Chinatown school welcomes Chinese New Year

BY LING-MEI WONG

The Josiah Quincy Elementary School celebrated Chinese New Year Festival on Feb. 14. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

The Josiah Quincy Elementary School celebrated Chinese New Year Festival on Feb. 14. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

“I love coming to this school,” said a student. “It’s a great school.”

Boston Mayor Marty Walsh said, “I love coming to this school, to see young faces and students who love learning. It’s important to keep doing celebrations, to never forget who you come from. This is a special time for the Chinese community in Boston.”

Students from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade kicked off the event with a lion and dragon dance. They performed traditional Chinese dances, sang songs in Mandarin and demonstrated gymnastics.

Principal Cynthia Soo Hoo welcomed guests in English and Cantonese.

“The Year of the Dog represents a true friend. This fits in with one of our FIRE principles, which is integrity. I wish all our students academic success and good health.”

Guests included Boston City Councilor for District 2 Ed Flynn, former Councilor Bill Linehan, former principal Bak Fun Wong, former principal Suzanne Lee, former principal Simon Ho and Boston Chinese Evangelical Church senior pastor Steve Chin.

Linehan was recognized for his service as District 2 councilor over 11 years, during which time he helped with the rooftop playground and outdoor garden. “It’s really been an honor. In the Year of the Dog, I hope I’ve been known as a friend and someone loyal.”

Boston Lyric Opera brings songs to Chinatown library

BY RUOBING SU

Three artists from Boston Lyric Opera performed excerpts from Humperdinck’s “Hansel and Gretel” on Feb. 20, in the atrium of the newly opened Chinatown Library. The performing artists showed children, students and caregivers how music tells a story during school vacation week.

“Hansel and Gretel” is an opera by 19th-century composer Engelbert Humperdinck, who described it as a fairy tale. Humperdinck’s sister, Adelheid Wette, wrote the libretto based on the Brothers Grimm’s story of “Hansel and Gretel.”

The one-hour long performance featured two professional singers, mezzo-sopranos Heather Gallacher, who played Hansel, and soprano Sarah Womble, who played Gretel. They were accompanied by pianist Patricia Au and teaching artist Lydia Jane Graeff. The artists used music to tell the students the story of Hansel and Gretel’s survival in the forest, after being thrown out by their mother.

The Boston Lyric Opera artists will perform at seven other Boston Public Library branches until Feb. 24.
## Event Calendar

### Chinese New Year Gala
- **Date:** February 24
- **Time:** 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- **Location:** The Chinese New Year Gala at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, Kresge 201 on 2F. A Mandarin conversation group will meet Tuesday. RSVP at www.meetup.com/bostontech.

### Mu Lan Society Classes
- **Date:** February 24
- **Time:** 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- **Location:** 87 Tyler Street
- **Format:** A Cantonese conversation group will meet Friday at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, Kresge 201 on 2F. A Mandarin conversation group will meet Tuesday. RSVP at www.meetup.com/bostontech.

### Chinese New Year Celebration
- **Date:** February 27
- **Time:** Noon
- **Location:** 93 Worcester Street, Wellesley, MA 02481
- **Format:** Harvard Pilgrim Health Care’s Center for Inclusion Initiatives will host its 14th Chinese New Year Celebration.

### Free evening meals
- **Time:** Every Tuesday and Thursday from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- **Location:** 93 Worcester Street, Wellesley, MA 02481
- **Description:** Bread of Life offers free evening meals for low-income families and individuals in the metropolitan area. Evening meals are served Tuesday at Bread of Life, Wednesday and Thursday at 368 Pleasant Street and Friday at 495 Main Street.

### MIT Asia Business Conference
- **Date:** Saturday, March 3
- **Time:** 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- **Location:** 75 Amherst Street, Cambridge, MA 02111
- **Details:** The conference will take place at the MIT Media Lab.

### Boston Chinese New Year dinner
- **Date:** March 9
- **Time:** 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- **Location:** 9 Tyler Street, Boston, MA 02111
- **Details:** The Academy of the Pacific Rim will host its Lunar New Year Celebration and Benefit Dinner at the China Pearl Restaurant. For details, contact Imani Jean at jean@ucampr.org.

### The 8th annual MIT Asia Business Conference: Innovative Business Conference: Innovative Asia, the largest-focused business conference in the US, will take place at the MIT Media Lab.

### ATASK annual meeting
- **Date:** Tuesday, March 6
- **Time:** 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- **Location:** 98 Albany Street
- **Details:** The Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence annual meeting will take place at the Pao Arts Center. Register online at https://atask2018.eventbrite.com.

### Harbor Health Services, Inc.
- **Location:** 87 Tyler Street, Boston, MA 02111
- **Phone:** (617) 426-9492
- **Email:** Tel: (617) 426-9492

### Educational programming
- **Location:** 87 Tyler Street, Boston, MA 02111
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Two men to represent BCNC at Boston Marathon

BY LING-MEI WONG

Ryan Ng, 34, will run for Team BCNC at the Boston Marathon on April 16. (Image courtesy of Ryan Ng.)

Come Patriot's Day on April 16, Ryan Ng and Allen Chan will run the Boston Marathon for Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC). Ng, 34, is undertaking his first marathon, while Chan, 65, has completed over a dozen marathons worldwide.

“I have always wanted to run the Boston Marathon since I started this sport four years ago,” Chan said. “Boston is like my second home. I lived for 17 years in the Boston area, so doing it for BCNC is very meaningful for me.”

Chan is a former CEO based in Hong Kong, who took up marathon running as a hobby when he retired at age 60. He was raised in Hong Kong, came to Boston for his studies in 1973 and returned to Asia to run a manufacturing business. Chan’s elder brother signed him up for the Hong Kong Marathon — his first road race — in 2014. By Marathon Monday, Chan will have completed 14 marathons.

Ng works in research and development at a pharmaceutical company. The San Francisco native took up running as a New Year’s resolution a few years earlier, completing a half marathon with friends. His parents will participate in the Boston Athletic Association’s 5K on April 14, flying in from San Francisco to race.

“I was telling my parents about Patriots Day weekend in Boston and how it was a big thing, with the reenactment of the Battle of Lexington and Concord, the Red Sox game and the marathon,” Ng said. “I told them if they did the BAA 5K the Saturday before, I would try to do the Boston Marathon.”

While there were several applications for BCNC’s two charity bibs, Chan and Ng stood out. “BCNC appreciates Allen and Ryan for efforts,” said Ally Ang, BCNC development associate. “It’s a huge undertaking, and we’re so grateful.”

Ng completed a yearlong internship at the Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco, where he researched his past and visited his ancestral village in China. He felt running for BCNC was a meaningful way to give back to Boston’s Chinese community.

“This has been an incredible journey,” Ng said. “I’m glad to find an opportunity like this.”

Chan’s wife and two daughters will be at the finish line; his wife is with him in Hong Kong, while his girls are in California. While they were initially worried about Chan’s knees wearing out, they now cheer him on. In turn, Chan has promised to walk rather than run, if he feels any pain.

Chan said, “As long as you can walk, you can finish a marathon. Once I’m on the road, I don’t think of anything. I just go for the finish line.”

To donate to Chan and Ng, visit www.crowdrise.com/o/en/campaign/team-bcnc2018/.

Neighborhood council hears three land proposals

BY LING-MEI WONG

The Chinatown/South Cove Neighborhood Council met Feb. 20 at the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. Attorney Nick Zosula (right) and Mount Vernon Company VP Morgan Pierson spoke about renovating 78 Tyler Street. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)


Architect Halle Auerbach of Millenium Properties gave a presentation on the 115 Winthrop Square project. The building’s height was reduced to 664 feet, after concerns were raised about shadows on the Boston Public Garden. Building 115 Winthrop Square will fund 171 affordable units on Parcel 12-C on Tremont Street, with parking for Tufts Medical Center and a hotel expansion for Corcoran Jennison, owner of the DoubleTree Hotel. The proposed mixed-use project will have a public meeting on Feb. 24.

The vacant Maryknoll Sisters convent on 78 Tyler Street will be renovated into 14 affordable studios, said attorney Nick Zosula. Developer Mount Vernon Company is seeking zoning relief for seven parking spaces from Boston’s Zoning Board of Appeals, as the current four-story building has no space for parking and is accessible on public transit.

Mount Vernon Company owns 40 Berkeley Street, a hotel with affordable housing units. Its 40 affordable units do not have individual kitchens or bathrooms, requiring tenants to share. Once the 78 Tyler Street renovation is complete, 14 tenants from 40 Berkeley Street will move in, so the affordable housing at 40 Berkeley Street can be updated.

A rowhouse at 29 Oak Street and Maple Place will be renovated from three rental units to four condos, said attorney Patrick Mahoney. The renovation needs zoning relief to increase the number of units. The property’s owner had rented out the units to a commercial management company but was displeased to learn the management company leased the units for Airbnb short-term rentals. The owner decided to convert the property to ownership condos instead.

Affordable Housing Lottery

Hanover at Andover
30 Shattuck Road, Andover, MA

1BRs @ $1,160*, 2BRs @ $1,374*, 3BRs @ $1,575*

*Utilities not included. Tenants will pay own Gas Heat, Gas Hot Water, Electric Cooking, and Electricity.

First units will be ready in Summer 2018. Hanover at Andover is a 248 unit rental apartment community located in Andover on the corner of Fisher Street and South High Street. 62 of these apartments will be made available through this application process. The project includes residential amenities such as a resort-style pool, firepit area and BBQs for outdoor grilling. Units will have modern kitchens with granite countertops, frameless cabinets, wood flooring, and stainless steel appliances. The living areas incorporate carpeted flooring and expansive windows, while the bedrooms have ceiling fans, large walk-in closets, and carpeted flooring. The finish packages have 9’ ceilings and accent color walls.

MAXIMUM Household Income Limits: $47,600 (1 person), $54,400 (2 people), $61,200 (3 people), $68,000 (4 people), $73,450 (5 person), $78,900 (6 people)

Completed Applications and Required Income Documentation must be received, not postmarked, by 2 pm on April 13th, 2018.

A Public Info Session will be held on February 26th, 2018 at 6:00 pm in the Activity Room in Memorial Hall Library (2 North Main Street, Andover). The Lottery will be held in the same location on May 3rd, 2018 at 6 pm.

For Lottery Information and Applications, or for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, go to www.s-e-b.com/lottery or call (617) 782-6900x1 (and then x2) and leave a message. For TTY Services dial 711. Applications and information are also available at the Memorial Hall Library in Andover on 2 North Main St (M-Th 9-9, Fri-Sat 9-5, Sun 1-5)
Pressley voices support for immigrants and underserved in congressional bid

BY LING-MEI WONG

Boston City Councilor at-large Ayanna Pressley has never been afraid of a tough fight.

“I’ve known Ayanna since 2009, when she first ran for Boston City Council,” said Suzanne Lee, a former principal at Josiah Quincy Elementary School. “She has always been a voice to tackle the issues that people say are too hard, such as education disparities for girls of color or single mothers.”

Pressley had a birthday party on Feb. 13 at La Fabrica Central in Cambridge, with more than 100 attendees. In her kickoff speech, she talked about her bid with more than 100 attendees. In her kickoff speech, she talked about her bid with more than 100 attendees. In her kickoff speech, she talked about her bid with more than 100 attendees. In her kickoff speech, she talked about her bid with more than 100 attendees.

“Pressley affirmed her support for immigration, underserved in congressional bid. She’s tuned to community concerns. “She’s the same way I have fought for invisible workforces, hotel workers, custodians, security workers, restaurant workers, I will never allow for the Dreamers to be invisible,” Pressley said. Lee admires Pressley for being attuned to community concerns. “She’s been fighting for the underdog,” Lee said. “We need an advocate like her in Congress.”

Pressley has faced criticism for challenging an incumbent and being overly ambitious. Lee herself challenged an incumbent, going against Bill Linehan for District 2 Councilor in 2011 and 2013.

“I ran against an incumbent, and it’s not to do the same thing,” Lee said. “I know Capuano and like him. But he’s been in office almost 20 years. Whatever he wants to do, he should have gotten done by now.”

Lee is a founder of the Chinese Progressive Association, which Pressley has worked with on Chinatown initiatives, along with other civic organizations. Pressley said, “What I love about Chinatown specifically is the intergenerational activism. I especially love that so many women are leading in Chinatown.”

Pressley has advocated for Chinatown, supporting the restoration of a Chinatown branch library, bilingual ballots, rental inspection and worker rights.

“I’m continuing to make sure that Chinatown remains affordable,” Pressley said. Pressley affirmed her support for immigrants, especially Dreamers.

“The same way I have fought for invisible workforces, hotel workers, custodians, security workers, restaurant workers, I will never allow for the Dreamers to be invisible,” Pressley said. Lee admires Pressley for being attuned to community concerns. “She’s been fighting for the underdog,” Lee said. “We need an advocate like her in Congress.”

Pressley said, “What concerns me is the daily uneasiness, stress and worry of many folks in this room and many more beyond.”

The Quincy Lunar New Year Festival took place Feb. 11 at North Quincy High School. Quincy City Councilor Nina Liang greeted attendees Li Chen and Stanley Thang from South Cove Manor at Quincy Point. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

Quincy rings in Year of the Dog

BY LING-MEI WONG

Quincy rang in the Year of the Dog with its 30th Annual Lunar New Year Festival on Feb. 11 at North Quincy High School, attracting hundreds of attendees.

Quincy Mayor Tom Koch said in a prepared statement, “From the performances to the food, arts and crafts and activities for all ages, the Lunar New Year Festival is a wonderful symbol of Quincy’s great diversity.”

Event organizer Quincy Asian Resources, Inc. (QARI) CEO Philip Chong said he was proud Asians represented more than 27 percent of Quincy’s population. He also appreciated over 400 youth from QARI’s Youth Service Corps.

Wellesley Chinese Language School celebrates Chinese New Year Festival on Feb. 10 at Wellesley High School. (Image courtesy of Dingli Zeng.)

Wellesley Chinese Language School celebrates Chinese New Year Festival on Feb. 10 at Wellesley High School. (Image courtesy of Dingli Zeng.)

Affordable First-time Homeownership Opportunity

Anthem Villages Phase I

Off Martin Street

Acton, Massachusetts 01720

One two-bedroom, one and one half bath colonial style home, 1,400 square feet of living area $207,500

Two three-bedroom, two and one half bath colonial style homes, 1,875 square feet of living area $226,400

Two four-bedroom, two and one half bath duplex homes, 2,400 square feet of living area $229,300

New construction of ENERGY STAR certified homes offering garage, deck or patio, gas forced hot air and central air-conditioning.

Community barn, six acres protected open space

South Acton train station one half mile from property

An information meeting will be held at the Acton Memorial Library, 486 Main Street, Acton at 2:00 PM on Saturday, March 3, 2018.

In order to qualify, total household income cannot exceed the following maximum income limits per household size:

One person household: $54,750

Two person household: $62,550

Three person household: $70,350

Four person household: $78,150

Five person household: $84,450

Six person household: $90,700

Seven person household: $96,950

Eight person household: $103,200

Household Asset Limit of $75,000

Buyers will be selected by lottery.

To request an application and information packet, please contact: Housing Resource Group, LLC by voice or text at 781.820.8797 or hrgllc.alwan@yahoo.com or visit the Acton Memorial Library, 486 Main Street, Acton.

Completed applications must be returned to the Housing Resource Group, LLC Four Raymond Street, Lexington, MA 02421 by April 11, 2018.

The lottery will be held at the Acton Memorial Library, 486 Main Street, Acton at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 21, 2018.
Seven organizations work on ending smoking in Chinatown

BY LING-MEI WONG

The Asian Health Initiative of Tufts Medical Center met Feb. 9 at the downtown hospital. It awarded three-year grants to seven neighborhood organizations who serve the Chinatown community, with each organization reporting on the first year of their efforts in 2017.

Tufts Medical Center’s Asian Health Initiative (AHI) has worked with the Chinatown community to address health needs for over two decades. The seven AHI community partners for 2017 to 2019 are the Asian American Civic Association, Boston Asian: Youth Essential Services, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center, Josiah Quincy Elementary School, the Rose Kennedy Greenway and the Wang YMCA of Chinatown.

The Asian American Civic Association (AACA) is working with the Greenway to reduce smoking at Chinatown Park and the Mary Soo Hoo Park. AACA has collected more than 1,000 responses to a survey, led by smoking cessation specialist Sherry Xue. Park visitors were asked if they wanted to stop smoking, with 89 percent saying they did not want to at the beginning of 2017, which decreased to 70 percent at the end of the year. Xue leads a focus group to help smokers quit, with three participants successfully quitting.

The AACA also publishes the Sampan Newspaper, with health content funded by the AHI.

Boston Asian: Youth Essential Services is educating middle school students funded by the AHI. A survey of the agency’s clients had 401 responses; about 34 percent reported smoking in the household by a male resident of the home.

The Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center held eight health workshops for seniors in Chinese, following up with 20 attendees who smoked for three months. Of the 20 smokers, four quit, and all smokers reduced the number of cigarettes they smoked. The center also held a health fair with 10 agencies and more than 150 attendees on Dec. 4, 2017, said social service director Megan Cheung.

The Josiah Quincy Elementary School serves 828 students in grades K-5, who are learning about smoking prevention and its harmful effects, said principal Cynthia Soo Hoo. Students learned about e-cigarettes, chewing tobacco and vaporizers, not just cigarettes, as those are more appealing. A survey identified some fifth graders who had tried smoking.

The Wang YMCA of Chinatown formed a focus group with 27 restaurant workers, five of whom smoked, said executive director Pat Barmwell. Two of the five smokers dropped out, but the other workers continued coming to the Y for exercise and group recreational time.

The center also has a health fair with 10 agencies and more than 150 attendees Dec. 4, 2017, said social service director Megan Cheung.

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Tobacco use in Asian American communities

BY ASIAN PACIFIC PARTNERS FOR EMPOWERMENT, ADVOCACY & LEADERSHIP

Tobacco harms Asian American communities. Tobacco use is the No. 1 cause of preventable death, disease, and death for all groups, including Asian Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It is associated with the top three killers of Asian Americans nationwide: heart disease, cancer, and stroke, based on 2012 data from the National Center for Health Statistics. Smoking causes cancer almost anywhere in the body — and 80 percent of all lung cancer deaths. Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer of Asian Americans.

High prevalence of tobacco use hidden by lack of data on Asian American subgroups

High rates of smoking in Asian American communities, especially among men, are not usually captured by standard research practices, such as lumping together all Asian subgroups into one category and conducting surveys only in English.

Smoking prevalence is extremely high among Vietnamese American and Korean American men in the United States. Around 1 in 3 Vietnamese and Korean American men smoke, according to disaggregated data collected in languages for the National Latino and Asian American Study.

To disaggregate data collected in-languages serve to identify subgroups — including Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, Laotians, and Southeast Asian American men — is linked to higher levels of lung cancer among Asian American men. According to a recent study, the fact that 15 percent of adults and 29 percent of high school students in Massachusetts are currently using tobacco highlights how much work remains to be done in our communities to prevent and reduce tobacco use.

The year’s “State of Tobacco Control” finds Massachusetts’ grades show that progress can be made, although more must still be done by Gov. Baker and the state legislature to enact proven policies that will reduce tobacco use and save lives:

- Funding for state tobacco prevention programs — Grade F
- Report card on smokefree workplace laws - Grade A
- Level of state tobacco taxes — Grade A

Massachusetts shows leadership potential in effort to reduce tobacco use

BY THE AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION

The American Lung Association’s 2018 “State of Tobacco Control” shows Massachusetts earned overall passing grades on its tobacco policies and is in position to show great improvement in 2018. The 16th annual report grades states and the federal government on tobacco policies to prevent and reduce tobacco use, and it finds that while Massachusetts has taken significant steps to reduce tobacco use, elected officials must do more to save lives and ensure all residents benefit.

“Nationwide, smoking rates have continued to decline to historically low levels, yet tobacco use remains the nation’s leading cause of preventable death and disease killing over 400,000 Americans — including 9,300 Massachusetts residents — each year,” said Jeffery J.reyon, executive vice president, Northeast Region of the American Lung Association.

“Tobacco use is a public health crisis in our smoke-free workplace law, and prohibiting the sale of tobacco in healthcare facilities. The bill has already been heard in the Joint Committee on Public Health and did pass the Senate last session 32-2. Grassroots support for the bill can be seen through the increase of local municipalities passing their own similar legislation; Over 155 communities have raised the age of sale to 21; 130 municipalities have included smokefree workplaces; and 152 communities have prohibited the sale of tobacco in healthcare care institutions. A comprehensive statewide law would support and strengthen the existing local legislation.

Sadly, the report also details that as a result of decades of targeted marketing by the tobacco industry, too many Americans haven’t seen the benefits of reduced smoking rates, Massachusetts and the federal government could do more to ensure all Americans benefit from tobacco control efforts. According to the American Lung Association, in addition to passing the omnibus bill, Massachusetts legislators must act to protect and enhance existing smokefree legislation for the Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program.

Presidential Gardens Apartments

140 Evergreen Drive
Bradford, MA 01835

We are opening our HUD Section 8 Very Low Income Waiting Lists for 1, 2 & 3 Bedroom Apartments, our HUD Section 8 Low Income Waiting List for 3 Bedroom Apartments, and our Moderate Income Waiting List for 3 Bedroom Apartments

Waiting List Opening: Effective Date and Time
Monday, February 26, 2018 at 11:00AM

Household Size

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*Area Median Gross Income (AMGI) levels are published and updated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and are therefore subject to change.

Rent for subsidized units is based on Income Tier expected to be 30% of adjusted household income:
- Project Specific (PSY) – Median Minimum: 1BR - $940, 2BR - $1,210, 3BR - $1,325
- Moderate

Presidential Gardens is an equal opportunity property.

Deadline for Receipt of Completed Applications for Lottery Entry: Friday, March 16, 2018 @ 4:00PM

Original, completed applications for lottery entry must be received by the office at the above address by this deadline in order to be entered into the lottery. Mailed applications must be postmarked by the deadline date and time. Faxed or copies of applications will NOT be accepted.

Presidential Gardens has existing waitlists. Completed original applications received postmarked by the lottery deadline will be entered into a lottery to determine placement on lottery applicants list for the respective size of each of those existing lists. Applications collected postmarked after the lottery deadline of Friday, March 16, 2018 at 4:00 PM will be placed at the bottom of the post lottery waiting list but not due date and time. Applications received is this a smoke free property.

Applicants are not required to attend the lottery; however applicant presence is most welcome.

Lottery Location:

Presidential Gardens Apartments, 140 Evergreen Drive, Bradford, MA 01835

Note: By entering the lottery applicants are not considered to be applicants to the above address by this deadline in order to be entered into the lottery. Mailed applications must be postmarked by the lottery deadline date and time. Faxed or copies of applications will NOT be accepted.

If you have any questions about this lottery, please call 978-373-2543 / Relay: 711.
Investing in our students to provide a better education for all

BY BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT TOMMY CHANG

At the Boston Public Schools, we believe that our budget is a values statement, reflecting our commitment to creating the best schools for all our students. Through the BPS budget, we prioritize investing in every individual learner throughout their academic career. We must ensure that all students — regardless of their race, native language, or immigration status — have equitable access to the supports they need to prepare to succeed in college, career, and life.

Here in Boston, the biggest percentage of the City’s budget is allocated to investing in our students and our schools. This is due to Mayor Walsh’s commitment to creating 21st century classrooms with excellent teachers, learning environments and tools for students.

Under the Mayor’s leadership, the city’s allocation to BPS over the past five years has increased by $170 million, or 18 percent. This significant investment in our school system comes at a time when net education aid from the State has decreased.

Although aid from the state continues to decline, Boston continues to invest record amounts in our students: the $1.109 billion district budget we are proposing for next school year marks the largest ever in BPS history. Our proposal includes a $48 million increase over last year, building upon the gains we’ve made in key areas that have proven results: early childhood education, extended learning time, and excellent teachers in every classroom. It also makes record investments in individual school budgets and maintains Boston’s leadership in investment levels on a per pupil basis, both in the state and across the county.

With the graduation rate at a historic high and more Level 1 and 2 schools in city history, Boston continues to lead the nation in public education. The proposed budget for next school year will allow us to build on that momentum.

The budget is a making strategic investment to grow the academic-enrichment program known as “Excellence for All,” which will be supported with an additional $700,000, bringing the total allocation to $2.6 million.

The BPS budget is created with students in mind first. We are working to close opportunity and achievement gaps, and build safe, welcoming and sustaining learning environments for all our students. We believe this budget will continue to ensure each and every BPS student has an excellent education in a 21st-century school.
A food aficionado: Five Spices House

BY ANNA ING

Five Spices House deliver authentic Sichuan spice in the heart of Boston’s Chinatown. Boston has added more restaurants specializing spicy “Mala” food originating from Sichuan and Chongqing, with variations from other provinces. “Mala” means numbing and “La” stands for spicy, as in hot. In addition to Mala, Five Spices House sells Cantonese and other Chinese fare on its extensive menu.

We started with the House Seafood Soup ($12), a light soup with swirls of egg white and peans. The soup was seasoned with squid, scallop and shrimp.

Thankful for recommendations, we tried the Boiled Fish and Red Pepper and Bean Sprouts ($16.95). The fish came out in an intimidating bowl filled with red oil, topped with more red chili powder. I’m used to eating steamed fish, so this version was a surprise, as the fish fillets were braised in Sichuan peppercorns, chili pepper, spices and oil. There are many large pieces of flaky and tender fish, which were mouthwatering in the fragrant oil. While I cannot tolerate insane levels of spiciness, this dish was deliciously with rice.

Our Foil Wrapped Chicken ($14.95) came in a big pouch of tin foil, containing boneless chicken with peanuts and spices. The chicken went well with white rice, without being overly salty or spicy.

Boiled Fish and Red Pepper at Five Spices House features fish fillets braised in fragrant hot oil, Sichuan peppercorns and spices. (Image courtesy of Ling-Mei Wong.)

While I cannot tolerate insane levels of spiciness, this dish was bearable. The levels of spice and aromatic flavors went beyond the one note of just pure “hot” spicy, and the fish paired deliciously with rice.

Our Foil Wrapped Chicken ($14.95) was efficient and our food came out fast.

We finished our meal with Sauteed Tupinambis ($9.95), a dish of sautéed tongue in a savory sauce with ginger, garlic, scallions, chili and soy sauce. We thought it was a good choice to complement the spicy flavors from the previous dishes.

Our Foil Wrapped Chicken ($14.95) was flavorful and juicy, with a good balance of seasoning. The skin was crispy and the meat was tender. The peanuts added a nice crunch and texture to the dish.

Feeling the full effect of the spicy dishes, we decided to order a pot of hot tea to cool down. The pot of hot tea helped to soothe the lips and tongue, making it easier to enjoy the following dishes.

Overall, Five Spices House offers authentic Sichuan cuisine in a cozy and welcoming atmosphere. The portions are generous and the prices are reasonable. If you are looking for a unique and flavorful dining experience, Five Spices House is definitely worth a try.