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UNDER LAW OF THE BOSTON BAR ASSOCIATION**

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OCR TO INVESTIGATE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR DISCRIMINATION

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law of the Boston Bar Association ("LCCR") and the Black Educators' Alliance of Massachusetts ("BEAM") have filed a complaint with the United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights ("OCR") against the Boston Public School Department. The complaint alleges discrimination on the basis of race against the City's Black and Latino students and parents.

"Historically, disproportionate numbers of school closings have occurred in the predominantly Black neighborhoods of the city," said BEAM's President, Nora Toney. "BEAM has consistently raised serious questions of equity and fairness during each school closing process. The school closings have had a profound impact on our students, families, and community; creating constant disruption, instability, and uncertainty while failing to provide the quality schools promised by the district. We understand there must be critical decisions made to address the budget and underperformance of schools, but those decisions must be made using a process that is fair and equitable so that all students benefit."

Specifically, the complaint alleges that the Department's new Redesign and Reinvest plan, which proposes to close several schools in the district, disproportionately burdens Black and Latino students. Of the schools, to be closed 46% of the students that will be impacted are Black and 44% are Latino, while only 5% are White, which is disproportionate to the School District's demographics: 36%, 41% and 13% respectively. A disproportionate number of school closings will impact students from Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan, as compared to schools serving higher percentages of white students, such as West Roxbury, Roslindale, and Brighton.

According to LCCR staff attorney Rahsaan Hall, "We are not suggesting that the District continue to blindly pour money into schools that have been identified as failing. However, we are concerned that the burden of making these improvements overwhelmingly falls on the backs of black and brown children in the city."

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