

Offered by Councilor Ricardo Arroyo

**CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL**



ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS' PREPARATION AND/OR PLANNING IN THE EVENT OF EXTENDED COVID-19 SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES AND RELATED SCHOOL CLOSURES INTO SCHOOL YEAR 2020-2021

- WHEREAS:** On April 21, 2020 Governor Baker announced that all public schools in Massachusetts, including Boston Public Schools (BPS), will remain closed for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year in order to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and reduce the likelihood of overwhelming health systems; *and*
- WHEREAS:** On April 20, 2020 Mayor Walsh stated in an interview with Boston 25 News that officials will have to be creative about how schools reopen and look at “a potentially different way of education” in September to keep people safe; *and*
- WHEREAS:** On April 21, 2020 Governor Baker noted during his press conference that “there is no authoritative guidance with respect to how to operate schools safely” while the pandemic is ongoing; *and*
- WHEREAS:** The World Health Organization Director-General warned that lifting social distancing measures too early could result in a resurgence worse than the current situation; *and*
- WHEREAS:** On April 14, 2020 researchers at Harvard University’s T.H. Chan School of Public Health released a report to predict the trajectory of the pandemic; *and*
- WHEREAS:** The Harvard report found that a single, intense period of social distancing would push the peak of COVID-19 into the autumn season, which would coincide with the flu season and likely exceed critical care capacity and overwhelm health care systems; *and*
- WHEREAS:** The report found that intermittent social distancing combined with widespread surveillance would allow for a more moderate transition into post-pandemic life that would avoid an overload of critical care capacity; *and*
- WHEREAS:** The report determined that intermittent distancing may be required into 2022, unless a vaccine or treatment is developed or critical care capacity is substantially increased; *and*
- WHEREAS:** The development of a vaccine or therapeutic treatment is at least months away; *and*
- WHEREAS:** If social distancing may last until 2022, we need to prepare and plan for extended school closures or develop new protocols for effective social distancing measures in Boston public schools; **THEREFORE BE IT**
- ORDERED:** That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the preparation and planning of BPS for extended social distancing measures, and related school closures into the 2020-2021 school year; and that Boston Public Schools, the Boston Health Commission, and other relevant parties be invited to testify.

FILED ON: April 24, 2020