

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ERIN MURPHY, BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, CULPEPPER, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, LOUIJEUNE, PEPÉN, SANTANA, WEBER, AND WORRELL

**CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL**



**ORDER FOR A HEARING TO EXAMINE STUDENT
ACADEMIC OUTCOMES AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT
IN BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

WHEREAS, One of the fundamental responsibilities of the Boston City Council is to ensure that major public investments result in measurable improvements in outcomes, particularly when those investments are intended to address inequities and improve student achievement; and

WHEREAS, Boston Public Schools operates with an annual budget of approximately \$1.7 billion, making it the single largest expenditure in the City of Boston's operating budget and accounting for more than one-third of all City spending; and

WHEREAS, In addition to its annual operating budget, Boston Public Schools received approximately \$470 million in federal ARP and ESSER pandemic recovery funding, representing an extraordinary, one-time investment intended to accelerate learning and address pandemic-related learning loss for all students; and

WHEREAS, Despite this historic level of investment, 2025 MCAS data released by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shows persistently low academic outcomes across multiple grade levels in Boston Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, In the third grade, only 19 percent of Black students and 20 percent of Latino students met or exceeded expectations on MCAS, and when disaggregated further, only approximately 1 percent of Black students exceeded expectations, which translates to just 8 Black children citywide, while only 28 Latino students exceeded expectations across the entire district; and

WHEREAS, Similarly low outcomes appear across subsequent grade levels, including in the fourth and fifth grades, where only single-digit numbers of Black students and only a few dozen Latino students exceeded expectations, despite thousands of students tested; and

WHEREAS, By the sixth grade, only 17 percent of Black students and 20 percent of Latino students met or exceeded expectations, and only 24 Black students and 36 Latino students exceeded expectations citywide, demonstrating that performance does not meaningfully improve as students progress through the system; and

WHEREAS, While percentages alone can obscure the magnitude of these results, translating the data into actual numbers of students reveals outcomes so stark that many readers initially assume the data must be incorrect, when it is in fact accurately reported; and

WHEREAS, These outcomes raise serious concerns about the return on investment for students and families following years of unprecedented spending, particularly for Black and brown students who were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, The Boston City Council has a responsibility to understand whether the scale of public investment in Boston Public Schools has translated into improved academic outcomes for students, and if not, why;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to examine student academic outcomes and return on investment in Boston Public Schools. The Committee is requested to invite representatives from Boston Public Schools and the Boston School Committee, as well as educators, families, researchers, advocates, and members of the public, to testify regarding student outcomes, instructional effectiveness, and the impact of district spending decisions.

Filed on: February 11, 2026