

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS GABRIELA COLETTA, KENDRA LARA, RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE, ARROYO, BOK, BREADON, FERNANDES ANDERSON, FLAHERTY, WORRELL AND FLYNN



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO ESTABLISH A CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CURRICULUM IN BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, By 2030, sea level is projected to rise by 0.6 to 1.1 feet above 2000 levels. By 2070, some projections estimate a rise in sea level of 2.3 to 4.2 feet over 2000 levels. Sea level rise combined with more intense hurricanes and winter storms present a serious threat to people residing in coastal areas of Massachusetts; *and*

WHEREAS, Climate change is a pertinent part of our lives, and particularly our children's lives who will have to deal with the bulk of climate change consequences. Yet, climate change-related topics are missing from our Boston Public Schools learning standards; *and*

WHEREAS, In science, Elementary-aged students are expected to learn about weather and energy, but the discussion about how those topics relate to climate change is often missing from the lesson; *and*

WHEREAS, In 2021, An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy, also known as the 2050 Roadmap bill, was codified into Massachusetts state law. While the primary goal of the bill is to create a net-zero greenhouse gas emission limit in Massachusetts by 2050, the law also highlights environmental justice as a necessary tenet of the state's climate policy. This specific amendment is pertinent to Boston Public School students who often live in communities most vulnerable to environmental disasters; *and*

WHEREAS, Recently, a study analyzed publicly available documents from boards of education and state education departments across the U.S. and ranked Massachusetts in the lowest tier — along with most of the country— with “very low” inclusion of climate change-related content in state requirements; *and*

WHEREAS, The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has a key opportunity to close the gaps within environmental education and develop a climate change curriculum for all public schools. Community resources and partnerships are readily available to address this need; *and*

WHEREAS, Our obligation is to foster a school environment that produces conscious citizens who understand the severity of the climate catastrophe. Additionally, it is vital to

educate the next generation of leaders and to prepare them for professional opportunities that contribute to this fight; *and*

WHEREAS, As a coastal district, it is of the essence that Boston Public Schools has metrics in place to provide students and teachers with resources like community partnerships, curriculum, and professional development to help educate students of the impacts of climate change, and measures to reduce carbon emissions;
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss establishing an environmental justice curriculum in Boston Public Schools and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Superintendent Skipper, and other relevant BPS departments be invited to testify.

Filed on: January 11, 2023