



City of Boston, Massachusetts
Office of the Mayor
Michelle Wu

April 6, 2026

TO THE BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Dear Councilors:

I transmit herewith an annual appropriation order for the Boston Public Schools (BPS) for Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27), in the amount of \$1,726,565,143, submitted pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 224 of the Acts of 1936, as amended by Chapter 190 of the Acts of 1982, as further amended by Chapter 701 of the Acts of 1986, Chapter 613 of the Acts of 1987, and Chapter 108 of the Acts of 1991.

The FY27 BPS budget reflects our City's dedication to public education and our understanding that the best investment we can make is in our young people—even amid a challenging budgetary environment. I am grateful for the leadership of Superintendent Mary Skipper and Boston School Committee Chair Jeri Robinson in building a budget that maintains our multi-year investments in the core academic priorities that most directly benefit our students.

These core priorities—inclusive education, bilingual programming, high-quality instructional materials, and expanded college and career pathways—are improving student outcomes. Recent accountability data shows that these multi-year investments are yielding strong results:

- In 2025, the percentage of students in grades 3-8 meeting or exceeding expectations on the English Language Arts MCAS grew by **2.4 percentage points**, with gains across all grades and nearly all subgroups, including Black and Latino students.
- From 2022-2024, we also saw a **4-percentage-point increase** in Boston's 4th grade reading scores on the biennial National Assessment of Educational Progress, bucking state and national trends.
- The percentage of multilingual learners making progress on ACCESS, the annual English language proficiency assessment, grew by **nearly 5 percentage points** from 2024 to 2025.
- Boston's 4-year cohort graduation rate of **81.3 percent**, recently reported by the state for the class of 2025, is the **highest graduation rate in BPS history**.

We're excited about this progress—but in the face of significant fiscal pressure, there's more work ahead. To continue improving student outcomes, we have to maintain strong investment in our core academic priorities throughout the next school year and beyond.

To do so, BPS has worked to carefully align staffing levels with projected lower student enrollment by closing or consolidating classrooms in some schools. These changes have been implemented to ensure consistent staffing levels of 1 teacher for every 10 students and 1 paraprofessional for every 24 students. These staff-to-student ratios are lower than pre-pandemic ratios and are equal to the ratios in the FY26 budget.

The FY27 BPS budget also captures new, significant efficiencies in the Central Office, including the reduction of full-time and contracted positions that are not directly connected to students and student-facing programs. In total, the administration identified \$34 million in reductions to Central Office budgets next year. These strategic adjustments will help us focus our investments toward areas that most impact student outcomes and wellbeing.

The growth of the BPS budget also reflects significant cost increases across four key areas:

Healthcare: The combination of an expanded FTE workforce and escalating health insurance premiums is driving the rise in costs. After isolating the disproportionate impact of healthcare inflation, the underlying budget growth stands at 2.7 percent (\$41 million)—meaning a significant portion of the new funding is absorbed by mandatory benefit costs rather than new investments.

Transportation: The proposed transportation budget will help cover both increased bus demand and necessary system improvements to get our kids to school on time. The number of students requiring door-to-door bus service continues to rise, especially for students in charter schools and out-of-district schools. This makes investment in modernized bus routing and operations even more important. And we have shown these investments pay off: as we have continued the implementation of the Zum transportation software, 90 percent of our BPS buses have been arriving on time in the morning, an increase from previous years.

Special Education: Schools are facing a rapid, post-pandemic rise in the need for specialized student services—including speech therapy, occupational therapy, and one-to-one paraprofessional support. This trend accompanies a sharp increase in out-of-district tuition rates, which has strained central budget resources.

Collective Bargaining: We predict increased expenditures from newly ratified union agreements and labor contracts.

In composing this budget, we made many difficult but necessary choices. Throughout the process, we did not budge on upholding our high standards for teaching, supporting, and inspiring our young learners. Instead, we strategically directed our limited public resources to the core academic priorities that most affect students' long-term learning and success. This budget balances real fiscal constraints with the urgency to sustain the steady progress we are making in our classrooms. I look forward to continuing our investments in Boston's students and future.

Sincerely,



Michelle Wu
Mayor of Boston

**CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL**

ORDERED: That pursuant to Chapter 224 of the Acts of 1936, as amended by Chapter 190 of the Acts of 1982, and as further amended by Chapter 701 of the Acts of 1986, Chapter 613 of the Acts of 1987, and Chapter 108 of the Acts of 1991, to meet the current operating expenses of the School Department in the fiscal period commencing July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2027, the sum of ONE BILLION SEVEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIX MILLION FIVE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIVE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-THREE dollars (\$1,726,565,143) be, and the same hereby is, appropriated, said sum to be raised by taxation pursuant to Section 23 of Chapter 59 of the General Laws:

Boston School Department \$1,726,565,143

**I HEREBY CERTIFY
THE FORGOING, IF PASSED IN
THE ABOVE FORM, WILL BE IN
ACCORDANCE WITH LAW.**

BY 
**MICHAEL FIRESTONE
CORPORATION COUNSEL**

3/31/26