

Monday October 31, 2022

Dear Horace Mann Community,

I am writing to update you on some disappointing news. [Procurement and supply chain issues](#) have affected the timeline for the renovations to the former Edwards building in Charlestown, which will delay the Horace Mann community's relocation to the renovated space until the fall of 2024.

I know that this news is frustrating, particularly for a community that has already been disrupted by facilities challenges, and I acknowledge that many promises have been made and broken in the past. I want to reassure you of my unwavering commitment to achieving a BPS equipped with full-service school facilities that meet the needs and aspirations of our students, educators, and families, and my commitment to work with our City partners to deliver a [Green New Deal](#) for BPS. My team has worked with City agencies to inspect Horace Mann's current facilities in Allston and ensure that they are safe. With some additional investments from BPS, your current building will remain a welcoming space for Horace Mann students to continue to learn until the Edwards building renovations are complete.

The Horace Mann School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing provides access to high-quality public education in a dual language setting to students across the Commonwealth, and it's a jewel of the BPS. While we await the completion of the renovations to the Edwards building, I will focus on working with your school leader, Dr. Michelle Eisan-Smith, to direct resources to you to ensure the Horace Mann School's current learning environment supports all students, staff and families. We will be sharing additional updates soon; for example, our Operations Team has focused on HVAC and elevator maintenance, among other projects. In an effort to offer a space for your community to come together and ask us any questions you may have, we invite you to attend the following virtual meeting:

SAVE THE DATE

Horace Mann School Community Meeting

November 7, 2022

6:00pm

[Zoom Link](#)

(Interpretation services, including ASL, will be available.)

By and large, our facilities across the district, in their current state, are not suitable to support the academic vision we have for our students or fully meet their physical and socio-emotional needs. We are committed to delivering an inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education for all our students—especially those traditionally marginalized, including our Black and Brown students, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners. We firmly believe that BPS is long overdue for a long-term facilities plan, with a clear timeline and a budget for upgrading schools across the entire district. We've already begun by:

- **Committing to open and transparent data sharing:** Our [Building Dashboard](#) shows data from the 2022 School Year [Opportunity Index](#) with information on each school building's facilities and environmental conditions. This [tutorial video](#) provides a guide on how to navigate the platform.
- **Investing in a facilities condition assessment:** We have engaged experts who will provide us with an assessment of all our facilities that will make recommendations for repair, replacement, and renovation in our buildings.
- **Prioritizing quality educational and building standards:** We are also working with an architecture design firm to complete a School Design Study, a set of programming and design recommendations for all BPS PreK-6 and 7-12 schools. This will guide future renovations and construction, informed by authentic engagement with community members moving forward. These design standards will enable us to complete new construction and renovation projects more quickly in the future. We will share more information on a public kick-off for this engagement later this fall.

These assessment tools are expected to be completed by the fall of 2023 and will build the foundation for a long-term facilities plan that incorporates everyone's perspectives.

As we complete these critical foundational tools for the entire district, we remain committed to finding the Horace Mann School a permanent home, and we must move with urgency. The City's Public Facilities Department has already launched a study of the Jackson-Mann complex in Allston to evaluate the condition of the space and potential options for siting an elementary school, a community center, and the Horace Mann School on that campus. I look forward to sharing the results of that study with your community later this year, and working with you to establish a permanent site for the Horace Mann School in Boston.

Please join us on November 7 for the Horace Mann School Community Meeting. Interpretation services, including ASL interpretation, will be available. Please know that we are here for you and our students and staff. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the BPS Helpline. The Helpline is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 am-5:00 pm at 617-635-8873, or by email at Helpline@bostonpublicschools.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Elizabeth Skipper". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping underline.

Mary Skipper