



ACTION FOR BOSTON CHILDREN

June 2019

To the students, families, educators, and community members in Boston,

I am calling for Action for Boston Children.

Over the last several years, numerous studies and reports have detailed the systemic and long-standing challenges related to equity and quality in the Boston Public Schools. Racial and ethnic gaps across many achievement measures are stark, and some of them have even increased in the past decade. Too many of our students with special needs and English Learners, and the majority of students in poorer neighborhoods, are unable to access quality programs and schools. And when some of our city's brightest students – our valedictorians – struggle to complete college and never earn a middle-class income, what does it say about Boston's ability to provide a quality public education?

In my role as City Councilor, I have had the privilege of hearing and learning from many educators and community partners, witnessing the important work they do with our children. These public servants are doing their best, and in many cases helping students achieve great things. But these bright spots in many classrooms contrast against a school system that is not moving forward at the rate we need; to the contrary, I am struck by the sense that progress in education often gets *stuck* in Boston.

As we welcome a new Superintendent to Boston, we have before us a pivotal opportunity for change. I have spent the last several months asking families, school leaders, educators and the community to reflect with me on a few important questions: How can we accelerate action for Boston children? Which issues are most critical to address? And what steps should we take to get started? Their answers informed my thinking, and I highlight them here:

- ▶ **First, we must align on a common set of values that guide us.** For me, and many others, the overarching value is equity. But equity can mean different things to different people, and we as a community need to align on what it will mean for our public school system. I offer my definition in this report, and hope to continue the dialogue across the city.
- ▶ **Second, we must focus on a few areas that are most critical to unlocking progress for our children.** After hearing from a broad, diverse set of voices in the community, I see four areas as most critical:
 - ▶ #1: A Central Office that Serves Schools and the Community
 - ▶ #2: Access to Quality Schools
 - ▶ #3: Early Foundations for Lifelong Learning
 - ▶ #4: High Schools that Prepare Students for Success
- ▶ **Third, the district needs to make concrete commitments that allow for real public accountability.** In the past, BPS has “agreed” with outside research, but left its response vague enough that it is hard to know what is really changing. In this report, I recommend specific action steps, along with expectations for timing. These won't solve everything, but they can create momentum towards greater equity and excellence.

Ultimately, taking action is a matter of public and political will. We all must demand that the pace of change in BPS rise to meet the urgency of our children's needs. As we welcome a new Superintendent to Boston, I look forward to collaborating with the district on taking bold and courageous steps to move forward, and encouraging my partners and constituents to do the same.

I invite you to join me in calling for Action for Boston Children.



Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea Campbell".

Andrea Campbell
President, Boston City Council