



City Commits to a Downtown School

by **Eddie Small**
Courant News Writer

Boston is dedicated to establishing a public school downtown, according to its proposals for the city's new assignment plan.

A Boston Public Schools (BPS) presentation about the plan included the phrase "Committed to finding space to serve downtown families, where current walk-zone access is limited" in a list of elements con-

tained in new ideas for the assignment process.

Although this language was not included in the initial presentation that state legislators saw on January 22, BPS spokesperson Matt Wilder said that the city had always been dedicated to opening a school in central Boston and that its original omission of support was just a mistake. He emphasized that it was

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Walz Trades State House For Planned Parenthood



by **Zack Huffman**
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Back Bay and Beacon Hill residents will vote in a special election to fill the seat held by state Rep. Marty Walz, who will be leaving to become president and chief executive officer of the Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts.

Walz will be vacating her seat representing the 8th Suffolk District, which contains the Back Bay, Beacon Hill and parts of Cambridge.

As of press time, House leaders had yet to decide on a date for the special election to fill Walz's seat. Walz's last day at the State House will tentatively be Friday, February 15.

Ward 5 Democratic Committee Chair Josh Dawson was the only potential candidate to emerge as *The Boston Courant* went to press, but he has yet to make a definite decision about running.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF MARTY WALZ

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quickly corrected.

“Clearly that was an oversight, but the commitment never changed,” he said.

State Rep. Marty Walz said she was pleased with the addition but still anxious to receive more information about establishing a school downtown. She listed a target opening date and a location as two important details that the city still needed to work out.

“I think it’s a step in the right direction,” she said of the presentation, “but I want to keep the momentum going before I feel confident that this is going to happen on a reasonable timetable.”

The city released specifics for three new assignment process proposals last Tuesday. One would create 10 zones based on geography and offer students between three and 14 school options within each zone. The other two would create lists of schools for students based on factors including home address and school quality. One of these

proposals would offer students at least six choices, and the other would offer them at least nine.

The city will begin implementing its new system in the fall of 2014, which Walz referred to as the “logical time” for opening a school downtown. This is also the time period that the group Downtown Schools for Boston has set as their goal.

Ania Camargo, one of the leaders of the group, agreed with Walz that the city’s dedication to getting a school in central Boston still lacked several details. However, she said she was glad to see a commitment included in the proposal.

“We’re very happy that at least the mention of downtown families needing to be served is included in a plan that Boston Public Schools is putting forward,” she said.

A Facebook post from Walz on January 23 summarized her outlook on the school assignment plan after its revision.

“For the first time, BPS has committed to finding space for a new school,” she wrote. “Now we need to work on making that a reality as soon as possible.”