



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING EXPANDING INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, Boston Public Schools (BPS) serves approximately 45,000 students across 125 schools, with about 21% enrolled in special education programs; and

WHEREAS, the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC), in partnership with the City of Boston and BPS, facilitates the Mayor's Summer Jobs Program, connecting high school students to internships across various sectors; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Youth Employment and Opportunity (YEO) offers both summer and year-round employment opportunities for Boston youth through programs like SuccessLink, aiming to bridge opportunities for personal and professional growth; and

WHEREAS, current internship programs may not adequately address the unique needs of students with disabilities, potentially limiting their access to valuable work-based learning experiences; and

WHEREAS, inclusive internship opportunities are essential for equipping students with disabilities with the skills, confidence, and professional networks necessary for post-secondary success; and

WHEREAS, collaboration between the BPS Office of Special Education, the departments overseeing internship programs, and the YEO is crucial to develop and implement inclusive internship opportunities; and

WHEREAS, engaging local employers and community organizations is vital to creating a diverse range of internship placements that accommodate and support students with varying abilities; and

WHEREAS, ensuring equitable access to internships aligns with the City of Boston's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and academic excellence for all students; and

WHEREAS, feedback from special education teachers and parents of students with disabilities highlights a pressing need for expanded internship opportunities tailored to these students; now

THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED, that the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss strategies for expanding internship opportunities for students with disabilities within Boston Public Schools. Representatives from the BPS Office of Special Education, the departments managing internship programs, the Office of Youth Employment and Opportunity, local employers, community organizations, students, parents, and special education teachers shall be invited to testify on current challenges and propose actionable solutions to enhance inclusivity in internship offerings.

Filed on the 26th day of February, 2025