

## **Testifying at Boston School Committee: How To and Sample Testimony**

The Boston School Committee meets every second Wednesday during the academic year and one or two times during the summer. Meetings are at 6pm at the Bruce Bolling Building, 2300 Washington Street, Roxbury MA 02119 (Dudley Square). To access the schedule for this year, see [here](#).

Information on testifying:

- Public testimony happens following initial announcements and the Superintendent's report. There is also a public comment period at the end of the meeting.
- Each individual is allotted two to three minutes, depending on the number of speakers.
- There are two ways to sign up to speak:
  - Contact the School Committee Secretary, Elizabeth Sullivan at [esullivan3@bostonpublicschools.org](mailto:esullivan3@bostonpublicschools.org) or by phone at (617) 635-9014.
  - Sign up in person at the meeting by 6:30pm.
- The Secretary of the Committee will call individuals in the order in which they signed up, though students and elected officials are often called first.
- Your testimony will be timed and you will get a verbal cue when your time limit is reached.
- The Committee will listen but will not respond to testimony
- The Committee welcomes written copies of testimony, which can be handed to the Secretary, who sits at the right of the stage.
- Written testimony can also be submitted by emailing it to the Secretary (see above).
- It's generally helpful to identify yourself at the start of your testimony, explain your concern, and make clear what you think would be helpful.

### **Sample Testimony Boston School Committee on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

"Hi my name is Stephanie Bode Ward. I am a parent and a member of QUEST.

I want to speak to the fact the BPS has designed a priority within the assignment plan for Charlestown and the North End. Since 2012, QUEST has focused on issues of equity. When the assignment plan was voted on last March this priority was not a part of the plan. QUEST advocated for BPS to continue focusing and correcting issues of inequity within the plan, and for me that this [Charlestown/North End priority] is the only priority created in a City filled with inequity is heart breaking.

My requests are as follows:

First I would like BPS to share what other measures, if any, have been taken to ensure equity for children, especially those who are black or brown and living in poverty.

My next request is that there be an independent body appointed immediately to monitor the implementation of the new assignment plan, assist with transparency, and target areas where mitigation may be needed.

Finally, and I know this is more difficult to talk about, we need an independent body that works in conjunction with the office of equity to review all policies through a race based lens.

I have to confess that when I view this priority to Charlestown and the North End using a racial lens, I am disheartened, especially when I know these two neighborhoods have double the access to tier-one schools as does East Boston. Because of perceptions like mine, and please know in this I am not alone, we need to be able to have dialogues about race and systemic racism publically and safely. We need, as a community, to examine the system and have open and honest dialogue about how the system appears to benefit some and not others. Other cities do this, and it makes for a stronger more cohesive community and school system when these discussions can be held openly and transparently.”