

# Innovations in Education

## OVERVIEW

Thanks to the strong support of the Mayor, City Council, and School Committee and the stable leadership of the outgoing superintendent, the Boston Public Schools (BPS) has made considerable progress over the past decade. Boston's comprehensive education reform plans, Focus on Children and Focus on Children II, have guided the progress in the Boston Public Schools. The unifying goal of the strategic reform plan has been to accelerate the continuous improvement of teaching and learning to enable all students to meet high standards. Results of this work have been encouraging despite the difficult fiscal context of recent years. Although FY07 will still present fiscal challenges, the budget will allow BPS to effectively support its teaching and learning priorities.

## Focus on Children

Focus on Children, adopted in July 1996, emphasized the goal of improving teaching and learning to enable all students to achieve high standards of performance. The entire BPS community – educators, administrators, families, students, and private partners – worked towards this goal. The efforts of Focus on Children had a positive, measurable impact on public education in Boston. Test scores and other data show that Boston's schools and students demonstrated continuous improvement over the first phase of Focus on Children.

The successor to Focus on Children, Focus on Children II, emphasized the goal of whole school improvement, a collaborative process that leads to measurable improvement in student performance. Whole school improvement requires all stakeholders to look at a school's many challenges and opportunities not in isolation, but in their entirety. Focus on Children II set out six essentials of learning:

- Use effective instructional practices and create a collaborative school climate to improve student learning;
- Examine student work and data to drive instruction and professional development;
- Invest in professional development to improve instruction;
- Share leadership to sustain instructional improvement;
- Focus resources to support improvement in instruction and in student learning; and
- Partner with families and the community to support student learning.

## BPS Operating Budget

The Boston Public Schools' FY07 budget, totaling \$734.5 million, represents a \$16.7 million increase over the FY06 appropriation. This budget reflects the Mayor's continued commitment to education. It demonstrates that despite fiscal challenges, education remains a top priority for the City of Boston.

Despite continuing pressures resulting from increases in health insurance and energy costs, the FY07 budget supports a number of critical priorities and achieves several important goals:

- Restoration of some of the reductions schools have faced over the past few years;
- Expansion of full-day Kindergarten 1 (K1) programs for four- year-olds;
- Continued funding of a multi-faceted strategy to address and close the "achievement gap;"
- An expanded program of support for new teachers;
- Instructional materials, curricular guidance, and aligned professional development for a cohort of schools in English/language arts and literacy;
- More robust support for English Language Learners;

- Supplemental resources to bolster low-performing schools;
- Continued support for the current fifteen Family and Community Outreach Coordinator positions, plus funding for an additional two positions;
- Adequate funding for anticipated increases in health insurance, utilities, and other costs affected by above average inflation; and
- Funding for known collective bargaining costs.

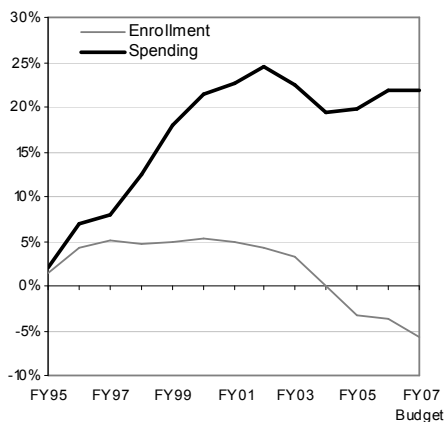
In order to fund its priorities, cover increasing fixed costs and balance the FY07 budget, BPS has developed and incorporated strategies such as expenditure reduction, efficient allocation of resources, and revenue generation. BPS has streamlined its central operations and instituted multi-year “phase-in” periods for new teaching and learning initiatives in order to achieve cost savings. BPS takes an “all funds” approach to budgeting that aligns all operating and external funds with instructional priorities. “Circuit breaker” funding for special education has covered extraordinary costs associated with serving students with disabilities.

## BPS STUDENTS

### Student Enrollment

Student enrollment is a key factor in the Boston Public Schools’ budget. During the budgeting process, BPS projects enrollment levels for each program, grade, and school. The projected enrollment at each school for the upcoming school year then determines the allocation of resources at the school level. As of December 2005, 57,954 students were enrolled in the Boston Public Schools. This enrollment level represents a decrease of 284 students from the 58,238 students enrolled in December 2004. The actual December 2005 enrollment represents a decrease of about 8.5% (5,391 students) from the recent enrollment peak of 63,355 reached in December 1999 (See Figure 1).

The enrollment projection of 56,806 students in FY07 anticipates a nearly 2.0% decrease in the number of regular education students from the actual enrollment level in December 2005. Special



**Cumulative School Enrollment Growth vs. Cumulative School Expenditure Growth**  
 FY95- FY07 adjusted to FY94 dollars

Figure 1

education enrollment is expected to decrease slightly from the December 2005 enrollment. Bilingual education/Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) enrollment is projected to decrease by 4.38% from the December 2005 level.

Currently, 80.1% of Boston Public Schools students are in regular education programs (including vocational and advanced work, and mainstream special education), 9.64% are in bilingual education, and 10.22% are in substantially separate special education programs. The BPS student population is racially and ethnically diverse. In FY06, the student body was 42.8% African American, 33.4% Hispanic, 13.6% Caucasian, 8.5% Asian, 0.5% Native American, 0.1% Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and 1.1% multi-race, non-Hispanic.

The Boston Public Schools seeks to ensure equal educational opportunities and prevent discrimination and inequalities based on racial, ethnic, or socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, or any other reasons.

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

### Regular Education

Regular education programs at the Boston Public Schools include grades 1 through 12, kindergarten, and early learning opportunities. BPS programs run the gamut from early learning to high school programs, from classical education to technology,

and from advanced work classes to remedial and alternative education. In addition, adult basic education and evening high school programs are available for Boston's adult population.

### **English Language Learners**

The Boston Public Schools, through its Office of Language Learning and Support Services (OLLSS), ensures that English Language Learners (ELL)/Limited English Proficient (LEP) students acquire proficiency in English while achieving the same standards as their fluent English-speaking peers. There are approximately 9,400 ELL/LEP students in the Boston Public Schools. BPS offers many choices and services for these students to help them attain English language proficiency and learn content matter. These programs include sheltered English immersion programs, alternative bilingual instruction, two-way bilingual programs, native language literacy, and general education.

Federal and state laws have established specific standards to govern instructional services for ELL/LEP students. Massachusetts General Laws c. 71A, as amended by Chapter 386 of the Acts of 2002, is the law governing the education of English language learners. Known as Question 2, this law requires that school districts limit the time a student with limited English proficiency spends in a sheltered instructional program to a period "not normally intended to exceed one year."

Since Question 2 took effect in FY04, the Office of Language Learning and Support Services (OLLSS) has redefined its mission to achieve a balance between focusing more deeply and systematically on the academic achievement of English Language Learners and monitoring compliance with Question 2. During FY07, OLLSS will work towards:

- Expanding the district's capacity to provide every school with more qualified teachers of English language learners;
- Increasing the number of English as a Second Language (ESL) certified teachers;
- Reassigning a substantial number of certified ESL teachers to schools with the greatest need;
- Continuing the implementation of a multi-year professional development plan focused on enhancing instructional practices in schools and collaborative coaching and learning protocols;

- Continuing to emphasize diagnostic and prescriptive assessment of ELL/LEP students to inform instruction and intervention;
- Providing information to families and other stakeholders regarding the restructuring of programs for ELLs, the location of the instructional programs, and the availability of resources to engage families and the community at large; and
- Hiring an additional twenty ESL teachers to provide direct services and support to ELLs, at a cost of approximately \$1.5 million.

### **Special Education**

The Boston Public Schools provides special education services in both public schools and special education private schools to approximately 11,875 students (or 19.3% of BPS students). In keeping with BPS's goal to enable all students to achieve high standards, special education policies and practices focus on assisting and empowering students with disabilities to attain these standards. All special education services are provided in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Massachusetts State Regulations (CMR 28), Boston School Committee policies, and court orders. Special education teachers work with students with disabilities to meet the goals and objectives specified in their Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs). Speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, adaptive physical education teachers, and other specialists also provide services as determined through the IEP process. To ensure equal access to all curricula in regular education, all teaching and learning experiences within the special education arena are closely aligned with the Citywide Learning Standards (CLS) and Curriculum Frameworks. BPS strives to provide appropriate services to students with disabilities and to serve more students within regular education settings.

While many special education students receive instruction in regular education classrooms and resource rooms, approximately 43% of students with disabilities are educated in substantially separate settings. Students move to these separate settings when such a move is necessary to meet their special education needs.

In addition to in-district placements in mainstream or substantially separate placements, BPS is responsible for the educational services of approximately 480 students in out-of-district placements. Students receive out-of-district placements when it is determined that their needs cannot be met in a public school setting, and that a private day school or private residential school is required to meet their educational goals and objectives. In FY06, BPS was fully or partly responsible for paying for services for 419 of these students. Costs range from \$12,500 per year to \$225,000 per year. Tuition rates are established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Rate Setting Commission.

### **Student/School Support Services**

Students in all programs take advantage of a wide range of support services in the schools. These support services focus on mitigating barriers to teaching and learning, so that all students can reach citywide learning standards, graduate from high school, and have the tools to choose post-secondary education options and/or employment. The Unified Student Services Team offers school medical services, psychological services, guidance services, and other support services across all grade levels. The Unified Student Services Team collaborates with human services and community agencies to supplement the support services BPS offers.

## **ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL DESIGNS**

### **Pilot Schools**

Innovation in education is essential to continuous school improvement. In recognition of this fact, BPS and the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) collaborated in 1994 to create pilot schools that could serve as laboratories for innovative ideas in quality instruction. Pilot schools, exempt from the BTU contract and School Committee rules and regulations, can test innovative educational ideas that can later be introduced to the entire BPS community. Pilot school students' test scores on national and state tests have shown consistent improvement. Reports by the Center for Collaborative Education have suggested that the flexibility pilot schools have been given with regard to budget, staffing, and scheduling has had

a positive impact on instruction, the educational environment, post-secondary outcomes, and most importantly, student achievement.

The existing seventeen pilot schools were created through a request for proposals process. BPS creates budgets for each pilot school based on the average per-pupil grade-level cost. The per-pupil cost allocated to each pilot school includes all instructional, administrative, and support service costs excluding private placement students. Pilot school budgets are part of the BPS operating budget.

In FY07, there will be seventeen pilot schools serving just over 5,600 students in grades kindergarten through twelfth grade. BPS and BTU have committed to expanding the number of pilot schools in operation over the next few years. The following Boston public schools currently operate as pilot schools: Fenway High School, Young Achievers K-8 School, Lyndon K-8 School, Greater Egleston Community High School, Mission Hill School, Harbor School, New Mission High School, Boston Arts Academy, Josiah Quincy Upper School, TechBoston Academy, Boston Community Leadership Academy, Orchard Gardens K-8 School, New Boston Pilot Middle School, Another Course to College, Lee Academy, Mason Elementary School and the Baldwin Early Learning Center

### **Horace Mann Charter Schools**

The City of Boston has two Horace Mann charter schools that will serve an estimated 570 students in FY07. These schools, the Health Careers Academy and the Boston Day and Evening Academy, were originally founded as pilot schools and were designated as Horace Mann charter schools in 1999.

A Horace Mann charter school represents all or part of a public school operated under a formal charter approved by the local school committee and local bargaining agent and granted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Charters are granted for five years and are renewable. Charter schools must comply with state regulations on testing and assessments, and must measure their progress against the goals specified in their charter and produce a formal annual report. In

addition, site visits are used to assess each charter school's progress.

Horace Mann charter schools submit a budget request to the Superintendent and School Committee each year. The cost of Horace Mann charter schools is included in the BPS Operating Budget. In accordance with the Massachusetts law governing charter schools, a Horace Mann charter school's budget allocation must be consistent with the allocation to other public schools in the district.

### **Commonwealth Charter Schools**

In accordance with the Education Reform Act of 1993, Commonwealth charter schools are public schools established by charters granted by the Board of Education independent of local school committees. Commonwealth charter schools differ from pilot schools and Horace Mann charter schools in that the granting of their charters does not require the approval of the local school committee or school unions and they do not submit an annual budget request to the local school committee. The sending district of the student attending the Commonwealth charter school bears the cost of their education. Tuition costs for charter school students who live in Boston are paid by the City of Boston through a state assessment separate from the BPS operating budget.

In FY06, approximately 4,250 Boston students attended Commonwealth charter schools. In FY07, enrollment of Boston students in charter schools is expected to increase to approximately 4,697. Boston students currently attend 22 Commonwealth charter schools in and around the City. *(For more information on charter school funding, see Revenue Estimates and Analysis)*

### **EXTERNAL RESOURCES**

External funds are critical to the success of the Boston Public Schools. They are targeted for specific purposes that enhance teaching and learning and are aligned with the general fund budget to support an all-funds approach to budgeting. External funds are provided through formula grants (called entitlements), competitive

grants, reimbursement accounts, and other grants, primarily from state and federal sources.

BPS expects to receive \$136.2 million in external funds in FY07, an amount equal to 15.6% of its all-funds budget. The FY07 projected budget for external funds represents a decrease of approximately \$5.6 million or 4% from the FY06 budget. In FY06, federal funding comprised 79.3% of the external funds budget, state grants contributed 20.7%, and private funds accounted for less than one-tenth of one percent. In FY07, BPS expects to receive 78.9% of its external funds from federal sources and 21.1% from state grants. At the time of this writing, BPS was in the process of applying for grants that may be awarded for FY07, but are not yet guaranteed.

### **Federal and State Aid**

Federal and state aid to the Boston Public Schools has varied over the past few fiscal years. The Boston Public Schools' level of federal funding dropped in FY04 when the federal government began using 2000 Census figures in aid formulas, rose in FY05, leveled off in FY06, and is expected to drop in FY07 as a result of hurricane relief assistance and cuts in federal education programs. State assistance to the City of Boston and the Boston Public Schools dropped sharply in FY04, remained the same in FY05, inched up in FY06, and is expected to increase slightly in FY07. In FY05, BPS was affected by several changes in state grants due to revenue reductions and policy changes that included decreases in early childhood grants and Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) funding. However, the Commonwealth increased funding for special education. The state's FY06 budget provided moderate increases for many of the education grant programs, including kindergarten grants, targeted tutorial funds, and adult education. The Commonwealth's FY07 budget provides close to level funding for most of the grant programs BPS has benefited from in the past.

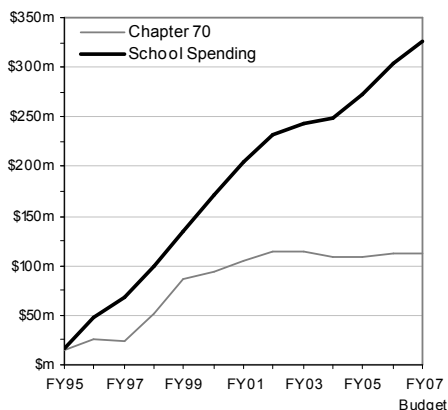
The Boston Public Schools' primary source of federal education funding is the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). NCLB, established during the cyclical reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2002, promises resources geared toward improving the quality of education for every child. NCLB funds

come with substantial new programmatic requirements including targeting of disadvantaged students, greater choice for parents, flexibility for states and districts, accountability, and scientifically-based instructional strategies and academic content. NCLB's enactment also provided the Boston Public Schools with a number of new opportunities to compete for funds.

BPS's primary source of state aid is Chapter 70. The state began distributing school dedicated Chapter 70 aid to support schools after the enactment of the state's comprehensive school reform law, the Education Reform Act of 1993.

The school funding system in Massachusetts includes a mandated local level of spending (local contribution), state aid to support school operations (Chapter 70), and establishes required annual local spending increases (municipal revenue growth factor). The City has consistently met these requirements, and contributed beyond the level of funding required. (See Figure 2 for school spending and Chapter 70 aid levels.)

Additionally, the state provides important aid to mitigate the financial costs of educating students with disabilities. With "circuit breaker" reimbursements, the state shares the cost of educating students with disabilities once the cost to educate those students exceeds a threshold amount. "Circuit breaker" aid was enacted in 2000 and implemented in 2004.



**Boston's Cumulative Chapter 70 Growth vs. Cumulative School Expenditure Growth**

Figure 2

Prior to FY2005 the Commonwealth provided annual funds to offset the cost of school transportation. The City received \$9.1 million in FY04 for the cost of student transportation, a cost that has since been absorbed by the City.

*(Please see the Revenue Estimates Section for more detail on school aid.)*

**Private Partnerships**

The Boston Public Schools, in collaboration with several non-profit partners, has been very successful in leveraging grants and donations from private foundations, corporations, and occasionally individuals to support their educational mission. In FY07, BPS will benefit from major grants from foundations as well as partnerships with local organizations.

Thanks to major grants from the Annenberg Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation, approximately \$638,000 is expected in private funds to support literacy coaching and whole school improvement in FY07. Those funds are made available to BPS through a partnership with the Boston Plan for Excellence in the Boston Public Schools, a non-profit organization founded in collaboration with Boston's business community in 1984.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has made a substantial grant contribution to support the work of BPS in transitioning toward small schools as part of their high school renewal and small school initiatives. BPS expects to receive approximately \$2.3 million from the Gates Foundation to support small school development and implementation in FY07. Gates Foundation funds were awarded through an intermediary, Jobs for the Future, which in turn makes funds available to school awardees through the Boston Educational Development Foundation (BEDF).

The Boston Public Schools Office of Human Resources has been very successful in securing private foundation resources to implement innovative initiatives to improve customer service and enhance BPS's ability to recruit and retain outstanding educators. To date, nearly \$2.8 million in private funds have been raised to support the "HR reinvention." In particular, the Broad Foundation and an anonymous local foundation have been generous in their support of BPS's

efforts to upgrade its information systems and develop state-of-the-art technology-based recruitment and staffing tools.

The Boston Public Schools will receive financial and in-kind contributions from several local organizations in FY07. The non-profit Boston Educational Development Foundation (BEDF) serves as a fiscal agent for relatively small donations awarded to individual schools by corporate partners, foundations, or individual donors. As of March 2006, BEDF's non Gates Foundation accounts had balances totaling \$7.45 million dollars.

BPS has a long-running tradition of working with numerous independent organizations to help bring additional resources, expertise, and guidance to Boston's youth and BPS students in particular. BPS seeks to have each school build a partnership not only with a college or university, but also with a business or foundation, arts or cultural organization, and health or human services provider.

## **Performance Indicators and Standards**

### **Overview**

BPS is committed to using performance indicators and standards to mark its progress. The goal of its accountability system is to promote continuous improvement in teaching and learning in every classroom and every school. Federal and state funding guidelines also require BPS to track student progress. Recent changes in federal and state law have changed the district's role with respect to accountability. Under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), federal regulations define the specific criteria for which schools will be held accountable, and on which sanctions and/or rewards are based. NCLB requires that states set standards for achievement and testing for students to see whether those standards are being attained, not only by the population as a whole, but also by student subgroups. Subgroups include students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, and students from all major ethnic and racial groups. At the state level, a provision in the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 stipulated that all students from the class of 2003 forward must pass the Massachusetts

Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) in order to receive a high school diploma.

Following are descriptions of the performance indicators that BPS currently uses in accordance with federal and state law. (*Performance Indicator & Standards data can be found in the Education chapter in Volume II of the City of Boston FY07 Budget.*)

### **Adequate Yearly Progress**

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is the amount of improvement toward student proficiency that a school or district must demonstrate each year, on average, to close performance gaps and have all students performing at proficient and advanced levels in English language arts and mathematics by 2014. AYP is determined separately for English language arts and mathematics.

The amount of progress that is deemed to be "adequate" depends on a school or district's performance level relative to state performance targets for each rating cycle, and the extent to which a school has improved relative to its baseline for that rating period. A rating cycle represents a two-year period over which MCAS performance is averaged. Cycle I, the current baseline, spanned 1999 and 2000, Cycle II spanned 2001 and 2002, Cycle III spanned 2003 and 2004, and Cycle IV spans 2005 and 2006. A school is considered to have made AYP for Cycle IV if:

1. Performance is at or above the State Performance Target for Cycle IV (proficiency index of 68.7 or higher for mathematics; 80.5 or higher for English language arts) or
2. The school meets or exceeds the Improvement Target for all students overall and for all subgroups.

### **Daily Student Attendance**

Student attendance is an indicator of student exposure to school instruction. It is calculated as the average daily attendance divided by the average daily membership based on data provided by each school to the Records Management Unit using certain grades at different schools and excluding kindergarten. High rates of student attendance are a basic requirement underlying

school effectiveness. BPS expects student attendance to continuously improve.

### **Dropouts**

The dropout rate is regarded as a significant indicator of a school's effectiveness and also measures a school's holding power. According to state guidelines established in FY92, students in grades 6-12 are counted as dropouts if they leave school during the year from July 1 to June 30 for any reason other than transfer, graduation, death, or expulsion with an option to return. Middle and high school refer to grades 6-8 and 9-12 respectively. BPS expects the dropout rate to continuously decline.

### **MCAS Tests: Distributions**

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is a statewide standardized test that measures student performance and serves to seek educational accountability from their respective school systems. MCAS data present the percentages of students at each school that fall into each of the four MCAS Performance Levels. Level 1 denotes "failing," Level 2 denotes "needs improvement," Level 3 denotes "proficient," and Level 4 denotes "advanced."

In the analyses of MCAS scores, percentages are based on the total number of students required to take the test. This includes regular education students, students with disabilities tested with standard accommodations, and limited English proficient students. BPS expects that the percentage of students in Level 1 will continuously decrease and the percentages of students in Levels 3 and 4 will increase.

### **Promotions**

Promotion rates are intended to reflect academic proficiency year-to-year during the standard school year. Therefore, promotion rates are calculated as the percentage of students promoted to the next grade as of June. They do not include those students who are promoted during the summer. Promotions represent an achievement both for students and for their schools. It should be noted that the more rigorous promotion policy now in place encourages an end to social promotions. BPS expects that promotion rates will continuously improve.

## **FORMAL BUDGET PROCEDURES**

### **Governance**

The seven-member Boston School Committee is appointed by the Mayor to staggered appointment terms and serves as the policy-making body of the Boston Public Schools. This structure was affirmed by the voters of the City of Boston in a referendum held in November 1996. The School Committee appoints a superintendent who serves as the chief executive officer of the Boston Public Schools. The superintendent, who is responsible for the management and supervision of the public schools, reports directly to the School Committee and also serves as a member of the Mayor's cabinet. At each school, site councils, consisting of the building administrator, parents, teachers, representatives from collaborating institutions, and a student (at the high school level), assist principals and headmasters in decision-making processes.

### **The Operating Budget Process**

The operating budget serves as a financial plan for carrying out the educational mission of the school system. The operating budget is developed in accordance with the goals and objectives approved by the School Committee and with extensive input from principals, headmasters, school site councils, the superintendent's leadership team, and the larger school community. The budget reflects the goals that the BPS community seeks to achieve during the next fiscal year.

The public school operating budget is developed under the following statutory schedule:

The superintendent is required to submit to the School Committee a proposed budget for the next fiscal year by the first Wednesday in February.

The School Committee is required to submit to the mayor estimates of the next fiscal year's operating budget by the fourth Wednesday in February.

The School Committee is required to take "definite action" on the proposed budget by the fourth Wednesday in March. The School Committee may adopt, reject, reduce, or increase any item in the superintendent's recommended operating budget. If the School Committee fails to take action on the superintendent's recommended operating budget by the fourth Wednesday in March, the budget



recommended by the superintendent is automatically and officially approved.

After School Committee approval of the next fiscal year's annual budget, the superintendent submits the budget to the mayor who may approve or reduce the total recommended budget, but who may not allocate among expenditures.

The mayor must submit the school's operating budget to the City Council for appropriation.

The City Council shall vote on the total amount of the appropriations requested by the mayor, but neither the mayor nor City Council shall allocate the appropriations among accounts.

## **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

The City's capital planning process supports the Mayor's commitment to education and ensures that Boston's educational facilities are equipped to meet the needs of the City's families. Capital expenditures for schools between FY01 and FY05 totaled \$278.9 million. FY06 capital expenditures for schools are estimated at \$35.7 million.

The FY07-11 capital plan includes \$242.0 million for school facilities. In FY07, \$34.5 million in new authorization is proposed. The proposed capital plan includes the following:

- Construction of an addition at Burke High School. The addition will house a new gym and a full-service neighborhood branch library.
- Design and construction to re-open the Hemenway School in Hyde Park.
- Major renovation at the Cleveland School building to update the facility for a future program expansion.
- Renovation of the Russett Road School building in West Roxbury to re-open as a school facility.
- Continued phased renovation at the Dearborn School in Roxbury including updated plumbing system.
- Continued support of the Schoolyard Initiative by constructing new school yards and maintaining equipment installed during prior projects.

In addition to these highlights, the FY07-FY11 capital plan includes maintenance projects for masonry, roofs, fire alarm replacement,

mechanical systems, and accreditation repairs at schools across the City. Project-level detail on capital expenditures can be found in the Education section of Volume II of the FY07 Budget.

Capital investment in high schools has resulted in all schools either maintaining or improving their accreditation status over the past year. The School Building Assistance Program (SBAP), administered by the Massachusetts School Building Authority, is an important revenue source for school renovation and construction. The SBAP reimburses municipalities for some of the costs associated with these capital projects. The SBAP will reimburse the City of Boston for 90% of the construction costs for the Burke High School project. Future projects will be reimbursed at a lower percentage. For the period FY07-11 total estimated payments from the state are estimated at \$77.2 million.

## **LINC Boston Strategic Technology Plan**

To prepare students for life and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is critical that the Boston Public Schools embed technology into the educational experiences of its students, teachers, staff, and families. Since 1995, the Boston Public Schools has made dramatic strides in providing access to technology to support teaching and learning, communication, collaboration, and improved administrative functions. The district's continued support of technology is essential for BPS to achieve its academic and operational goals.

The Boston Public Schools will implement its third strategic technology plan, Learning and Information Network for the Community III (LINC III), in September 2006. As a living document, LINC III will become the district's systemic guide for technology from 2006 to 2009. Building upon the successes of the district's two previous technology plans, LINC III will lead the Boston Public Schools into the future of technology use based on the needs and goals of our students, staff, and families.

By June 2007, the LINC III Strategic Technology Plan will demonstrate the following accomplishments:

- Continued development and implementation of MyBPS, an Intranet

portal, in accordance with the MyBPS Roadmap;

- Phase I implementation of a partnership with business and community partners to refresh outdated Windows 95 and Windows 98 computers in our schools and to replace technology hardware that is more than five years old;
- Phase I reorganization of data and information resources that provides greater flexibility to access and analyze data to advance data-driven decision-making across the district;
- 112 schools fully networked with electrical upgrades;
- Families in approximately eighty schools participating in Technology Goes Home @ School and using MyBPS to communicate and collaborate with teachers concerning their children's classroom assignments; and
- Continued implementation of two multi-year National Science Foundation grants totaling \$4.2 million. One grant supports the alignment of IT curriculum at high schools, community colleges, and University of Massachusetts Boston, and the alignment of these curricula with industry needs. The other grant funds a collaboration between TechBoston and Northeastern University to strengthen IT and engineering education for Boston middle school students and other urban Massachusetts districts.