

## **ARTICLE 20**

### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE STATEMENT**

The Brookline School Committee (BSC) supports providing free menstrual hygiene products within the Brookline Schools, consistent with the intent of Warrant Article 20. The Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) are not subject to the proposed new by-law, therefore we take no position on the vote of Town Meeting.

The BSC believes that the intent of the Warrant Article is consistent with the core values and long-established efforts of the PSB to support the health and wellness of students and to ensure equity in education. In particular, the BSC sees alignment between the inclusive language of Warrant Article 20 and the PSB's ongoing work to support students regardless of gender, gender identity, or gender expression.

Currently, the PSB provides free menstrual hygiene products to students who visit the nurse's office and request them. However, requiring students to come to the nurse's office to obtain these hygiene products has the potential for two unintended consequences that can create barriers to access: attaching or reinforcing a stigma of illness or shame to natural biological functions, and causing unnecessary lost classroom time.

By providing free menstrual hygiene products in school bathrooms, the PSB would remove those access barriers for students who need the products and help to ensure that those students are not unduly deprived of class time. It is the BSC's intention that school nurses would continue to provide health counseling and support for this and other personal health, wellness, and hygiene questions or concerns.

For these reasons, the PSB will begin providing feminine hygiene products in bathrooms at Brookline High School. Additionally, the BSC has initiated a process to develop a policy and the subsequent practices consistent with the Warrant Article and with pending legislation before the Massachusetts Legislature (H.1959/S.1274) that would mandate this practice in public schools serving grades 6-12.