BOSTON CITY COUNCIL
Committee on Education
Henry Santana *Chair*

REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

March 29, 2024

Dear Councilors:

The Committee on Education was referred the following docket for consideration:

Docket #0381, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($500,000.00) in the form of a grant, for the Open Data Curriculum, awarded by the MA Department of Education to be administered by the Department of Innovation and Technology.

This matter was sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu, and referred to the Committee on February 28, 2024.

Summary
Docket #0381 authorizes the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of $500,000 in the form of a grant. This Open Data Curriculum grant is awarded by the Massachusetts Department of Education and will be administered by the Department of Innovation and Technology. The grant would fund the development of a curriculum that can be used by teachers in Boston Public Schools, as well as other educational providers that leverage existing open data from the city, state, and federal government.

Information Received at Hearing
The Committee held a public hearing on Docket #0381 on Friday, March 29, 2024. The Committee heard from representatives from the Administration including Santiago Garces, Chief Information Officer for the City of Boston, and Kerry Jordan, Chief of Staff for the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT).

Chief Garces discussed the City's current open data portal, Analyze Boston, which provides the public with numerous data sets that are collected from various City departments. DoIT and Boston Public Schools (BPS) are exploring the possibility of incorporating the open data curriculum with current required civic and mathematics courses by utilizing this readily available data. These classes would be targeted toward high school students with the potential to expand this program to younger students in the future.

These funds will be used to assist BPS teachers in designing a curriculum using Analyze Boston. DoIT is also working with an organization, Data Science for Everyone, which introduces data science in elementary to high school classrooms to help shape the open data curriculum. This grant will also assist in funding a Project Manager to implement this program.

Chief Garces discussed the importance of youth learning data science as a way to enter the field of data analytics and computer science. He highlighted the underrepresentation of people of color and women in these fields which typically lead to high-income jobs.

The Committee also discussed tracking student career trajectories and creating more pathways to data science and computer science higher education, other partnerships between DoIT and BPS, and the possibility of providing professional development opportunities for BPS teachers.

Committee Chair Recommended Action
As Chair of the Committee on Education, I recommend moving the listed docket from the Committee to the full Council for discussion and formal action. At that time, my recommendation to the full Council will be that this matter **OUGHT TO PASS**.

Henry A. Santana

Henry Santana, Chair
Committee on Education