

Offered by City Councilors Ricardo Arroyo and Michelle Wu, Mejia, Campbell, Essaibi-George, Bok, O'Malley, Breadon, Flaherty, Edwards, Janey and Flynn



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING THE SELECTION OF NWEA AS THE ADMISSIONS EXAM VENDOR FOR BOSTON'S EXAM SCHOOLS AND THE IMPACT EXAM-BASED ADMISSIONS HAS ON DIVERSE ENROLLMENT AT THOSE EXAM SCHOOLS

- WHEREAS:* Boston Public Schools (BPS) has three exam schools that require students to take an entrance exam in order to be invited for enrollment; *and*
- WHEREAS:* On February 6, 2020, the previous admissions exam vendor, Education Records Bureau, shared concerns that the district relies too heavily on the admissions test for eligibility, which contributes to significant demographic disparities in its exam schools, and had made the district aware of this for many years; *and*
- WHEREAS:* The school district's contract with Education Records Bureau expired on June 30, 2020; *and*
- WHEREAS:* On October 2018, researchers from the Harvard Kennedy School released a report that found that despite Black and Hispanic students making up 75% of Boston's student population, they only make up 40% of enrollment at the 3 schools and only 20% of enrollment at the Boston Latin School; *and*
- WHEREAS:* On February 17, 2020, BPS issued a Request for Proposals in order to find a new exam school admissions test vendor; *and*
- WHEREAS:* On June 30, 2020, the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force held a meeting at which Superintendent Casselius and members of her staff were present. At that meeting they were asked whether a new exam vendor had been selected at the time of the meeting, they answered no; *and*
- WHEREAS:* On June 30, 2020, the Task Force unanimously voted to suspend the city's exam school admissions test for one year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, citing the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on Black and Latino communities and the significant learning disruptions that have occurred during the shift to remote learning; *and*

WHEREAS: On July 2, 2020, Superintendent Casselius announced that the City had signed a new contract with NWEA, an admissions exam vendor from Portland, Oregon;
NOW THEREFORE BE IT

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the new BPS contract with NWEA, the decision-making process that lead to the selection of NWEA, and the impact of the admissions test on racial and ethnic representation at exam schools; and that representatives from Boston Public Schools, the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force, the Boston Teachers' Union, the NAACP of Boston, and other interested parties.

Filed on: July 15, 2020