

# Bureau Brief



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September 16, 1996

BB96-3

## A Thoughtful Process To Appoint School Committee Members

**NO**, the Mayor can not appoint whomever he wants to the Boston School Committee. The legislation creating the appointed School Committee (Chapter 108 of the Acts of 1991) established a credible process for the nomination and selection of the members of the Committee. Ultimately, the Mayor is responsible for selecting committee members, only natural since the Mayor is now fully accountable for the performance of the BPS and is responsible for funding the schools. Nevertheless, a degree of independence exists between the Mayor and the nominating process. The Mayor selects school committee members only from a group of candidates recommended by the School Committee Nominating Panel. The Nominating Panel actually requires a formal application, establishes criteria and interviews individuals to determine what mix of candidates would be best suited for establishing educational policy for the BPS. This is a thoughtful process that emphasizes the credentials, qualifications and experience of individuals who are ultimately appointed to a position on the Boston School Committee rather than just the number of votes. This process allows the Committee to represent a diversity of interests and experiences that collectively is able to provide policy direction and oversight in meeting the educational needs of the BPS and its students.

### *How Are School Committee Members Appointed?*

Chapter 108 requires that:

- ☐ The School Committee consists of seven members appointed by the Mayor to four-year staggered terms. That means that each year the terms of two or three members expire.
- ☐ A member whose term expires can be re-appointed by the Mayor, but only if the member submits an application and is nominated by the Panel.
- ☐ The members must be Boston residents and reflect the ethnic, racial and socioeconomic diversity of the City and school population.
- ☐ The Mayor appoints a School Committee member only from a list of nominees presented by the Nominating Panel.

Starting in October, the 13-member Nominating Panel collectively establishes criteria for holding the position of School Committee member, prepares an application and review process for potential candidates, advertises for nominations and conducts interviews to assess individuals qualifications. The Panel is then required to submit to the Mayor three to five names for each vacant position no later than the first Monday in December. The Mayor must choose from these nominees. The Mayor may not reject the nominees and request a new group of candidates as is the case in some other cities with appointed school boards. The new members would begin their term starting on the first Monday in January.

### *How Is The Nominating Panel Selected?*

Chapter 108 requires that:

The Nominating Panel consists of 13 members, most of who are representatives of various organizations. The members serve for two-year terms. Each year, at the Panel's first meeting in October, the members elect a Chairperson. The make-up of the Nominating Panel is as follows:

- ☐ Four **parents** of school children, one each selected by the: Citywide Parents Council, Citywide Educational Coalition, Boston Special Needs Parent Advisory Council and Boston Bilingual Parent Advisory Council.
- ☐ One **teacher** selected by the Boston Teachers Union from its membership.
- ☐ One **headmaster or principal** selected by the Boston Association of School Administrators and Supervisors (BASAS) from its membership.
- ☐ One Boston **business** community representative, who serves for one year selected alternately by the: Boston Private Industry Council, Boston Municipal Research Bureau and the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce.
- ☐ One **college president** selected by the Chancellor of Higher Education.
- ☐ The Massachusetts **Commissioner of Education**.
- ☐ Four persons **appointed by the Mayor** to round out the Panel.



## 1996 Members of the Appointed Boston School Committee

Continuing the tradition, the 1996 appointed School Committee consists of seven individuals committed to education with a wide variety of backgrounds and expertise. All have extensive histories with the Boston Public Schools (BPS) and have demonstrated a strong commitment to the success of education and youth in Boston. Since the beginning of the appointed Committee, the members have been diverse in both gender and race and have been drawn from all neighborhoods of Boston. The 1996 appointed School Committee unquestionably demonstrates that the appointed process guarantees diversity and brings together members whose strengths and interests compliment one another.

### **Robert P. Gittens, Chairperson**

*First Assistant Suffolk County District Attorney*

- ☐ Brings a knowledge of the judicial system and a strong interest in issues of student safety and preventive discipline.
- ☐ Is deeply involved in his community and with youth.
- ☐ Moved the system to set high academic standards and open the BPS to parents while ensuring that the BPS financial picture is reasonable.
- ☐ A resident of Dorchester, he received a B.A. in Political Science and a Law Degree from Northeastern University.

### **Elizabeth Reilinger, Ph.D., Vice Chairperson**

*President & CEO, Crittenton Hastings House*

- ☐ Brings strong financial and managerial skills. She has targeted attention to major appropriation areas and improved financial management.
- ☐ Is focused and able to cut through the "red tape" of the BPS to hold administrators to policy directives and improved public reporting.
- ☐ Has experience in youth services and the needs of young women.
- ☐ A resident of Boston, Dr. Reilinger received her Doctorate in Public Policy and Sociology from Cornell University.

### **Felix D. Arroyo - Executive Director, Egleston Square Neighborhood Association**

- ☐ A parent of BPS children, he is constantly working to make the schools more responsive to parents.
- ☐ Active in the Hispanic community in Boston. Strong background in higher education and civic affairs and social service work for youth and minorities.
- ☐ A resident of Hyde Park, Mr. Arroyo holds a Masters in Secondary Education from the University of Puerto Rico and a Certificate of Advanced Studies from the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University.

### **John Gould - Chief Executive Officer, Associated Industries of Massachusetts**

- ☐ Has an extensive business background and knowledge of state and federal policies.
- ☐ A former member of the State Board of Education who has a thorough understanding of state and local educational policies and issues.
- ☐ Brings financial expertise and a personal commitment to the arts and ensuring their presence in the BPS.

- ☐ A resident of Boston, Mr. Gould attended Boston and Suffolk Universities, is a graduate of the American Management Institute and served in the U.S. Air Force Security Service.

### **Alfreda J. Harris - Deputy Commissioner, Boston Parks & Recreation Department**

- ☐ Brings an unwavering commitment to the youth of Boston.
- ☐ Based on many years of experience in running community service centers in Boston, her knowledge and commitment to recreational and safety needs of all children and her interest in all issues that encourage healthy children, she is committed to putting the needs of the students first.
- ☐ A resident of Jamaica Plain, she attended Roxbury Community College and New Hampshire College.

### **Edwin Melendez, Ph.D. - Director, Mauricio Gaston Institute for Latino Community Development & Public Policy, U-Mass. - Boston.**

- ☐ A consumer of the BPS, who continually pushes for a "parent friendly" BPS and parent satisfaction.
- ☐ Brings strong financial, analytical and research skills and a knowledge of the skill needs required for today's workforce.
- ☐ Has an extensive background in educational policy issues, curriculum and bilingual education.
- ☐ A resident of Roslindale, Dr. Melendez received a Ph.D. in Economics from U-Mass.-Amherst.

### **William J. Spring - Vice President, District Community Affairs, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston**

- ☐ An expert in public policy issues who has extensive experience at the federal, state and local levels in developing policy, programs and legislation on youth employment and vocational education.
- ☐ Works regularly to engage the Boston business community in the support of the schools.
- ☐ His leadership in vocational education and commitment that all children be properly prepared for life brought about significant reform of vocational education in the BPS.
- ☐ A resident of the Back Bay, Mr. Spring is a graduate of Harvard and a strong supporter of school to career initiatives to allow students to advance in their education.