Offered by City Councilors Julia Mejia, Erin Murphy, Breadon, Culpepper, Flynn, Louijeune, Pepén, Weber, and Worrell

CITY OF BOSTON

IN CITY COUNCIL

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-SIX

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO AUDIT BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS' SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND RETURN ON INVESTMENTS

WHEREAS, One of the fundamental responsibilities of the Boston City Council is to ensure accountability, transparency, and accessibility in all city business, including the planning, governance, and operations of Boston Public Schools; *and*

WHEREAS, In the 2025–2026 school year, Boston Public Schools serves approximately 44,416 students, of whom 24.2 percent are students with disabilities, reflecting a continued and growing need for robust, well-resourced special education services; *and*

WHEREAS, The Special Education budget totals over $421 million in FY26, representing an increase of approximately $3.9 million, or 1 percent, from FY25, and accounting for nearly one-quarter of the total BPS operating budget; *and*

WHEREAS, This investment supports more than 11,500 students with disabilities including students receiving services across in-district programs, substantially separate classrooms, and out-of-district placements; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston Public Schools continues to report persistent staffing shortages in special education, including unfilled positions that may contribute to service delays, unfulfilled Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), increased reliance on costly out-of-district placements, and inequitable access to legally required supports; *and*

WHEREAS, Despite the scale of investment, families, educators, and advocates have raised ongoing concerns regarding service consistency, staffing stability, compliance with federal and state special education mandates, and whether current spending levels are translating into improved student outcomes and long-term system sustainability; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston City Council has a duty to evaluate whether major public investments are being deployed effectively, equitably, and in alignment with student needs, particularly when they represent a significant and growing share of the City's education budget; ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to examine Boston Public Schools' Special Education services, staffing capacity, cost drivers, and return on investment, including but not limited to in-district programming, out-of-district placements, compliance with IEPs, and long-term financial sustainability. Representatives from Boston Public Schools, the Boston School Committee, advocates, individuals with lived experience, and members of the public are encouraged to attend and testify.

Filed in Council: February 4, 2026