

Offered by City Councilor Michelle Wu



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARENT ENGAGEMENT MBTA VOUCHERS

- WHEREAS:* The City of Boston is home to the first public school system in the United States; and
- WHEREAS:* Boston Public Schools spent \$3,060,218 in FY14 for BPS Controlled Choice MBTA, servicing 14,314 students with yearly passes; and
- WHEREAS:* In 2014, 78% of BPS families qualified for free or reduced lunch, totaling approximately 44,460 families; and
- WHEREAS:* According to data from 2005-2009, 23% percent of families with children in Boston are at or below the Federal Poverty Standard, and thus paying for extracurricular transportation may not be a possibility; and
- WHEREAS:* Parents or guardians who do not have the means to spend money on transportation costs miss out on parent teacher conferences, school open houses, and other vital school events; and
- WHEREAS:* It is proven that children supported by strong parental involvement in the classroom perform at a higher level; and
- WHEREAS:* Enabling more parents to attend school events would strengthen students' academic performance in the classroom while also helping parents and guardians to feel informed and supported; and
- WHEREAS:* Having a set of vouchers specifically for school events may be a catalyst to increase awareness about opportunities for parents to get involved; and
- WHEREAS:* Providing five MBTA vouchers per student, at approximately \$4.20 per trip (\$2.10 each way), for 44,460 low income families would total \$933,660, which is less than 0.1% of the total BPS budget for FY 2016, and a potential partnership with the MBTA could further reduce this cost;
NOW

THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,

That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the viability, impact, and potential sources of funding for MBTA pass vouchers for low income BPS families; and that representatives from the MBTA, Boston Public Schools, Community Parent groups, and BPS families at large be invited.

Filed on: August 12, 2015