



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO EXAMINE BPS SCHOOL CLOSURE AND MERGER ACTIONS RELATED TO THE 2026-27 AND 2027-28 SCHOOL YEARS AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE LONG-TERM FACILITIES PLAN PROCESS

WHEREAS, Boston Public Schools advanced a series of school closure, merger, and grade reconfiguration proposals beginning in January 2025, with implementation timelines extending through the 2026–27 and 2027-28 school years; and

WHEREAS, The Boston School Committee has voted on multiple closure and merger actions during 2025, and additional decisions affecting school communities continue to be brought forward as part of this process; and

WHEREAS, In January 2025, I filed a hearing order seeking oversight and transparency regarding Boston Public Schools’ closure plans and its long-term facilities planning, in good faith and with the expectation that the administration and the School Department would provide clear, timely, and transparent information to the City Council and the public; and

WHEREAS, That hearing did not occur during the previous Council term, despite continued closure and merger announcements, growing concern from affected school communities, and repeated, documented efforts by my office to have the matter scheduled before the appropriate committee; and

WHEREAS, I regularly receive calls, emails, and requests for advocacy from students, families, educators, and school communities when school closures and mergers are announced, and City Councilors must have access to clear, complete, and accurate information in order to effectively respond, advocate, and serve as a bridge between the School Department and the public; and

WHEREAS, I acknowledge that Boston Public Schools faces real fiscal and operational challenges, including declining enrollment, the conclusion of one-time federal ESSER funding, and the responsibility to manage aging facilities and public resources; and

WHEREAS, This hearing order is not intended to challenge whether long-term facilities planning is necessary, but rather to examine how decisions regarding school closures and mergers are being made, communicated, and justified; and

WHEREAS, Families, educators, students, and community members have raised concerns about limited transparency, unclear criteria, and insufficient public engagement prior to and following closure and merger announcements; and

WHEREAS, Boston Public Schools is required, as part of its agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, to develop and implement a comprehensive Long-Term Facilities Plan; and

WHEREAS, While Boston Public Schools has referenced enrollment projections, building conditions, and utilization metrics, the public and the City Council have not yet been provided with a complete, clearly articulated long-term facilities plan that explains how individual closure and merger decisions align with a consistent, neighborhood-based and district-wide strategy; and

WHEREAS, School closures and mergers have significant and lasting impacts on students, families, educators, transportation, special education services, staffing, school safety, and the future use of public buildings; and

WHEREAS, As a member of the Boston City Council, I have a responsibility to exercise oversight and to ensure accountability, transparency, and public trust in decisions that affect Boston Public Schools and the communities they serve;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to examine Boston Public Schools' school closure, merger, and reconfiguration actions connected to the 2026–27 and 2027-28 school years, with particular focus on transparency, communication, community engagement, and alignment with the district's Long-Term Facilities Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED: That Boston Public Schools be requested to present and submit clear and detailed information regarding the criteria and data used in closure and merger decisions, including enrollment projections, building condition assessments, utilization metrics, fiscal assumptions, and programmatic considerations, as well as alternatives that were evaluated and not pursued; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED: That Boston Public Schools provide a full timeline of communications and engagement with affected school communities, including opportunities for public input, and explain how feedback from students, families, educators, and community members was considered in final decisions; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED: That representatives from Boston Public Schools, the Mayor's Office, the Public Facilities Commission, and other appropriate department heads attend said hearing to provide clear answers and testimony.

Filed in Council: January 5, 2026