

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS BENJAMIN J. WEBER, JOHN FITZGERALD, ERIN MURPHY, BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, DURKAN, FLYNN, LOUIJEUNE, MEJIA, PEPÉN, SANTANA, AND WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO LEARN HOW THE CITY COUNCIL CAN SUPPORT THE MAYOR'S YOUTH SPORTS INITIATIVE TO INCREASE YOUTH SPORTS PARTICIPATION ACROSS BOSTON

WHEREAS, When children play and participate in sports and other athletic activities it promotes physical health and mental well-being and teaches the valuable lessons of teamwork, resilience, and commitment; *and*

WHEREAS, The administration has made clear commitments to improving availability of youth sports opportunities and information through the 'youth sports directory,' which has compiled a large list of both city- and non-profit run sports organizations and programs available to Boston kids; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston also holds Youth Sports Fairs across the city to provide information on available athletic programs to help connect kids with programs or organizations that provide opportunities for participation; *and*

WHEREAS, Mayor Michelle Wu's Human Services Cabinet operates the 2025-2026 Let's Play Boston Youth Sports Grant, offering up to \$5,000 to local nonprofits and fiscal sponsors serving BPS students to be used for athletic equipment and waiving student application fees for athletic programming; *and*

WHEREAS, There are over 250 sports nonprofits operating in the City of Boston, providing an abundance of opportunities for participation but also creating a difficult maze for parents to navigate; *and*

WHEREAS, Organizations have had difficulty gaining access to the necessary equipment, such as JP Youth Soccer needing to pay to provide lights themselves at Pagel Field; *and*

WHEREAS, In 2023, the Mayor's Office and the Human Services Cabinet engaged with internal and external partners to assess the Boston youth sports ecosystem and surveyed families and caregivers to determine how young people become involved in sports with an eye toward increasing staff levels, constructing new facilities and renovating existing ones; *and*

WHEREAS, There is a direct correlation between family income, race, and participation in youth sports, creating a barrier to cross-economic social engagement and opportunities for lower-income children. As stated in the administration's 2024 report on youth sports, Boston's high school student involvement in sports (34%) lags significantly behind the state average for youth aged 6-17 (63%). BPS athletics participation dropped 10% during the pandemic (from 44% in 2019), and girls participation (30%) is even lower than boys' (39%). While 53% of white students play sports, Asian (25%), Black (41%), and Latino (27%) participation is much lower; *and*

WHEREAS, By learning from the findings and recommendations in the administration's 2024 report, the City Council has an opportunity to help advocate for the necessary funding and structures to break down barriers, support cross-sector collaboration, and increase youth sports participation for families across Boston; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to review City organization of youth sport opportunities and work with the administration to identify key barriers to participation, opportunities to strengthen the youth sports ecosystem, and methods of expanding access.

Filed on: October 22, 2025