

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR ERIN MURPHY



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO ENSURE THAT ALL INCIDENTS OF BULLYING AND VIOLENCE ARE PROPERLY REPORTED TO ENSURE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS AND STAFF IN THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, A recent audit of Boston Public Schools by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education reported that the Boston Public School system does not support the physical, social, and emotional well-being of all students and does not ensure a safe environment for all students; *and*

WHEREAS, That audit also found that the district's system for managing, responding to, and resolving complaints is not responsive to parent and guardian concerns. This has led to some parents not believing that the district schools prioritize the physical, social, and emotional well-being and safety of all students: *and*

WHEREAS, Acts of violence in Boston Public Schools, including physical assaults, bullying, and sexual assaults, are much to blame for this report; *and*

WHEREAS, District data shows more than an 80% increase in bullying complaints to 440 this year, compared to the 243 complaints in 2018-2019, the last full year of in-person learning. The rise in bullying prompted a student-led protest at the Boston Arts Academy in Dorchester and parental criticism of behavior in a third-grade class at the Manning School in Jamaica Plain; *and*

WHEREAS, The recent report on the Mission Hill School makes painfully clear that unabated sexual and mental abuse of students took place there for nearly a decade to countless students as young as 4 and 5; *and*

WHEREAS, With all the recent, tragic incidents in schools nationally, it's clear that sensible, timely communication regarding dangerous school situations is more important than ever. Now is the time for law enforcement and Boston Public Schools to cooperate, rather than alienate; *and*

WHEREAS, Due to a 2020 school policy to protect students' privacy, schools now provide less information to law enforcement than ever before, which in some cases, adversely impacts the safety of students. The policy requires law enforcement officials to get approval from Boston Public School lawyers or obtain a subpoena or court

order for information about students except in extreme emergencies, such as an active shooter situation; *and*

WHEREAS, There is frustration with the lack of action and accountability by Boston Public Schools. *The Boston Globe* reported on three assaults this spring where one student beat another with a Chromebook laptop, leaving one child bloodied and another with a concussion. In all three cases, the parents, rather than the schools, contacted the police; *and*

WHEREAS, Crimes happening outside school grounds are also a growing worry. The May 11th stabbing at Nubian Square Station is one recent incident. Both victim and attacker were students of Boston Public Schools. In another incident, earlier this spring, a teacher and student were shot just outside of TechBoston Academy in Dorchester; *and*

WHEREAS, Concerned parents and guardians are removing their children from Boston Public Schools. Enrollment has steadily dropped for over ten years and has only accelerated in the last two years; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston Public Schools is responsible for over 46,000 students and 10,000 school staff. The mental and physical safety of these students and school employees is of most importance; *and*

WHEREAS, The recent acts of violence - assaults, bullying, and sexual harassment - must be investigated and appropriately addressed with the help of the Boston Police Department to ensure the public safety of all students and staff in Boston Public Schools; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to examine how the Boston Public School Administration handles all types of assaults and misconduct with law enforcement and to discuss much-needed transparency and solutions for such incidents in the upcoming school year. Representatives from the City of Boston, Boston Public Schools, Boston Police Department, MBTA Transit Police Department, the Office of Safety Services in Boston Public Schools, the Office of Equity in Boston Public Schools, youth leaders, members of the public, and any other interested parties shall be invited and are encouraged to attend.

Filed on: July 13, 2022