

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ERIN J. MURPHY, ED FLYNN, BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, FITZGERALD, SANTANS, WORRELL, LOUIJEUNE AND MEJIA



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS THE EXTENSION
OF FREE MUSEUM PASSES EXCLUSIVELY FOR BOSTON
PUBLIC SCHOOL FAMILIES

WHEREAS, The administration announced earlier this week that they would be extending the BPS Sundays program that allows only Boston Public School families free admission to our leading cultural institutions on the first two Sundays of each month; *and*

WHEREAS, Since the Mayor introduced this 8-month pilot program back in January, Councilor Flynn and I have strongly advocated for its expansion to include all Boston families, not just those with children in the Boston Public Schools. Over 23,000 children in our City attend METCO, charter, private, religious and parochial schools and are unjustly excluded from this initiative; *and*

WHEREAS, We filed a Resolution to address these concerns back on February 28th, 2024, and that was blocked by the Council. The Resolution was placed into the Education Committee to hold a hearing and have the appropriate members of the administration attend and answer all the questions the Council had. Unfortunately, the Chair of Education refused to hold a hearing on the matter; *and*

WHEREAS, The initial pilot program, costing \$1 million, was a commendable effort to provide cultural and educational experiences to our students. However, it is crucial to recognize that families whose children attend METCO, private, parochial, and charter schools are also taxpayers contributing to our city's resources. Many of these families are first-generation immigrants, a significant percentage are English Language Learners, and over 80% of charter school students are children of color, with more than 70% coming from low-income households. All these families, many who face financial constraints, deserve the same free access to such enriching experiences.; *and*

WHEREAS, The decision to extend this program for four more months while continuing to exclude deserving families is problematic. We urge Mayor Wu to reconsider the scope of this initiative and to collaborate with the City Council to ensure that it benefits all children in Boston. By including all families, we can foster greater inclusivity and equity in our city, truly reflecting the diverse and vibrant community we aim to support; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

ORDERED: That the Boston City Council holds a Hearing to discuss the BPS Sundays Pilot Program so we have a clear understanding of how much more this will be costing

the taxpayers, where all the funding is coming from, share the results of the \$150,000 study they said they were doing on the data from the first eight months of the program, and find out why all our families in Boston were not included in the expansion of the program. Representatives from the Mayor's office, Office of Arts and Culture, Boston Public Schools, and other interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed on: September 9, 2024