

Menino appoints two residents to School Committee posts

Both to target dropout rate

By [James Vaznis](#)

Globe Staff / January 1, 2010

Two Boston residents with deep roots in the city will join the School Committee on Monday, Mayor Thomas M. Menino announced yesterday.

The two new members are John Barros, executive director of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, and Mary Tamer, a freelance writer who also is on the board of the League of Women Voters of Boston.

They will be sworn in following the mayor's inauguration Monday morning at Faneuil Hall, a few hours before their first School Committee meeting.

"I am honored to appoint two extraordinary individuals who have already given so much to the Boston public schools and to supporting our young people and their families," Menino said in a statement.

Both Barros, a Roxbury resident, and Tamer, of West Roxbury, attended Boston public schools, and Tamer has two sons at Joyce Kilmer K-8 School in West Roxbury.

Tamer, 43, said joining the School Committee was a natural progression for her. After graduating from the University of New Hampshire with a degree in journalism, she covered education for the Gloucester Daily Times and has been active in the Boston Latin School Association. She volunteers at the Kilmer School and has served on the superintendent's search committee.

"Public education is my passion," Tamer said. "I'm honored and thrilled to serve on the School Committee."

Barros, 36, a Dartmouth College graduate, was a teenager when he joined the board of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, which works with city youth. He is involved in several other community-based groups, serves on the board of trustees at St. Patrick's School, is an associate trustee at Boston College High School, and is a member of a School Committee task force working to improve programs for English language learners.

"I really do believe that all youth of our city have the potential to succeed at high levels," said Barros, the son of Cape Verdean immigrants. "The only question is, can we create the necessary support networks, relationships, and programs."

Both appointees expressed interest in tackling such issues as lowering the high school dropout rate and closing the gaps in achievement among various groups of students.

Menino made his selection from a list of six finalists generated by a nominating panel that fielded roughly two dozen applications. They replace Elizabeth Reilinger, a longtime chairwoman of the board, and Helen Dájer, both of whom decided not to seek reappointment to the seven-member board.■

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