

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE, BRIAN WORRELL, JULIA MEJIA,
BREADON, COLETTA, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, MURPHY, PEPÉN,
SANTANA AND WEBER



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FIVE

**ORDER FOR A HEARING ON THE CREATION OF A
BOSTON SCHOOL BUILDING AUTHORITY**

WHEREAS, Boston Public Schools (BPS) have struggled with deferred maintenance and outdated buildings for decades, resulting in closures, under-resourced facilities, disrupted school communities, and few new school buildings; *and*

WHEREAS, Research shows that safe, healthy, and inspiring school facilities are foundational to academic achievement, positive school culture, and overall student well-being; *and*

WHEREAS, Despite city initiatives such as BuildBPS and the Green New Deal for BPS, there remains no comprehensive, equity-driven, or transparent master facilities plan to build new school buildings and oversee more than one hundred aging school buildings across Boston; *and*

WHEREAS, Leading examples in cities such as Washington, D.C., and New York City demonstrate that centralized oversight and planning for school facilities can deliver meaningful improvements; *and*

WHEREAS, The lack of sustained or systematic maintenance has led to the closure of large facilities such as the West Roxbury Education Complex and the Jackson-Mann School, displacing entire school communities and leaving sections of the city without vital educational assets; *and*

WHEREAS, Reports estimate that the deferred repairs and modernization of Boston's school buildings could cost well over three billion dollars, underscoring the urgency of securing robust and reliable funding sources; *and*

WHEREAS, BPS operates 119 schools in approximately 131 physical buildings, over half of which were constructed before World War II, with more than 30 now over a century old, resulting in aging facilities that can no longer meet modern educational needs; *and*

WHEREAS, Only about one-third of BPS buildings have comprehensive heating, cooling, and ventilation systems, leaving roughly two-thirds of school facilities in need of HVAC upgrades to ensure safe and healthy learning environments; *and*

WHEREAS, From 2000-2024 only six new BPS buildings have been constructed (with two in progress), while the city has closed at least 35 schools, an imbalance that has disproportionately affected certain neighborhoods and student populations; *and*

WHEREAS, Only about 14 percent of BPS buildings fully support the district’s “High-Quality Student Experience,” leaving approximately 86 percent lacking key features such as modern science labs, art rooms, or adequate athletic and common spaces; *and*

WHEREAS, The scope of Boston’s school facilities demands an aggressive pursuit of multiple financing options, including city, state, and federal funding, including municipal bonds, potential new revenue streams, and close collaboration the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), to modernize and expand educational infrastructure, while the City’s AAA bond rating and available debt capacity provide a strong foundation for construction and renovation projects; *and*

WHEREAS, Establishing a Boston School Building Authority (BSBA) would create an independent entity charged with assessing, planning, and overseeing BPS facilities, using a modern, data-driven approach to construction, renovation, and consolidation—and, in doing so, attempt to remove politics from school building decisions while allowing the School Committee to focus on educational priorities; *and*

WHEREAS, A BSBA would engage families, educators, and community stakeholders early and meaningfully in facility-related decisions, ensuring each project aligns with academic needs, safety standards, and equity considerations across all neighborhoods; *and*

WHEREAS, The creation of a Boston School Building Authority, along with robust community engagement, would enable a comprehensive facilities master plan that would address the urgent need for modern, safe, and effective educational facilities across the city; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to examine the feasibility, structure, and potential benefits of establishing a Boston School Building Authority, and include discussion of: operational scope and governance; funding mechanisms, including public, private, and innovative financing models; protocols for community engagement and transparency; alignment with Boston School Committee, MSBA and other agencies; and the inclusion of equity measures in planning and project selection. Representatives from the School Committee, Boston Public Schools, relevant City departments, the MSBA, DESE, community organizations, parents, educators, and students shall be invited to testify, with the goal of delivering on the promise of safe, high-quality school buildings for every child, in every neighborhood across Boston.