mental health counselors. We know those investments are working and this new commitment will put us on the path to be truly one great district for all.

The FY21 budget also includes a proposed \$17 million increase for our Charter School students so our total increase in public education for next year tops \$97 million and nearly \$1.5 billion total. This \$97 million increase in FY21 represents over 63% of the total new City resources across all categories of spending. Public Education spending remains over 40% of our City budget; education spending is up over \$440 million on an annual basis since FY14; and per-pupil spending at BPS will approach \$22,000, more than a 30% increase over the past six years.

While our focus today remains on supporting our students and families through this public health crisis, our driving motivation remains to be one great district for all. I look forward to our continued partnership on achieving this goal and supporting every young person to achieve the greatness within them. I respectfully request your support of the FY21 appropriation for the Boston Public Schools.

Sincerely,

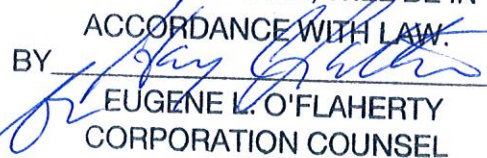
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Walsh', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Martin J. Walsh  
Mayor of Boston

**CITY OF BOSTON  
IN CITY COUNCIL**

ORDERED: That pursuant to Chapter 224 of the Acts of 1936, as amended by Chapter 190 of the Acts of 1982, and as further amended by Chapter 701 of the Acts of 1986, Chapter 613 of the Acts of 1987, and Chapter 108 of the Acts of 1991, to meet the current operating expenses of the School Department in the fiscal period commencing July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021, the sum of ONE BILLION TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY-EIGHT MILLION SIX HUNDRED THIRTY THREE THOUSAND SIXTY-FIVE dollars (\$1,258,633,065) be, and the same hereby is, appropriated, said sum to be raised by taxation pursuant to Section 23 of Chapter 59 of the General Laws:

Boston School Department            \$1,258,633,065

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT  
THE FOREGOING, IF PASSED IN  
THE ABOVE FORM, WILL BE IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH LAW.  
BY   
EUGENE L. O'FLAHERTY  
CORPORATION COUNSEL