

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR BRIAN WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF BILL S.403, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A SPECIAL COMMISSION TO REVIEW THE ADEQUACY AND EQUITY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAM

WHEREAS, The Massachusetts School Building Authority has operated for more than two decades, using 1.25 cents from the state sales tax to fund new schools and repair old ones; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston has used its accelerated repair program to great success, fixing windows, doors, boilers, and more at a rapid pace and with financial assistance from the state; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston has used the core program to finance new school builds, including the recently opened Josiah Quincy Upper School and the soon-to-open Carter School, as well as the Shaw-Taylor Elementary School and the Ruth Batson School, which have both been accepted into the MSBA process; *and*

WHEREAS, The MSBA core program can take 8 years to open a school, a timeline that can slow some projects beyond what's necessary; *and*

WHEREAS, Projects aren't allowed to join the MSBA core program after design or study phases, and must start the core program cycle from the beginning, forcing duplicative study and design components for projects such as the rebuild of the Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, a school that Boston has already spent years and millions of dollars studying and designing; *and*

WHEREAS, The cost of building a high-quality technical vocational school in Boston, which will reap long-term regional economic benefits far beyond Boston's economy, is expected to cost \$750 million, a price too costly for one school district to finance on its own; *and*

WHEREAS, The MSBA should be examined to see how its core program could speed its process quicker than 8 years, allow for projects to join after the design and study pages, finance a larger chunk of school building projects in districts with a higher amount of Title I schools, or simply offer lump-sum annual payments directly to larger school districts such as Boston that have a need for dozens of new schools; *and*

WHEREAS, The City Council is currently considering the creation of a Boston School Building Authority that could use direct state aid from the MSBA as well as other financing options; *and*

WHEREAS, During the past two decades, Boston's net state aid has declined from \$365 million in Fiscal Year 2008 to \$133 million in Fiscal Year 2024, showing the state's lack of support for Boston, especially its public schools; *and*

WHEREAS, The State Senate of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is considering, S.403, which would create a commission to review the adequacy and equity of the MSBA, and it should also consider direct payments for new schools outside of the MSBA process because of the need in Boston; *and*

WHEREAS, The City of Boston needs state assistance as part of an all-hands-on-deck approach to build dozens of new schools in the next two decades; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

RESOLVED: That the Boston City Council urges the state legislature on Beacon Hill to pass Bill S.403, which would create a commission to examine and improve the MSBA, with a hope that Boston could qualify for funding outside the MSBA process based upon its urgent need.

Filed on: March 31, 2025