



OFFERED BY COUNCILOR ERIN J. MURPHY

CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

Order for a hearing regarding impacts of the Boston Public Schools hiring and spending freeze on students, educators, and school communities

WHEREAS, the Boston Public Schools have publicly identified a projected budget shortfall for Fiscal Year 2026, reported to be approximately \$50 million, which has prompted the implementation of an immediate hiring and spending freeze; and

WHEREAS, communications to school principals and leaders indicate that this freeze applies to hiring for vacant positions, discretionary purchases, stipends, contracts, travel, and other expenditures that directly support school operations and student programming; and

WHEREAS, educators, families, and school communities have expressed serious concern about how these measures may affect staffing stability, student support services, program continuity, enrichment opportunities, and the ability of schools to operate effectively during the current school year and in planning for the upcoming school year; and

WHEREAS, schools have been directed not to fill vacant positions at a time when educators are ordinarily submitting staffing needs and provisional educators are awaiting letters of assurance, creating uncertainty for school communities and employees; and

WHEREAS, the projected shortfall has been attributed to multiple cost pressures, including health insurance, salaries and benefits, transportation, and the expiration of federal relief funds, and clarity is needed regarding the assumptions and timing underlying these projections; and

WHEREAS, additional reporting and stakeholder concerns have raised questions as to whether the actual budget gap may be significantly larger than the approximately \$50 million publicly cited, with some estimates suggesting the shortfall could approach \$150 million, underscoring the need for transparency regarding when the shortfall was identified, how projections were developed, and what range of scenarios is being considered;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED: That the Education Committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to examine the impacts of the Boston Public Schools hiring and spending freeze on students, educators, and school communities, including effects on staffing, programming, and school operations during the current school year and in Fiscal Year 2026, and to provide timely clarity and accountability from the appropriate members of the Administration.

Filed in Council: January 28, 2026