



Boston City Council Committee on Ways and Means

Dockets #0524-0531, FY22 Budget

BPS Commitments #2-4

Dockets #0532-0534, BPS Revolving Funds

Working Session: Friday, May 7, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

BPS Hearing Commitment #2: Tuesday, May 18, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

BPS Hearing Commitments #3-4, Revolving Funds: Tuesday, May 18, 2021, 2:00 p.m.

The following is a collection of questions that were asked by the Committee regarding the FY22 budget for Boston Public Schools Commitments #2-4 and BPS Revolving Funds at the Working Session on Friday, May 7, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Recording here: <https://youtu.be/GavZAZTbqCk>

The Administration is requested to respond to all questions in one of three ways:

- 1) Verbally at the hearings on Tuesday, May 18th, at 10AM or 2PM.
- 2) For factual questions, through written responses supplied by May 18th, including budget book page numbers or other references where appropriate.
- 3) By deferring to another specific scheduled departmental budget hearing.

Please annotate and return this information request by May 18th, indicating how each question will be answered.

BPS Commitments #2-4 Budget Questions

Councilor Kenzie Bok, Chair, asked:

- What is the plan to make up for learning loss this past year? We have discussed the additional social and emotional support staff who are being hired; do we expect to have increased 1:1 tutoring and other enhanced academic supports?
 - o If these extra supports are to be funded through federal funds, we will need to decide as much very soon -- to what extent have we budgeted tentative 'holds' for this purpose?
- How are we going to diagnose which students need what kind of focused support, academic and/or emotional, early in the school year and make sure that resources are being marshalled accordingly?
- What is the plan specifically for learning loss experienced by high school students, who have less runway until they need to be college-ready or career-ready? What additional supports are planned to make high school students who may have been chronically absent this year get successfully integrated back into school?
- What update do we have on summer program sign-ups and what portion of our students we seem to be reaching or not reaching with those opportunities?



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- Please speak in greater detail about places where we have the opportunity to really improve curriculum and might be able to use one-time federal funds to achieve that higher quality.
- Please discuss the District's recently introduced plan re: the MassCore standards.
- Please provide a thorough update on the BuildBPS. I understand that the plan will be presented to the School Committee the week prior, so hopefully there will be a presentation from that and we can build off of. Where is BPS going next with the plan?
- We have been talking about BuildBPS for a long time and the first billion dollars have been spent several times over. We need a real vision from the district on the capital plan. Where are we and what are the next steps for the BuildBPS plan?
- What is our capital plan for the McKinley School and the Kennedy Academy?

Councilor Julia Mejia asked:

- In regards to job preparedness, how are we working with local unions and vocational organizations to help the next generation of tradespeople get the certifications they need before they graduate from BPS?
- In terms of graduation rates, we're seeing some of the lowest graduation rates in Boston Day and Evening Academy and BATA. What are we doing to ensure that adults who are going through BPS are retained and prepared to graduate?
- We're seeing a 27% reduction in "reading" according to program detail for FY22. How does that align with our goal of boosting literacy?
- Our office recently filed a task force to boost literacy rates and to improve services for people who cannot read or write in any language, either due to disability or because of stunted education. Any initial thoughts or responses to the idea?
- We're seeing reductions in spending for mathematics and math support, science, and social studies. What is the reasoning behind these cuts and how are they aligned with BPS Commitment II?
- What are we doing to make sure that every school has access to arts and music education, and that those programs reflect the diversity of backgrounds in our students?
- Our office attended a meeting in the Jackson/Mann on Wednesday and the parents that were there were upset about the lack of clarity regarding the future of that school leadership up to that particular meeting. How are we making sure that



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parents, students, and teachers are being brought along in the decision making processes and are not simply informed after the fact?

- When a school is shut down such as the McCormack or the Jackson/Mann, how are we ensuring that the students are provided socio-emotional support and that they are being kept in their neighborhood?
- How are we ensuring that all schools have a School Site Council and that these councils are open to parents from all different backgrounds, including parents who speak languages other than English, parents of students in special education, and parents who may work during nights/weekends?

Councilor Ed Flynn asked:

- I've just filed a resolution in support of a state bill that would allow students graduating in 2021 and 2022 to opt-into an additional year if they choose to. Are there any plans for BPS to allow students to do that even without the state bill? What about students turning 22 who might want to stay an additional year?
- I've been advocating for better translation and interpretation services for parent engagement from BPS; can we talk about what is BPS' plan to continue to improve on language access? What sort of outreach is done to engage with parents and families who speak a language other than English?
- With deciding how to distribute the federal COVID relief funds, what is the plan to engage and solicit input from parents who might not speak English?
- The Boston Music Project, formerly Josiah Quincy Orchestra Program, is a tremendous music initiative that provides opportunities to students who might otherwise not have the resources to learn an instrument and be in an orchestra. It is highly successful, and it is funded by private money. Does BPS see additional opportunity to collaborate with the initiative, be it through funding or other sort of partnership?

Councilor Ricardo Arroyo asked:

- What is the status of BPS's partnership with "Youth on Board"?
- Is the Boston School Committee funded through BPS's budget? If so, does the funding come from the Central Office and can we get a breakdown of the budget for the School Committee?
- If funding from the School Committee from the BPS, has BPS put aside a part of the Central Office budget for stipend for the Boston School Committee Student Representatives?



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- Does BPS plan on releasing comprehensive, detailed reports on BuildBPS plan revisited, if at all, to make adjustments?

BPS Revolving Funds Questions

Councilor Ricardo Arroyo asked:

- For the Facilities Revolving Fund, BPS expects to spend \$76,000 by the end of the fiscal year, but had only spent \$94,812 by 3/31/21; Is BPS still on track to spend that amount and what does BPS anticipate this funding will go toward (i.e. repairs, maintenance, etc.)?
- How does BPS determine where (which schools) the expenditure is directed toward or does the revenue go into a general fund for use by the school district as a whole?
- For the Technology Revolving Fund, in the prior fiscal year, expenditures were about \$50,000 above the receipt amount: Can the department explain this discrepancy? Was it due in part to the purchase of computers for remote learning?
- For the Transportation Revolving Fund, in the prior fiscal year, expenditures were about 5.5 times higher than the receipts: Are the expenditures covered by the operating budget, and specifically the transportation portion of the BPS budget?