

Offered by City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo, Bok, Breadon, Fernandes Anderson, Flaherty and Louijeune



CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY THREE

HOME RULE PETITION

WHEREAS, The Boston School Committee is the governing body of the Boston Public Schools (BPS) and is responsible for defining the vision, mission, and goals of BPS; the annual operating budget; hiring, managing and evaluating the Superintendent; and setting and reviewing district policies and practices; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) is a citywide body of student leaders representing their respective high schools, a member of BSAC serves as a non-voting student representative on the Boston School Committee; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston Student Advisory Council, representing high school students across the district, has pushed for many years for the student representative to be able to vote; *and*

WHEREAS, The student point of view as represented by a student member of the school committee has valuably informed school committee discussions, representing the student point of view, but has not had the power to vote on decisions that will directly impact the 55,000 students of BPS; *and*

WHEREAS, Legislation filed in 1971 by Governor Francis W. Sargent created the position of the only voting student member who serves on the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE); *and*

WHEREAS, Currently in Commonwealth of Massachusetts, no student member on a District school board can vote on issues before them; *and*

WHEREAS, Students bring real-time knowledge of school issues, help connect the board to everyday activities, conditions and problems within their respective schools but are hindered by their inability to vote; *and*

WHEREAS, A single adolescent voice could be isolating to the student member and could be drowned by adult members and could easily under-represent the interests of the student body as a whole; *and*

WHEREAS, Establishing the power of a student vote on the Boston School Committee allows students of diverse backgrounds to fully partake in the decision making process around educational policies that directly affect them, bolstering the youth voice and holding those in power accountable; ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED, That a petition to the General Court, accompanied by a bill for a special law relating to the City of Boston to be filed with an attested copy of this order be, and hereby is, approved under Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article II, as amended, of the Articles of Amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to the end that legislation be adopted precisely as follows, except for clerical or editorial changes of form only:

**PETITION FOR A SPECIAL LAW RE:
AN ACT ESTABLISHING STUDENT VOTING ON THE BOSTON
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Chapter 108 of the Acts of 1991 is hereby stricken and replaced with the following:

Section 1.

Notwithstanding sections one hundred and twenty-eight to one hundred and thirty-four, inclusive, of chapter forty-three of the General Laws or any other general or special law to the contrary, the school committee of the city of Boston as presently constituted is hereby restructured and thereafter shall include two student voting members.

Section 2.

Subject to the provisions of this act, the composition of the school committee of the city of Boston shall transition to include two voting student members.

- a) Starting on the first Monday of the month immediately following the passage of this act an additional student member would be selected by BSAC to make it , two (2) voting student members and one (1) alternate student member shall be seated on the Boston School Committee. Members shall be selected by the Boston Public Schools student population through a vote of the Boston Student Advisory Council. Both student members shall have all the privileges of elected or appointed members of the School Committee.
- b) The student members of the school committee shall at all times be enrolled in Boston Public Schools during their terms of office and be Boston residents.

Section 3.

All existing powers and duties hitherto exercised by the Boston school committee, including the powers and duties set forth in chapter 613 of the acts of 1987, shall henceforth be exercised by the Boston School Committee and its student members.

Section 4.

The student members shall have a term of office of one (1) year and shall commence on June 1 and expire on May 31. Upon the selection,, of the student members, the city clerk shall administer the oath of office to the student members of the school committee and they shall subscribe in the book kept by the city clerk in accordance with the provisions of St. 1948, c. 452,

s.11A, as amended by Acts of 1951, c. 376 s. 1.11A and as further amended by Acts of 1983, c.342, s.1. The office of each student member shall become vacant upon the expiration of the term of said member. A president of the school committee shall be elected annually by its members including the student members at the first meeting in each municipal year. In the event that the president is unable to complete their term, a new president shall be elected by committee members for the unexpired term.

Section 5.

Upon notice provided by the City Clerk that a vacancy exists in the office of any student member school committee member due to personal circumstances, illness, or resignation, the Boston Student Advisory Council shall convene within one (1) month of such notice and shall, select a replacement student member.

Section 6.

This act shall not be amended or repealed except by special act passed in conformance with article 89 of the amendments to the constitution of the commonwealth.

Section 7.

The provisions of this act shall take effect upon the approval of the act transitioning the School Committee to an elected body.

Filed in Council: February 8, 2023