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TO: School Committee Members
FROM: Kenneth N. Salim, Ed.D. , Superintendent of Schools
RE: Adjustments to the FY 2021 Proposed Budget
Date: April 24, 2020

As the School Committee moves forward to adopt the FY 2021 Budget, we are in a very different place than when we developed the Proposed Budget that I presented on March 12. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted us all. Our schools, which closed on March 16, will not reopen this school year, a loss of 61 regular school days. I am enormously proud of our educators who are working hard to implement distance learning plans and support our students, yet we know we will face an unprecedented challenge meeting the academic and social emotional needs of students in the upcoming school year as a result of the extended school closure. Responding to this challenge will not be easy. All students and families have been impacted, but those with the greatest need are likely to experience the most significant impact - it is imperative that we continue to prioritize equity and racial equity. **We will need to think flexibly about how to deploy our resources to support and adapt to a long-term recovery plan that addresses the academic and the social emotional needs of every student.**

Nationally, state and local governments are facing uncertain economic times and Cambridge is not immune to these economic issues. The City is anticipating significant fiscal impacts for the remainder of this year and into FY 2021, including reductions to state revenue, and other non-property tax revenues. City Manager Depasquale and I are in regular communication about the CPS FY 2021 budget and the broader issues and challenges related to resuming school. While the City is making changes to its own budget, the FY 2021 CPS budget allocation of \$213 million will *not* be reduced. I am grateful for the City Manager's continued partnership and strong support of our schools.

Although the closure posed some unique challenges for the School Committee's budget review process, we were able to conduct budget workshop meetings and the public hearing remotely. These meetings gave us an opportunity to present more detailed information about some of the initiatives, answer questions, and hear your feedback as well as that of community members. We also began discussions about the potential impact of the extended school closure on the upcoming school year and the FY 2021 budget. Based on this feedback and discussion, I am providing the following information that we will discuss on April 28th:

1. How we are thinking flexibly and creatively about existing resources to support the extended school closure recovery plan.
2. Two recommended adjustments to the FY 2021 Proposed Budget to support our extended closure recovery plan.
3. Clarifications about the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging to address questions and feedback raised during the last few weeks.

I. Using Resources Flexibly

In many ways we will be in uncharted territory as we enter the next fiscal year and school year. We still do not know the specifics of when or how we will welcome students and staff back into our buildings. Crafting a recovery plan in this uncertain landscape will require flexible and adaptive thinking about how we do our work and how we allocate our resources. Initial planning includes:

- **Summer programming** will be an important part of our recovery plan, and we will need additional flexibility that may include distance learning, in person engagement or a blended approach.
- **Strategic scheduling** will be even more important as schools organize student and staff schedules to support students' individual needs. In addition, the district may need to implement alternative scheduling approaches related to social distancing. The budget includes funding for technical assistance for schools to support creative and effective scheduling.
- **Partner organizations** play a critical role in supporting our students, and we will work with them to align their programming and efforts with the recovery plan.
- **Curriculum, professional development and school improvement plan (SIP) budgets** will be leveraged to support key priorities and align with our recovery strategy and plan.
- **Operational budgets** for transportation, food and facilities, as well as other areas, will need the flexibility to implement measures related to the safe reopening of schools, including social distancing, health screening protocols, and sanitary requirements.

II. Recommended Adjustments To The FY 2021 Proposed Budget

I am recommending two changes to the Superintendent's FY 2021 Proposed Budget that I believe will support our efforts in the upcoming year. These recommended adjustments do not change the bottom line of the FY 2021 Budget, which is in balance with district's \$213,714,730 allocation from the City Manager.

Social Emotional Support for CRLS: Recent work at CRLS has focused on cultivating a community of engaged, resilient students through strengthening multi-tiered practices explicitly devoted to relationship development and growth mindset. I am recommending the addition of two social worker positions to the CRLS budget to build capacity for this ongoing work through research-based restorative practices and counseling supports. The social workers will provide the high school with increased capacity to: (a) help students navigate through the emotions experienced as a result of COVID-19; (b) help to coach educators in expanding daily structures, routines and touch points with students; and (c) lead small groups with both students and staff.

Funding: The increase of 2.0 FTEs social worker positions (+\$147,000) is offset by a reduction of 2.0 FTEs reserve teacher positions (-\$147,000). **Impact on Reserve Position:** The Proposed Budget includes 5.0 FTEs reserve teacher positions. The allocation of 2.0 FTEs to fund the social worker positions will leave 3.0 FTEs teacher reserve positions. There are also 2.0 FTEs reserve paraprofessional positions.

Elementary School Out-of-School Time Network: Our focus on a comprehensive recovery plan reinforces the need to support expansion and coordination of the district's JK-8 out-of-school time opportunities during the school year, vacation weeks, and the summer. I am recommending a restructure of

the originally proposed new assistant Program Manager for Summer and Vacation Learning to create an Assistant Program Manager of the Elementary Out-of-School Time Network. This position will join the existing CPS team that supports out-of-school (OST) time programming. This team is charged with strengthening collaboration with the OST community and providing more equitable program access to families. This will include launching an elementary out-of-school time network, and overseeing planning and coordination of CPS's JK-12 summer and vacation programming.

Funding: The increase of 1.0 FTE Assistant Program Manager Elementary School Network (+\$72,000) is offset by restructuring the 1.0 FTE Assistant Program Manager of Summer/Vacation Programs.

III. Office Of Equity, Inclusion, And Belonging

An important initiative included in FY 2021 Proposed Budget is the creation of a new district level department, the Office of Equity Inclusion and Belonging, to lead and support our efforts to become an anti-racist school district. During the budget review process, I have appreciated the opportunity to hear the concerns and questions about this initiative from community members, educators and families of color and School Committee members.

This new department will lead and accelerate CPS's efforts to address the barriers to equity, become a more proactively anti-racist district, and achieve more equitable outcomes for students. The department will oversee core CPS functions that are inherently connected to issues of equity, including family engagement, social emotional learning, mental and behavioral health, culture and climate, discipline and restorative practices, and incident reporting and response. To staff and fund this department, the FY 2021 Proposed Budget includes **5.0 new** FTEs - a Chief Equity Officer, a second FTE to staff racial equity efforts, an Incident Reporting and Support Specialist, and two Family Engagement team members, and \$240K in discretionary funds. I fully expect that these resources will allow us to launch the office, and give the team the flexibility to design and implement this work in collaboration with students, families, educators and community members. Therefore I am not recommending additional funding at this time. *(Additional information about the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging is included in the Attachment).*

We know that CPS must accelerate its efforts to become an actively anti-racist school district. Disrupting the systemic barriers to equity requires work at every level of our school system and a long-term commitment to meaningful changes in practice and to centering the experiences and voices of students, educators, and families of color in decision making. Our work during the extended closure has underscored the centrality of these issues as we address the increasingly interrelated academic and non-academic needs of families, grapple with the loss of community and relationships in a remote context, and prepare for an unclear and evolving path back to school.

I appreciate your diligence in reviewing the FY 2021 Proposed Budget, and your thoughtful perspectives and insights, particularly in regard to our on-going work around racial equity and anti-racism, as well our need to address the impact of the COVID-19 school closure. I look forward to the discussion with the Committee at the April 28th Budget Workshop and to our continued partnership as we focus our efforts at developing a comprehensive extended school closure recovery plan.

Attachment: Overview of the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Over the last few weeks, we have received feedback and questions about the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging through public comment, discussions with educators and families of color, and School Committee discussions. I have appreciated the conversation with community members and the opportunity to listen and understand their concerns and ideas.

This feedback has centered on five themes: 1) clearly framing this work through an anti-racism framework, 2) providing more detail around the specific activities to be implemented, including explicit ways that community members will play significant roles in design, decisions, and implementation, 3) increasing overall funding for these activities, and 4) clarifying the transition plan to the launch of this office, including hiring processes and community members' roles.

The Development of an Anti-Racism Framework

In 2018-19, CPS worked with the Disruptive Education Equity Project (DEEP) to provide training to CPS educators, administrators, and School Committee members on issues of racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion. That work led to the development of a definition of equity and racial equity for CPS that was subsequently adopted by the School Committee.

As I have shared previously, CPS must accelerate its efforts to become an actively anti-racist school district. Earlier this year, I committed to the development of an anti-racism and racial equity statement that builds on the adopted definition and Building Equity Bridges findings to serve as the foundation for the district's work ahead. This Anti-racism Statement will be the starting place for a more detailed racial equity and anti-racism framework that will support the alignment of district policies and practices, including through training, audits, and accountability measures.

In February, CPS recruited youth, families, educators, and partners to serve on a working group to develop a draft statement and propose ways that it can be integrated into ongoing practice to serve as a living compass for CPS. This group has been meeting remotely to develop a draft statement and recommendations to be reviewed and adopted by the School Committee.

Budget for the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

The proposed Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging will lead efforts in four interrelated areas: 1) Racial Equity, 2) Family Engagement, 3) Climate & Relationships, and 4) SEL & Mental Health. The Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, which includes a new Chief Equity Officer, a new second FTE to staff racial equity efforts, a new Incident Reporting and Support Specialist, two district-level Social Workers, and two new Family Engagement team members will work with district and school staff, families/caregivers, and students in these four areas.

The proposed budget includes \$240,000 in discretionary funds for the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging to launch the office and execute first-year activities. In addition the office will also have oversight over external grants that support this work, including \$80K from the Nellie Mae Educational Foundation

(NMEF) and anticipated \$100K in state grant funds to support mental health efforts. These funds are broken down as follows:

- **\$175K discretionary funds for racial equity and anti-racism efforts**, detailed in the section below, including equity audits, coaching, and stipends for educators' and community members' leadership and participation;
- **\$35K funds for family engagement efforts and programming**, including Mind Matters and leadership stipends for liaisons;
- **\$30K discretionary funds for social-emotional learning efforts**, including teacher mentoring;
- **\$80K in NMEF funds¹**, to support the Building Equity Bridges team through December 2020 and partially fund the launch of the next cohort of Equity Fellows; and
- **\$100K in state grant funds**, to support mental health needs as part of the closure recovery plan.

Key Expectations For The Office Of Equity, Inclusion, And Belonging

Given the nature of the questions and comments in recent weeks, I focus below on the aspect of the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging's charge to advance racial equity and anti-racism efforts. This initial list of activities reflects commitments and recommendations made over the last year. It is my expectation that the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging will actively engage community members - particularly stakeholders from historically marginalized groups - to design and articulate a clear, comprehensive, and impactful plan and measurable outcomes for the district.

- Oversee district-wide use and alignment to the **anti-racism statement** and development and adoption of a more detailed racial equity framework that guides CPS practices;
- Conduct district- and school-level **equity audits**; support action plans to address their findings;
- Oversee design and implementation of a **mandatory training for staff** on issues of racism, equity, belonging, and inclusion, building on work begun this spring;
- Identify **measures of accountability** for anti-racism, equity, belonging, and inclusion issues;
- Oversee **training and coaching** to CPS leaders and staff at the district- and school levels;
- Partner with the Office of Curriculum and Instruction to **review curriculum** for cultural responsiveness, historical-accuracy, and representation, building on work begun this spring;
- Provide direct training and support to CPS staff at all levels to provide culturally-responsive, differentiated, and role-based **family engagement** that reflects the anti-racism framework;
- Review of **school-based discipline policies and practices**, and accelerate a systemwide shift to restorative approaches, in partnership with the district's Mediation Specialist.

¹Currently there is approximately \$30K remaining in the current grant, and an additional \$50K that will come before the Committee on May 5 for a vote of acceptance.

The Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging will also oversee, establish, strengthen, and support structures and programs to directly collaborate with and elevate the voices of students, families, and educators, particularly from communities most impacted by racism.

We are committed to:

- Supporting the next cohort of **Equity Fellows** conducting participatory action research;
- Establishing a **Family/Caregiver of Color Superintendent Advisory Group** and **Family/Caregiver of Color coalition** to engage and support families/caregivers of color;
- Creating structures for **students** to provide input and leadership;
- Supporting initiatives to support Educators of Color, including **Employee Resource Groups** and leadership work by the **Educators of Color Coalition**, in collaboration with the Office of Human Resources.
- At this time, I am not assigning specific dollar amounts for each activity above, as it is important to provide maximum flexibility for the design and implementation of these activities, particularly in the light of extended closures and the system's recovery plan for students.

Key Activities Led and Funded In Other CPS Departments

I also want to reinforce that additional work to make our district more anti-racist is funded and led in other parts of the CPS budget and structure. Some examples:

- The Human Resources office oversees the **Dynamic Diversity Initiative**, which includes \$36K to support **Employee Resource Groups**, including leadership stipends and programming funds, and the \$100k for Project Elevate expansion.
- The Deputy Superintendent's office, which oversees curriculum development and review, professional learning, new teacher programs, and school-based work.
- CRLS continues to implement the **Level-Up initiative** and the **Becoming a Man (BAM)** program.

The Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging will collaborate on these efforts to ensure coherence, alignment, and impact across the district's racial equity and anti-racism efforts.

Transition plan to launch of this office

In the coming weeks, I will provide an update on additional work we are moving forward this current school year, with a combination of current CPS funds and NMEF funds, including support for the development of a family/caregiver coalition, support for work led by and to support educators of color, and the inclusive process for establishing the equity office including recruiting and hiring staff.