

# Innovations in Education

## OVERVIEW

FY06 is the final year of the Boston Public Schools' (BPS) five-year education reform plan, Focus on Children II. The plan recognizes the goals and accomplishments made through the plan's predecessor, Focus on Children, and emphasizes six essentials of learning. The objective of Focus on Children II is to guide instructional practice to accelerate the improvement of teaching and learning. Results thus far have been encouraging despite the difficult fiscal context of recent years. Although FY06 will still present fiscal challenges, the budget that has been adopted will allow the BPS to effectively support its instructional priorities.

## BPS Goals

In July 1996, the School Committee adopted Focus on Children, a comprehensive five-year education reform plan designed to serve as a blueprint for improvement throughout the system – from central offices to every classroom in every school.

Under the leadership of Mayor Thomas M. Menino, the Boston School Committee and Superintendent Thomas W. Payzant, the Boston Public Schools set upon a course for continuous improvement. With the adoption of Focus on Children the BPS community – educators, families, students, and private partners – sharpened its focus on the primary goal of improving teaching and learning in order to enable all students to achieve high standards of performance. This reform 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.

Lessons learned through the Focus on Children plan provided the foundation for Focus on Children II. Focus on Children II maintains that if we persist in a thoughtful and unifying process of continuous improvement, we will achieve the results we seek. Focus on Children II emphasizes

whole school improvement, a collaborative process that leads to measurable improvement in student performance. It requires all stakeholders to look at a school's many challenges and opportunities not in isolation, but in their entirety. The following six essentials of learning highlight whole school improvement:

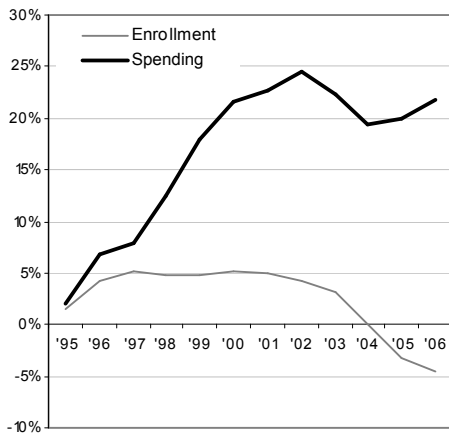
- Use effective instructional practices and create a collaborative school climate to improve student learning;
- Examine student work and data to drive instruction and professional development;
- Invest in professional development to improve instruction;
- Share leadership to sustain instructional improvement;
- 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 BPS FY06 budget, totaling \$712.4 million, represents a \$32.2 million increase over the FY05 appropriation. This budget is reflective of the Mayor's continued commitment to education. It demonstrates that despite fiscal challenges, education remains a top priority for the City of Boston.

The FY06 budget builds on the previous year's progress by concentrating available resources at the school level in order to implement citywide learning standards and bring about whole school change.

In order to fund its priorities, cover increasing fixed costs and balance the FY06 budget, the Boston Public Schools have developed and incorporated strategies such as expenditure reduction, efficient allocation of resources, and revenue generation. The BPS takes an "all funds" approach to budgeting that aligns all operating and external funds with instructional priorities. The BPS budget estimates savings associated with



**Cumulative School Enrollment Growth vs. Cumulative School Expenditure Growth**  
 FY95- FY06 Adjusted to FY94 dollars

Figure 1

vacant budgeted positions and lower unemployment costs as the workforce stabilizes. Special Education “circuit breaker” funding has covered extraordinary costs associated with serving students with disabilities. The BPS has also streamlined its central operations and instituted multi-year “phase-in” periods for new teaching and learning initiatives in order to achieve cost savings.

Despite continuing pressures resulting from increases in health insurance and collective bargaining costs, the FY06 budget supports a number of critical priorities and achieves several important goals:

- Restoration of some of the reductions schools have faced over the past two years (1% of each school’s budget allocation).
- Expansion of full-day Kindergarten 1 programs for four- year-olds. This budget provides funding to support the opening of over 450 Kindergarten 1 seats and represents the first phase of a multi-year strategy that will guarantee a placement for all four-year-olds in the City of Boston.
- Reorganization of two more comprehensive high schools into several small autonomous learning communities. The FY06 budget provides financial support to restructure West Roxbury High School and Hyde Park High School into small schools.

- Funding of a multi-faceted strategy to address and close the “Achievement Gap.” The BPS has made a strong commitment to eliminate the differences in academic achievement that exist between various student groups.
- Supplemental resources for schools in which student performance indicates a need for additional assistance. This budget continues to support low-performing schools and provides funding to address the most critical needs based on individual school assessment.
- Expanded capacity to engage families and community in support of student achievement.
- Continuing support for the Summer Transition Program for grade 3 and grades 6-9 that had been threatened due to reductions in state grants.
- Address critical support infrastructure issues. Initiatives include an upgrade of Human Resources software and a reassessment of technology needs, including a plan to replace obsolete computer equipment.
- Continued resources for sustaining Math and Literacy Instructional Coaching.
- Maintaining reductions in class size that the BPS has implemented over the past several years.
- Adequate funding for anticipated increases in health insurance and other inflationary costs.

## BPS STUDENTS

### Student Enrollment

Student enrollment is the key driver of the BPS budget. Allocations of resources at the school level are determined by the projected enrollment at each school for the next school year. These projections are distributed across all of the programs offered, across all grades, and at every school. As of December 2004, the BPS had 58,238 students enrolled. This represents a decrease of 1,926 students from the 60,164 students enrolled in December 2003. FY05’s actual December

enrollment represents a decrease of about 3.35% since FY94, or 1,952 students. (Figure 1.)

The enrollment projection of 57,420 students in FY06 anticipates an approximately 1.1% decrease in the number of regular education students from the December 2004 actual enrollment numbers. Special education enrollment is expected to show a slight decrease from the December 2004 actual enrollment numbers. Bilingual education/Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) enrollment is projected to decrease by almost 5% from the December 2004 level. Currently, 80.1% of students are in regular education programs (including vocational and advanced work, and 502.1, 502.2, and 502.3 prototype mainstream special education), 9.38% are in bilingual education, and 10.53% are in substantially separate special education programs (502.4 prototype).

The implementation of Massachusetts' Ballot Question 2 has led to a decrease in the number of students enrolled in bilingual and Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) programs. In the initial transition to SEI programs, more than 2,000 formerly bilingual education students were mainstreamed into the regular education setting.

The BPS student population is ethnically diverse. FY05 enrollment was 46% African-American, 31% Hispanic American, 14% Caucasian, 9% Asian American, and 0.2% Native-American.

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

## **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

### **Regular Education**

Regular education is comprised of grades 1 through 12, kindergarten, and early learning opportunities. The programs offered range from early learning and early education centers to high school programs, from classical education to technology, and from advanced work classes to remedial and alternative education programs. Regular education students are often integrated with bilingual and special education students. In addition, adult basic education and evening high

school programs are available for Boston's adult population.

### **English Language Learners**

In September 2002, the School Committee approved the Policy for English Language Learners (ELLs). This policy remains in place with modifications that take into consideration the legal requirements of Question 2. Question 2 mandates that, with limited exceptions, all public school children in Massachusetts must be taught all subjects in English. In November 2002, the BPS presented the first phase in the implementation of Question 2 to principals, headmasters, and administrators. The phase-in process continues in areas such as definition of programs, waiver process, student and teacher assignment, and professional development.

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. OLLSS is a project-based organization designed specifically to execute all aspects of Question 2 from research to implementation.

A team-based approach to program improvement has meant increased efficiency in the implementation of the BPS Policy for English Language Learners in the context of Question 2 and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). During the 2005- 2006 school year, OLLSS will work towards:

- The definition and implementation of a waiver application process to ensure that parents and children are well informed of program options to meet ELLs' needs.
- Continued implementation of a multi-year professional development plan focused on enhancing instructional practices in schools through collaborative coaching and learning protocols.
- Continued emphasis on diagnostic and prescriptive assessment of ELLs to inform instruction and intervention.
- Identification and purchase of appropriate materials, texts, and visual aids for Sheltered English Instruction.
- 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.

### **Special Education**

The BPS provides special education services in both public schools and special education private schools to approximately 12,174 students. 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). In addition to BPS teachers, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, adaptive physical education teachers, and other specialists 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.

In November 1998, the BPS Accountability Standards for Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Mandate was first issued. The 2003 report shows clear progress in the area of referrals to special education as well as out-of-district placements. Currently, approximately 19.5% of BPS students have Individualized Educational Plans. This figure includes all students who receive some form of special education service. The Massachusetts state average is 15.6%. Though considerable progress has been made in the area of referrals to special education as well as a reduction in the number of new students placed in out-of-district placements, the number of students placed in substantially separate settings (502.4 prototype students) requires continued attention.

### **Support Services**

Students in all programs take advantage of a wide range of support services in the schools. School medical services, psychological services, guidance services, and other support services are offered across all grade levels. Prudent deployment of this

student support is designed to improve the system's capacity to address the students' changing needs. In addition, collaborative arrangements with human services and community agencies supplement the support services offered to students and their families.

## **ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL DESIGNS**

### **Pilot Schools**

Pilot schools are schools exempt from union contract and school committee rules and regulations that can serve as "laboratories" to test innovative educational ideas. These ideas can later be shared with the entire BPS community. Pilot school students' test scores on national and state tests have shown consistent improvement. Recent reports by the Center for Collaborative Education have suggested that the flexibility pilot schools have been given with regard to budget, staffing, and scheduling appears to have a positive impact on instruction, the educational environment, post-secondary outcomes, and most importantly, student achievement.

In Boston, a total of seventeen pilot schools have been approved for FY06, with seats for almost 5,500 students in grades K-12. These pilot schools, developed through the BPS/Boston Teachers Union (BTU) collective bargaining contract, have been established through a Request for Proposals process. The budget for each pilot school is 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. The per-pupil cost of pilot school students is part of the BPS operating budget.

Boston currently has the following pilot schools: Fenway Pilot High School; Young Achievers Science and Mathematics Pilot School; Lyndon Pilot School; Greater Egleston Community High Pilot School; the Mission Hill Pilot School; Harbor Pilot School; New Mission High; Boston Arts Academy Pilot School; Quincy Upper Pilot School; Tech Boston Academy; Boston Community Leadership Academy; Orchard Gardens; New Boston Pilot Middle School; Another Course to College; Lee Academy; Mason Elementary School; and the North Zone Early Learning Center.

### **Horace Mann Charter Schools**

A Horace Mann charter school represents all or part of a public school operated under a charter approved by the local school committee and local bargaining agent and granted by the state Board of Education. A charter is granted for five years and is 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, there are site visits to assess each charter school's progress.

Two schools originally founded as pilot schools were designated as Horace Mann charter schools by the Board of Education in 1999. These two schools, the Health Careers Academy and the Boston Evening Academy, are projected to serve 535 students in FY06.

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. A Horace Mann charter school shall not receive less than it would under the school district's budgetary allocation rules.

### **Commonwealth Charter Schools**

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 school committees or school unions and they do not submit an annual budget request to the school committees. 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.

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 FY05, 4,434 Boston students attended twenty-one Commonwealth charter schools. The following sixteen are located in the City of Boston: Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter School, Boston Collegiate Charter School (formerly South Boston Harbor Academy), Boston Preparatory Charter

School, Boston Renaissance Charter School, City on a Hill Charter School, Codman Academy Charter School, Conservatory Lab Charter School, Edward Brooke Charter School, Excel Academy Charter School, Frederick Douglass Charter School, Media & Technology Charter School, Neighborhood House Charter School, Roxbury Charter High School, Roxbury Preparatory Charter School, Smith Academy Charter School and the Uphams Corner Charter School. Boston students attend five Commonwealth charter schools located outside of Boston. They are the Benjamin Banneker Charter School in Cambridge, Prospect Hill Academy Charter School in Somerville and Cambridge, Mystic Valley Regional Charter School in Malden, Foxboro Regional Charter School in Foxboro, and the South Shore Charter School in Hull.

All charter school tuition is deducted from the Chapter 70 distribution of the sending district. In FY99 a three-year reimbursement schedule was introduced, with the state reimbursing 100% of the first-year costs for new Commonwealth charter school students at new or existing Commonwealth charter schools, 60% of the students' second-year costs, and 40% of their third year costs. The sending district assumes the full tuition costs for its students by the fourth year. Even though this reimbursement law is still in effect, the state did not fund charter school reimbursement in FY03 and did not fully fund it in the FY04 or FY05 budgets. Instead, the state paid cities and towns 42% of the total reimbursement in FY04, and 97.86% of the total reimbursement in FY05.

Prior to FY05, charter school tuition rates were based on the average per pupil spending of the sending district (net transportation costs). In FY05, a new method was implemented based on grade level and program spending of the student in their sending district rather than the district's average cost for all students.

The new charter school tuition rate calculation consists of two parts: (1) the sending district foundation budget per-pupil spending for all students at an individual charter school and (2) the sending district's percentage of spending (for the fiscal year) above foundation budget. In addition, a state per-pupil average for capital expenditures for parcels of land and buildings is added to charter-school tuition rates. The state distributes the tuition reimbursement through the

three-year schedule mentioned above and also fully reimburses the capital facilities increment to cities and towns.

Boston's FY05 budget assumes charter school tuition of \$46.7 million with a tuition reimbursement of \$ 14.8 million (including a capital facilities reimbursement) yielding a net tuition cost of \$31.9 million to the City.

In January 2005, the Board of Education ruled that the Frederick Douglass Charter School and Roxbury Charter High School would be closed at the end of the 2004-05 school year. Both schools have appealed this decision. With approximately 520 Boston resident students attending these schools, the City has projected an FY06 net impact of charter schools on Boston that is the average of both of these schools closing and both remaining open. This average net impact is projected at \$38.7 million. As of July 2005 the Board of Education has not rendered its final decision on whether the schools will be closed.

## **EXTERNAL RESOURCES**

### **External Funds**

External funds are important for the success of 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.

Overall, the BPS expects to receive \$140 million in external funds in FY06, or 16.4% of its all-funds budget. The FY06 projected amount of external funds represents a decrease of approximately \$2.5 million or 1.8% from the FY05 amount. In FY05, federal funding comprised 89% of the BPS's external funds, state grants contributed 11%, and private funds accounted for less than one-half of one percent. In FY06 external funds have been budgeted at similar percentages. 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, and is expected to drop in FY06 due to federal

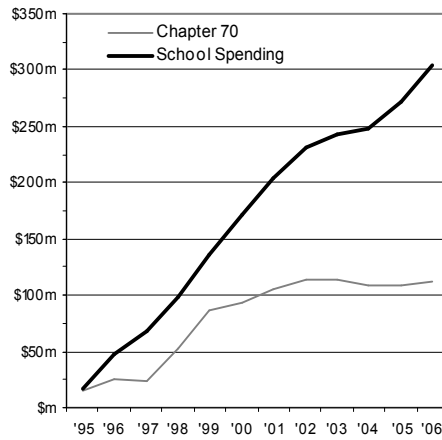
budget cuts in education. State assistance dropped sharply in FY04, remained the same in FY05, and is increasing moderately in FY06.

In FY05, the 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 Massachusetts FY06 budget provides moderate increases for many of the education grant programs, including kindergarten grants, targeted tutorial funds, and adult education.

The primary source of federal education funding is the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The appropriation for Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act will see a modest funding increase in FY06, but overall federal funding levels will decrease in FY06. NCLB, established during the cyclical reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), 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 also provides the Boston Public Schools with a number of new opportunities to compete for funds.

### **Chapter 70 Aid**

The 1993 Education Reform Act was a multi-year commitment by the Commonwealth to increase and equalize funding for local education. The last year of this funding schedule was FY00. Since the FY94 state budget, the Education Reform Act's financing formula has affected the amount of education aid the City has received. It has also required the City to spend at or above the education maintenance of effort, which the City has done. The City of Boston received \$66.6 million in FY94 with steady increases through FY00, when the City received \$186.2 million. The City received \$197.5 million in FY01 and \$205.6 million in FY02 and FY03.



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

Figure 2

For the first time since the passage of the Education Reform Act, Boston's Chapter 70 aid decreased in FY04, with the City receiving \$200.5 million in both FY04 and FY05.

The City's Chapter 70 education aid increased to \$203.6 million in FY06. Under the most recent state budget proposal for Chapter 70 education aid, all cities and towns that reached the foundation budget, increased their aid by at least fifty dollars per pupil.

During most of FY04 and FY05 cities and towns had been awaiting the Supreme Judicial Court's (SJC) ruling in the Hancock vs. Commissioner of Education Case to determine if the SJC found the State was in violation of its constitutional obligation to provide an adequate level of education in the Commonwealth.

On February 15, 2005, the majority of the Supreme Judicial Court ruled in favor of the Commonwealth and denied the plaintiff's motion that Massachusetts is not meeting its constitutional obligation. The next step will be in the hands of the Legislature; it will be very important for cities and towns to keep a close watch over education bills during the upcoming legislative session.

**Private Partnerships**

The BPS has continued 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. The 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.

Thanks to major grants from the Annenberg Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation and an anonymous donor, approximately \$2.01 million is expected in private funds to support literacy coaching and whole school improvement in FY06. Those funds are available through a partnership with BPS' non-profit organization - Boston Plan for Excellence.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has made a substantial grant contribution to support small schools and high school renewal. The BPS is expecting to receive approximately \$2.3 million from the Gates Foundation to support small school development and implementation in FY06.

In FY06 the BPS will benefit from major grants from foundations as well as partnerships with local organizations. The BPS will receive financial and in-kind contributions from several local organizations. The Boston Educational Development Foundation (BEDF) is a non-profit organization that serves as a fiscal agent for relatively small donations awarded to individual schools by corporate partners, foundations, or individual donors. As of March 2005, BEDF's financial resources totaled \$6.5 million dollars.

Over one hundred businesses have contributed to the Technology Initiative that has provided direct partnerships with schools and other forms of system-wide assistance to promote technology in Boston's public schools.

Through the ReadBoston initiative, various city organizations have worked to promote literacy among children in Boston's elementary schools.

In addition to business partnerships, the BPS is the beneficiary of partnerships with a consortium of higher education institutions. According to the Boston Higher Education Partnership, twenty-eight colleges and universities have formed a consortium that provides the largest contributions of funding and services to a single urban school district in the entire country. This steadily increasing assistance comes in the form of scholarships, pro bono assistance, and external grants.

The BPS has strengthened partnerships with arts and cultural institutions and health and human services providers. According to the Boston

Cultural Partnership, over sixty cultural organizations, ranging from internationally-known cultural institutions to community-based organizations to individual artists, have offered programs to the Boston Public Schools.

## **Performance Indicators and Standards**

### **Overview**

The BPS is committed to using performance indicators and standards to mark its progress. The BPS has been implementing an accountability system for a number of years. The goal of the accountability system is to promote continuous improvement in every classroom and every school. Federal and state funding guidelines also require the BPS to track student progress.

### **Adequate Yearly Process**

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the district's role with respect to accountability has been redefined. Under NCLB, federal regulations set the specific criteria for which schools will be held accountable and on which sanctions and rewards are based. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), as mandated by the federal government, interpreted by the state, and measured by performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), is the standardized test that defines whether or not a school is meeting an accountability standard. Thus AYP has been added as a new performance indicator.

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.

NCLB also requires public schools to inform parents if their child's school fails to make AYP for one or more cycles. A cycle is a two-year period over which MCAS performance is averaged. Parents of children in schools not making AYP for both Cycles I (1999 and 2000) and Cycle II (2001 and 2002), were notified that they could transfer their child to another school if space allowed and

if supplemental services were available to children who needed them. For schools not making AYP for Cycle II only, parents were notified that they could transfer their child to another school if space allowed. Schools not meeting the Mid-Cycle target for Cycle III (2003 and 2004) will be identified for corrective action and space requirements. Additionally, the BPS is expected to take appropriate action to ensure improved student performance at these schools in future years.

*(Note: Performance Indicator & Standards data can be found in the Education chapter in Volume II of the City of Boston FY06 Budget.)*

### **Daily Student Attendance**

Student attendance 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 excludes kindergarten. High rates of student attendance are a basic requirement for school effectiveness. The 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 SY1991-92, 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. This indicator applies primarily to high schools. The 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 presents 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."

The reporting of MCAS scores and percentages includes regular students, students with



disabilities tested with standard accommodations, and Limited English Proficient students residing in the U.S. for more than three years.

The 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.

The Class of 2003 was the first group of students required to pass the MCAS to graduate. Of the 3,759 members of the Class of 2003, 76.3% met MCAS and local requirements, 7.1% met neither MCAS nor local requirements, 9.1% met MCAS but not local requirements, and 7.5% met local but not MCAS requirements. The BPS is committed to ensuring that appropriate actions are implemented for the improvement of student performance on the MCAS.

### **Promotions**

Promotion rates are intended to reflect academic proficiency year-to-year during the standard school year; therefore, it is calculated as the percentage of students promoted to the next grade as of June. It does not include those students who are promoted during the summer. Promotions represent an achievement for 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. The 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 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, have been

established. The site council assists the principal or headmaster in decision-making processes.

### **The Operating Budget Process**

The operating budget serves as an operational plan, stated in financial terms, for executing the goals 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 Boston Public Schools seek 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 an annual operating 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 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 shall be deemed as approved by the School Committee.

After School Committee approval of the next fiscal year's annual budget, the Superintendent shall submit 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 FY00 and FY04 totaled \$319.0 million. FY05 capital expenditures for schools totaled \$30.7 million.

The FY06- FY10 capital plan includes nearly \$225 million for school facilities and equipment. In FY06, \$34.0 million in new authorization is proposed. The proposed capital plan includes the following:

- Construction of an addition at Burke High School which will contain a new gym and a full-service neighborhood branch library;
- Renovation of the annex buildings at Dorchester Education Complex for improved use as the home of TechBoston Academy;
- Continued major renovation work at the Holland Elementary School, including a new exterior, roof, windows, electrical and fire alarm updates, access improvements, new interior ceilings and painting, and pool and locker room updates;
- The start of extensive masonry repairs at the Dearborn Middle School, and planning for a comprehensive phased interior building renovation;
- Complete construction of six schoolyards; and
- Additional computer purchases in FY06.

In addition to these highlights, the FY06-FY10 capital plan includes maintenance projects for masonry, roofs, fire alarm replacement, and fire escape repairs at schools across the City. Project-level detail on capital expenditures can be found in the Education section of Volume II of the FY06 Budget.

Capital investment in high schools has resulted in all schools either maintaining or improving their accreditation status over the past year.

The City has made strides towards achieving the Mayor's goal of adding technology throughout the schools. Complete electrical upgrades and technology wiring began in FY99. Today, all schools have received at least a minimum build-

out of classroom technology to make connections to the school network and the Internet. Some of the technology work is discountable at a rate of 80-90% through the Federal Communications Commission Universal Service Fund.

### School Building Assistance

In July 2004, the Legislature enacted and the Governor signed into law Chapter 208 of the Acts of 2004, establishing a new Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The program is designed to assist cities and towns in building new schools or in renovating existing ones.

The new Massachusetts School Building Authority is now chaired by the State Treasurer. Under the new law, cities and towns will continue to be reimbursed for all those projects currently on the priority waiting list by 2009. The State will continue to pay for any remaining grants for projects for which cities and towns have already received payments.

The new law, Chapter 208, has lowered the range of reimbursement rates from 50% - 90% to 40% - 80% for new projects. The methodology used to determine project reimbursement rates will remain relatively unchanged, and will involve equalized property valuation, per capita income and the percentage of low-income students in the school district. Also, the new law allows for school projects to still earn incentive points and points for having desegregation plans through 2012. A few more detailed changes in the reimbursement rate methodology, including lowering the base-points with which projects start, have led to the new lower range of rates. Existing school projects that are currently receiving school building reimbursement or that are on the priority list will receive reimbursement at rates outlined under Chapter 70B.

Under the new school building assistance law, the City expects to receive reimbursement for its projects currently on the priority list – Brunswick Garden, Mildred Avenue and Orchard Gardens in FY06 at 90% and the Burke in FY08 at 90%.

Reimbursement, however, for future projects could be lowered to 76% (through FY2006) and to 71% (through FY2012) without the incentive points. No new applications for projects will be accepted until July 1, 2007. A revised estimate for SBA

payments to the City of Boston between FY06-10 is approximately \$184 million.

Supporting the new school building assistance law, Chapter 208, the Massachusetts Legislature also enacted and the Governor signed into law Chapter 210 of the Acts of 2004 that outlines the funding mechanism for the new School Building Assistance program. In addition to dedicating one cent of the sales tax, the Commonwealth transferred \$150 million to the trust fund and authorized \$1 billion in general obligation bonds.

### **LINC Boston Technology Plan**

The City of Boston and the BPS have committed to wiring schools to the Internet, providing computer access in the classroom and supporting teachers' professional development to effectively use technology to support student learning. LINC2 (Learning and Information Network for the Community), the BPS' second five-year technology plan, articulates the use of technology to support Focus on Children II and the six essentials of whole school improvement as follows:

- To support literacy and mathematics instruction for all students, including special education and bilingual education, and to prepare students for higher education and for careers using technology;
- To retrieve and analyze data to assess student learning and improve instruction;
- To provide and document professional development for all staff as they improve their understanding of the power of technology to enhance and customize instruction;
- To facilitate the identification and sharing of best practices in instruction;
- To support the sharing and alignment of resources; and
- To connect families and community with student learning.

LINC2 will also continue the goals of LINC1 as follows:

- Complete networks and electrical upgrades at all schools;
- Provide professional development so that all teachers will be able to use technology thoughtfully to support student learning;

- Integrate technology with Citywide Learning Standards; and
- Provide appropriate support, maintenance and upgrades.

By FY06 the BPS will assess the goals achieved in LINC2 and begin planning for LINC3. LINC3 will build on the infrastructure put in place during LINC2 and provide opportunities for continued and improved professional development for the BPS community.

By June 2006, the LINC Boston Plan will be able to demonstrate the following accomplishments:

- Continued development of MyBPS – an Intranet portal for improved communication and efficiency in the entire BPS community, particularly with registration, student assignment, and transportation;
- The purchase of 1,500 new pieces of equipment including computers, InFocus projection devices and printers, replacing approximately 20% of the equipment that is more than five years old;
- 112 schools will have been fully networked with electrical upgrades. The remaining 27 schools have had their technology networks completely built-out with the capacity for additional upgrades;
- 85% of teachers will have participated in at least 50 hours of training;
- 1,500 teachers will have been trained to integrate technology with Citywide Learning Standards;
- Families in more than 20 schools will have participated in Technology Goes Home program and use MyBPS to communicate and collaborate with teachers concerning their children's classroom assignments.