



# BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Government Operations

Lydia Edwards, Chair

---

One City Hall Square ♦ 5<sup>th</sup> Floor ♦ Boston, MA 02201 ♦ Phone: (617) 635-3040 ♦ Fax: (617) 635-4203

## REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

September 15, 2021

Dear Councilors:

*Docket #0896, communication from Eneida Tavares, Chair, Board of Election, for approval of a citizen petition entitled "An Elected Boston School Committee" for the placement of a local nonbinding public opinion advisory question on the ballot of the next regular municipal election on November 2, 2021, was referred to the Committee on August 18, 2021. The Committee held a hearing on September 10, 2021 where public comment was taken.*

### **Summary of Legislation:**

Docket #0896, if approved by the City Council and Mayor, would place a nonbinding public opinion question on the ballot for a regular municipal election. The nonbinding question is as follows: "Should the current appointed school committee structure be changed to a school committee elected by the residents of Boston?" This process is authorized under MGL chapter 53, section 18A.

### **Information Gathered at the Hearing:**

Councilors provided opening remarks supporting the petition process in order to have community input. The Committee discussed whether the question should be placed on the ballot. The Committee recognized the right under state law for citizens to weigh in on matters impacting them through the petition process. The Councilors discussed that this petition is non-binding and advisory in nature. Councilors believed that the language of the question is clear and easy to understand. Councilors recognized the advocates and the signers of the petition for their work on this issue. Sabino Piemonte, Assistant Registrar, Boston Election Department testified on behalf of the Administration. Registrar Piemonte reviewed the process and explained that the Election Department's website will identify that there are questions on the ballot. Registrar Piemonte explained that since the petition is non-binding, the election Department does not have the authority to advertise. Registrar Piemonte stated that getting the information to the Election Department in a timely manner is critical in order to have sufficient time for the printing of ballots. The Committee also heard testimony from the public supporting the petition.

### **Rationale and Recommended Action:**

Passage of this docket will allow the petition to move forward and be placed on the ballot for the November 2, 2021 election. Placing this petition on the ballot will allow the residents of Boston

to weigh in regarding their opinion on whether the City of Boston should have an elected school committee.

By the Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, to which the following was referred:

***Docket #0896, communication from Eneida Tavares, Chair, Board of Election, for approval of a citizen petition entitled "An Elected Boston School Committee" for the placement of a local nonbinding public opinion advisory question on the ballot of the next regular municipal election on November 2, 2021,***

submits a report recommending that this docket ought to **pass**.

For the Chair:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lydia Edwards". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Lydia" is written with a large, stylized "L" and "y". The last name "Edwards" is written in a more standard cursive script.

Lydia Edwards, Chair  
Committee on Government Operations