

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS BENJAMIN J. WEBER, JOHN FITZGERALD,
JULIA M. MEJIA, BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, CULPEPPER, FLYNN,
LOUIJEUNE, MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA, AND WORRELL



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS THE FINDINGS OF THE STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS' PROCUREMENTS, CONTRACTS AND PAYMENTS AND PLANS TO IMPROVE FISCAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES GOING FORWARD

WHEREAS, On Wednesday, August 26, 2026, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) released a report titled "*Boston Public Schools – Procurements, Contracts, and Payments*" after concerns were raised regarding improper payments and procurement practices that occurred between 2019 and 2024; *and*

WHEREAS, The report concluded that BPS engaged in several practices that resulted in either wasteful spending of taxpayer dollars or violations of Massachusetts procurement law, or both. These actions included using certain contractors as "passthroughs" for payments to other contractors; improper payments of markups to contractors being used as "passthroughs"; improper payment of excessive shipping costs and use of sole source contracts to purchase books; allowing a BPS employee to evade the City's residency requirement; and other violations of Massachusetts procurement law; *and*

WHEREAS, In total, the OIG found that as a result of BPS employee misconduct, poor department oversight, and an overly complicated procurement process, that "\$857,261 in public funds were spent either improperly or in violation of municipal procurement law" between 2019 to 2024. This included \$77,687 in wasteful markups charged to BPS by contractors being used as "passthroughs" and \$56,315 spent on excessive shipping costs that could have supported students; *and*

WHEREAS, The report contains strong evidence that BPS enabled practices that wasted resources intended for students and that violated Massachusetts procurement law by, among other things, failing to provide proper oversight of BPS employee actions and failing to review vendor shipping charges; *and*

WHEREAS, The OIG provided a series of recommendations including pausing payments for 10 business days on vendor contracts for non-essential goods and services handled through the Business Services Department, the Facilities Management Department, and the Planning and Engineering Department to conduct an immediate investigation to review the contracts; to immediately prohibit the practice of paying vendors through passthrough invoices; move to recover \$77,697 in wasteful markup costs charged by vendors; procure an independent forensic audit of all BPS vendor payments for the last three years; engage an independent consultant to review BPS procurement and contract processes; and to streamline BPS contract procurement procedures and all for more comprehensive oversight; *and*

WHEREAS, The BPS budget is approximately one-third of the City's Operating Budget. It is the role of the Boston City Council to give final approval on the Boston Public Schools budget and to provide fiscal oversight of the department not only during budget season but throughout the calendar year; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston City Council should review the findings of this report and discuss the recommendations laid out by the OIG to best understand how the policies and procedures will be revised in order to avoid fiscal mismanagement by the Division of Operations in the future; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss what fiscal management practices will be revised in the short term and long term to preserve public dollars for public education in the City of Boston, and that Boston Public Schools Division of Operations, the Chief Financial Officer and other representatives involved with the Boston Public Schools' budget be invited to attend.

Filed on: September 16, 2026