

April 26, 2024

To the Members of the Committee on Ways & Means:

I'm writing to update you on the Boston Public Schools budget in the wake of our collaborative efforts that began in late January to help shape the FY25 budget, which was approved by the Boston School Committee on March 27, 2024.

We held a committee meeting on Feb. 12, 2024, to discuss Requests for Information from Boston Public Schools and we also held a working session on March 14, 2024, with Boston Public Schools to discuss the budget directly with Superintendent Mary Skipper. At the end of this process, Boston Public Schools adjusted its budget to reflect many of the issues the Council advocated for, including:

- Boston Public Schools added 25 special education aides and 36 more special education teachers to better support the move to more inclusion classrooms.

- In an effort to better scale the school system's successful partnerships with outside organizations and businesses, Boston Public Schools added six new community field coordinators, who will develop and implement programs and strategies that will establish partnerships and collaborations with community agencies, corporate organizations, and families.

- Boston Public Schools added 3 more librarians.

- Increased funding to expand early college and career and technical education programs to all high schools.

- Increased funding for Community Hub Schools.

- Increased funding for programs to serve the psychological needs of our students.

Additionally, Boston Public Schools highlighted programming changes that are currently in the works to address many of the Council's concerns:

- Launching a two-year pilot in 10 high schools to teach AP African American Studies
- Increasing the Athletic budget by 20 percent.
- Expanding the Margarita Muniz Academy, a dual-language high school, to serve grades 7-8.
- Ninety of the 120 Boston Public Schools have had a new water filtration system installed, and the rest are slated to be installed in the next year.
- Funding for reading specialists was increased 15 percent, and last year, Boston Public Schools introduced High-Quality Instructional Materials across all schools and all grades. Next year, Boston Public Schools will include instruction for students with disabilities and multilingual learners. The new investments will fund additional staff positions, while Boston Public Schools focuses on staff development, helping every educator adopt evidence-based practices in literacy instruction across all content areas.

I look forward to continuing discussions on this FY 2025 Boston Public Schools budget with hearings this spring. I'd like to thank Superintendent Skipper and School Committee Chair Jeri Robinson for their support in undertaking this effort to give the Council more of a voice in the budget. I'm eager to continue this collaborative spirit and look to begin this process in the fall for future budget processes, which is when Boston Public Schools begins crafting its budget.

Sincerely,

Brian Worrell

Brian Worrell
Chair, Committee on Ways & Means