

# Innovations in Education

## **OVERVIEW**

Thanks to effective Superintendent leadership and the strong support of the Mayor, City Council and School Committee, Boston Public Schools (BPS) has made considerable progress over the past eighteen years. To provide students with a successful beginning to their educational careers, the district has prioritized early childhood education, including the early education centers and full-day kindergarten for four- and five-year-olds. In recognition of its great strides in public education, in 2006, the district won the distinguished Broad Prize for Urban Education, the highest national award presented to a big city school district.

Since her appointment as Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools in August 2007, Dr. Carol R. Johnson has developed an ambitious agenda for the next chapter in the Boston Public Schools' history. Dr. Johnson is committed to eliminating achievement and access gaps by creating and expanding opportunities for all students. In January 2008, she presented to the Boston School Committee and the community a five year strategic plan, the "Acceleration Agenda," that outlined key priorities for ensuring the success of all children, as well as a reorganization of the district's central offices to strengthen academic supports for schools. Superintendent Johnson's Acceleration Agenda focuses on achieving excellence for all student groups by addressing the persistent achievement gaps across race, gender and special needs populations and turning the tide on the dropout crisis.

## ***BPS Operating Budget***

The most challenging economic conditions in more than a generation have magnified already intense financial pressures on the Boston Public Schools budget. Health care continues to draw a greater share of the department's appropriation. Before any cost of living adjustments, collective bargaining agreements cost more than \$10 million

a year due to annual "step and lane" adjustments for employee longevity and educational credits. IDEA and Title 1 stimulus funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) expires at the end of FY11.

Despite these challenging times, BPS increased the graduation rate to the highest level it has ever been. The drop-out rate is the lowest in more than 20 years and Boston Public Schools students are outperforming their urban peers in nearly every measure. The achievement gap is narrowing and BPS is leveraging additional resources and new authority to turn around underperforming schools.

The Boston Public Schools' FY12 budget, totaling \$830.9 million, represents a \$9.5 million increase from the FY11 appropriation. This budget addresses deep structural inefficiencies by redesigning district services for effectiveness, efficiency and equity. One strategy is to fill empty classroom seats by merging eight schools into four and closing nine school buildings, resulting in \$10.6 million in savings. In addition, BPS will increase the average class size, while still keeping it below the contractual limit. BPS continued to increase central service efficiencies in administrative support. Still, the FY12 budget invests in key priorities of the Acceleration Agenda. These include:

- Continuing the City's commitment to early childhood education in order to stop achievement gaps before they start;
- Expanding programs and services for English Language Learners and continuing to hire and train qualified teachers;
- Replacing isolated and discontinuous substantially separate classes with highly specialized programs for students with disabilities;
- Continuing extended day programs at early education centers and turnaround schools; and
- Opening two new Horace Mann Charter Schools and one Innovation School.

### ***Weighted Student Funding***

Consistent with the Acceleration Agenda plan to ensure resource equity for all students no matter what school they attend, Boston Public Schools implemented a weighted student funding allocation system for FY12. Under the current system, BPS allocates staff based on the number of programs and students in each school. This system has become less effective over the years as BPS has had to make difficult choices, due to significant budget constraints.

BPS's weighted student funding model is more equitable, transparent and predictable, enabling schools to make greater academic progress. Under a weighted student funding formula, dollars follow students based on certain criteria. Dollars no longer follow programs, buildings, adults or schools. BPS calculates per-student funding by assigning a value to various factors based on a student's academic needs. A school's budget is calculated by adding the individual funding estimates for every student projected to attend that school in the fall. For example, students whose family income is at the poverty level will receive more resources, no matter which school they attend. Other need-based weights include students with disabilities, English language learners, off track 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and vocational education students.

Boston Public Schools provided additional funding above the weighted student funding allocation to some schools that experienced a significant decrease in their budget from FY11. The goal of this additional funding was to provide a transition period for schools to adjust their programmatic models or increase their enrollment for the following year. Schools received additional funding if they qualified in the following categories:

- High schools with enrollment less than 400 and a decrease in their level service budget greater than 15%;
- Turnaround schools with a decrease in their level service budget greater than 15%;
- Schools with a decrease in their level service budget greater than 15% and an increase in enrollment greater than 10%; and

- Schools with decreases in their level service budget greater than 35%.  
Boston's special education schools were held harmless while the appropriate weights and programmatic models are examined during FY12.

### ***BPS STUDENTS***

#### ***Student Enrollment***

As of January 2011, 56,751 students were enrolled in the Boston Public Schools. This enrollment level represents an increase of 411 students from the 56,340 students enrolled in January 2010. The January 2011 enrollment represents a decrease of about 10% (6,604 students) from the most recent enrollment peak of 63,355 reached in December 1999.

The enrollment projection of 56,546 students in FY12 anticipates a 0.4% decrease from the FY11 enrollment overall. The Boston Public Schools projects a 1.4% decrease in the number of regular education students from the actual enrollment level in January 2011. Special education enrollment is expected to increase by about 5.2% from the January 2011 enrollment level. Bilingual education/Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) enrollment is projected to decrease by about 0.8% from the January 2011 level.

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 through the weighted student funding formula.

#### ***Student Diversity***

The BPS student population is racially and ethnically diverse. In FY11, the student body was 36% Black, 41% Hispanic, 13% White, 9% Asian and 2% multi-racial or other. 76% of BPS students are eligible to receive free and reduced-price meals in school (69% free, 7% reduced).

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

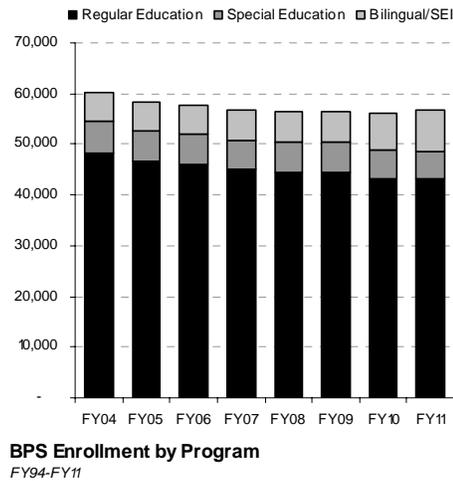


Figure 1

### ***PROGRAMS AND SERVICES***

Currently, approximately 76% of Boston Public Schools students are in regular education programs (including vocational and advanced work, and mainstream special education), 14% are in bilingual education or Sheltered English Immersion (SEI), and 10% are in substantially separate special education programs (See Figure 1).

#### **Regular Education**

Regular education programs at the Boston Public Schools include early learning opportunities, kindergarten and grades 1 through 12. BPS programs range 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 English Language Learners (OELL), 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 24,950 BPS students for whom English is not their first language.

The Parthenon report on strategies for off-track youth issued in 2007 found that ELLs who enter the Boston Public Schools for the first time during

high school are at high risk of dropping out of school before graduation. To address the needs of these students, the Boston Public Schools opened the Newcomers Academy in March 2009. The Newcomers Assessment Center is a transitional program to help prepare ELLs aged fourteen to eighteen years for successful entry into a diploma-granting high school, assessing 3,000 student on average every year. In addition, the Boston Public Schools has expanded enrollment at the Boston International High School, a school for ELLs that currently serves students from forty-eight countries.

Over the last year, Boston Public Schools invested more than \$10 million to expand academic programs and teacher training. BPS expanded the number of Sheltered English Immersion programs in the district. Over 2,000 students completed a four-week ELL Summer Enrichment Academy. In addition, BPS hired or trained 2,261 teachers with English as a Second Language (ESL) licenses or Category I, II and IV training. Another 809 teachers have completed two of the three category training elements and 776 teachers are ESL certified. These efforts are producing results, as ELL students increased MCAS proficiency rates across all grades, including double-digit gains in the third and eighth grades.

#### **Special Education**

The Boston Public Schools provides special education services in both public schools and special education private schools to approximately 10,950 students. In keeping with BPS's goal to enable all students to achieve high standards, BPS's special education services are geared towards mitigating barriers to teaching and learning so that all students can reach citywide learning standards, graduate from high school, have the tools to choose post-secondary education and/or employment and contribute to the community. All special education services are provided in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Massachusetts State Regulations (CMR 28), and Boston School Committee policies.

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.

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 44% of students with disabilities are educated in substantially separate settings to successfully 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 460 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. BPS is currently fully or partly responsible for paying for services for most of these students at an average cost of \$46,414 per year. Tuition rates are established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Rate Setting Commission.

In FY12, the Boston Public Schools will implement significant improvements to provide better services and deliver a higher quality education to our students with disabilities. Highly specialized programs will replace isolated and discontinuous substantially separate classes. This change will allow students with disabilities to move from grade to grade within a single school, supported by highly trained, specialized staff, providing more predictability and fewer transitions for families. In addition, BPS will increase the number of inclusive schools, from four to fourteen across all grade levels. These investments will improve the quality of education for special needs students and decrease costs over the long term.

#### Student/School Support Services

Students in all programs take advantage of a wide range of support services in the schools. These support services create a continuum of support for students with and without disabilities. BPS provides prevention services focused on improving

school climate and increasing staff capacity to deal with a broad range of issues, direct services provided to students either in groups or individually and to provide crisis services. BPS collaborates with human services and community agencies to supplement the support services BPS offers.

In FY11 Boston Public Schools adopted the Academic Achievement Framework, a multi-tier system of support to address the academic, behavioral, and English language development of all students. This is a team-based approach that involves continuous monitoring of students' academic progress, identifying areas where students are struggling, and applying appropriately intensive interventions until the barriers to learning are addressed.

### ***ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL DESIGNS***

#### ***Pilot Schools***

Innovation 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 many elements of 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 schools are created through a request for proposals process.

In FY12, twenty-one pilot schools will be in operation, serving an estimated 7,029 students, or 12% of Boston Public Schools students.

Boston's pilot schools include: Another Course to College, Baldwin Early Learning Center, Boston Arts Academy, Boston Community Leadership Academy, the Boston Teachers Union School, Fenway High School, Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School, Gardner Pilot Academy, Greater Egleston Community High School, Haley Elementary, Harbor School, Lee Academy, Lyndon K-8 School, Lyon 9-12, Mason Elementary School, Mission Hill K-8 School, New Mission High School, Orchard Gardens K-8 School, Quincy Upper School, TechBoston Academy and Young Achievers Science and Math K-8 School.

### ***Horace Mann Charter Schools***

The City of Boston has two Horace Mann charter schools which serve approximately 610 students in FY12. These schools, the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers and the Boston Day and Evening Academy, were originally founded as pilot schools and were granted Horace Mann charters in 1999.

In FY12, two new additional Horace Mann charter schools will open in Boston: Boston Green Academy and UP Academy. They are projected to serve 790 students. Combined with the two existing schools, Horace Mann charter schools will serve approximately 1,400 Boston students in FY12.

All Horace Mann charters require the approval of the local school committee, and are ultimately 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's school progress.

Horace Mann Charter Schools were authorized originally under the Education Reform Act of 1993. This authorizing statute changed dramatically under the recently-enacted Act Relative to the Achievement Gap - Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2010. Although Horace Mann charters still require school committee approval and are granted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, there are now three types of Horace Mann charter schools, each with different characteristics. Type I is a new school submitted with approval of the local bargaining agent(s). Type II is the conversion of an existing school, submitted with approval of a majority of the school's faculty. Type III is a new school which does not require pre-approval by the local collective bargaining unit(s). Instead, any proposed changes in a collective bargaining contract must be negotiated in good faith with the relevant union(s). If no agreement is met within 30 days prior to the start of school, the school operates under the terms of its charter.

The two new Horace Mann charters are both Type III. The new law limits the number of Type III charters to 14 state-wide, of which at least 4 are reserved for Boston. Overall, there is a statewide

limit of 48 charters for all Horace Mann Type I and Type III schools combined. There is no limit on the number of conversion (Type II) charters in the state.

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.

### ***Innovation Schools***

The 2010 "Act Relative to the Achievement Gap" authorized the creation of Innovation Schools by districts in the Commonwealth. These schools have greater autonomy and flexibility than traditional district schools with regard to curriculum, staffing, budget, schedule/calendar, and district policies. These schools establish measurable, annual goals for student and school performance, and are evaluated annually by the Superintendent. Innovation Schools are authorized by the School Committee for up to five years, and can be reauthorized at the end of that term. Innovation Schools receive the same per pupil allocation as any other school in the district.

The Boston Public Schools are aggressively pursuing this new school model. The Roger Clap Innovation School is expected to open in Fall 2011, and seven other prospective innovation schools have received preliminary approval to develop a full proposal.

### ***Commonwealth Charter Schools***

In accordance with the Education Reform Act of 1993 as most recently amended by Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2010 "An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap", 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. Commonwealth charters receive per-pupil tuition equivalent to the local

foundation tuition from the student's sending districts plus facilities tuition. Tuition costs for charter school students who live in Boston are paid for by the City of Boston through a state assessment separate from the BPS operating budget.

The Act Relative to the Achievement Gap of 2010 lifts the 9% district spending cap on charter schools resulting in an expansion of the number of seats permitted to charter schools in Boston. Now, if a district performs in the lowest 10% on MCAS statewide for the prior two years, the cap increases over several years until it reaches 18% of a district's net school spending. Boston currently falls into this category. Its cap is at 13% for FY12 and will grow by 1% each fiscal year until it reaches 18% in FY17.

In February 2011, four new Commonwealth charter schools were approved to open in Boston, with four more approved to open in Fall 2012. Expansions were also granted to two current charter schools. Because these charters will open with only 1-2 grade levels, they will take several years to reach peak enrollment, as they grow a grade at a time. The state Charter Office expects that these expansions will bring Boston to its 18% cap when the schools reach full enrollment in Fall 2019. In FY11, approximately 5,346 Boston students attended 23 Commonwealth charter schools. In FY12, enrollment of Boston students in charter schools is expected to increase to approximately 5,801 students. *(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 part of a strategic 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 \$152 million in external funds in FY12, an amount equal to 15.5 % of its all-funds budget excluding capital

funds. The FY12 budget for external funds represents a decrease of approximately \$29.3 million or 16.2% from the FY11 budget. At the time of this writing, BPS was in the process of applying for competitive grants that may be awarded for FY12, but are not yet guaranteed. As a result, the FY12 external funds estimate is likely understated.

## **Federal 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, and leveled off in FY06. Federal aid dropped in FY07 and FY08 due to cuts in federal education program budgets. In FY09, federal aid to Boston's schools increased slightly. In FY10, federal aid to the Boston Public Schools increased as a result of new funding from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act and higher funding for Boston in other major federal grants.

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 now contains all of the federal formula grants except for those pertaining to students with disabilities.

Funding for students with disabilities is provided through another major source of federal funding, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This funding serves as a revenue source for the district's comprehensive special education program.

## **American Reinvestment and Recovery Act**

On February 17, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) into law. This law provided for two

years of economic stimulus funding for school districts with the purpose of preserving jobs and investing in strategic initiatives that create long-lasting results for students. Boston Public Schools received approximately \$63.2 million over two years from ARRA Title I and ARRA IDEA grants. BPS used this funding to preserve 180 teachers' jobs and absorb a reduction in the state's "circuit breaker" funding for extraordinary special education costs. Boston Public Schools also used ARRA funding for strategic initiatives, such as:

- Formative assessments for teachers to evaluate student outcomes;
- "Acceleration Academies" offering an additional week of instruction during school vacation weeks;
- Additional teachers, materials and assessments for effective instruction for English language learners;
- Acquiring assistive technology equipment and software for students with autism; and
- Acquiring uniform literacy curriculum in all schools

#### Race to the Top

One component of ARRA was \$4.35 billion for Race to the Top, a competitive grant program to encourage and reward states that are creating conditions for education innovation and reform. The Department of Education made grants available in two phases and Massachusetts was one of ten recipients in Phase II. The State was awarded \$250 million over four years. Half of this award is allocated through the Title I formula. Boston Public Schools will receive \$31.8 million over four years with the goals of:

- Improve teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance by implementing the statewide evaluation framework.
- Ensure effective teachers and leaders in every school and classroom by aligning curriculum to the Common Core State Standards and strengthening climate, conditions and school culture.
- Increase college and career readiness by increasing the number of students

completing MassCore – high school programs intended to help high school graduates arrive at college or the workplace well prepared.

- Turn around the lowest achieving schools.

#### School Improvement Grants

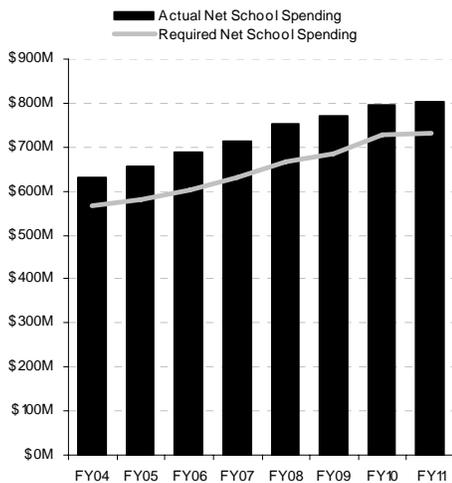
Another component of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was the Department of Education's School Improvement Grant program. These grants are used to improve student achievement in Title I schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. Massachusetts was awarded \$59 million, of which \$25.7 million will be awarded to 12 Boston Public Schools over three years. This funding will allow BPS's lowest performing schools, named turnaround schools, the ability to extend the instructional day by at least 30 minutes, hold an additional 100 professional development hours for teachers, and provide other school based support, such as after school tutors.

#### **Education Jobs Fund**

On August 10, 2010 President Barack Obama signed the Education Jobs Fund law, providing \$26 billion for one time support for educational jobs and Medicaid. Massachusetts received approximately \$204 million and Boston Public Schools received \$13.1 million through the Chapter 70 funding formula. These funds are to be spent by September 30, 2012. In FY11, BPS used funding to retain 57 custodians and in FY12 the remaining \$10.1 million balance will fund teachers.

#### **State Aid**

The primary source of state aid to schools is Chapter 70 education aid. (Note: This funding is not included in the BPS external resources total as it is normally distributed as direct general fund revenue to the City.) The state began distributing dedicated education aid after the enactment of the state's comprehensive school reform law, the Education Reform Act of 1993. The City received \$210.5 million in Chapter 70 education aid in FY07, and \$215.8 million in FY08. In FY09, \$221.4 million in Chapter 70 general fund revenue was



**BPS Actual Net School Spending (FY11 Budgeted) vs. Required Net School Spending<sup>FY04-FY11</sup>**

Figure 2

budgeted. The state reduced that amount by \$23.3 million mid-year and offset the reduction with a \$23.3 million grant from the state's ARRA funds. In FY10, the City received \$217 million in Chapter 70 funds. In FY11, the City expects to receive \$204.3 million in Chapter 70 funds and is budgeting \$196.1 million a reduction of 4% over FY11 for FY12.

The school funding system in Massachusetts includes a mandated local level of spending (local contribution), state aid to support a minimum level of spending or "foundation budget," 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 changes in actual net school spending vs. required net school spending)

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. BPS received \$11.8 million in Circuit Breaker funding in FY09. In FY10, circuit breaker funding decreased to \$7.0 million and to \$6.9 million in FY11. In FY12, the Boston Public Schools is projecting to receive \$6.9 million in circuit breaker funding.

Prior to FY05 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

In FY12, the Boston Public Schools will create the Office of Innovation, Partnerships and Development (OIPD) to address four specific areas: innovation, partnerships, development and time.

First, political, social and economic forces are pressing for changes in how school systems operate. By developing an office that can focus on research and design, the district is better able to steer, vet and implement new ideas in a thoughtful way. The OIPD is coordinating all Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) proposals.

Second, the Boston Public Schools have a rich history of partnering with outside organizations to improve outcomes for their students. Since many of these partnerships are driven almost exclusively at the school level, little institutional knowledge exists within the central office on the number or quality of these partnerships. OIPD will seek to manage these partnerships and target services to schools in need, while preserving the resourcefulness of our principals.

Third, this office will coordinate and expand Boston Public Schools' institutional development. 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 individuals to support its educational mission. The Boston Arts Expansion Initiative is one example of a public/private partnership. Partnering with EdVestors, the goal of this initiative is to increase access, equity and quality of arts opportunities for BPS students. Since FY09, the BPS Arts Expansion Fund has awarded \$1.25 million in grants and anticipates awarding \$800,000 in FY12. In FY11, 81% of students in kindergarten through 8th grade received weekly, yearlong arts instruction, compared to 67% in FY09. For high

school students, 47% of students received arts instruction in FY11 compared to 26% in FY09.

Finally, the OIPD will oversee time projects that are provided outside the traditional school day. Boston students are often challenged by achievement, opportunity and social-emotional support gaps. Expanding time and resources for students in an impactful way can close these gaps. Recent examples of this work include week long intensive instruction at vacation academies, extended learning time at several schools and increasing summer learning from approximately 5,000 students to almost 9,000 students for the summer of 2011.

## **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND STANDARDS**

### **Overview**

BPS has been evaluating its progress using measurable outcomes for a number of years. Through a collaborative process that involved the Superintendent and School Committee, BPS has developed and refined performance indicators and standards to promote continuous improvement in teaching and learning in every classroom and every school. In the Acceleration Agenda, the Boston Public Schools outlined three key goals, and set academic performance measures and targets to measure progress towards these goals. Federal and state funding guidelines also require BPS to track student progress. Changes in federal and state law over the past several years have changed the district's role with respect to accountability. (*Performance Indicator & Standards data can be found in the Education chapter in Volume 2 of the City of Boston FY12 Budget.*)

### **Federal and State Standards**

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 implement 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. 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 or advanced levels in English language arts and mathematics by 2014. AYP is determined separately for English language arts and mathematics.

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. 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 (LEP) 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.

### ***Acceleration Agenda Performance***

The Acceleration Agenda lays out three key goals for the Boston Public Schools:

- To ensure all students achieve MCAS proficiency;
- To close access and achievement gaps; and
- To graduate all students from high school prepared for college and career success.

BPS has developed performance measures with targets against which they will measure progress towards their academic goals. Boston Public Schools seeks to have all students learn to read by the end of Grade 1 and read to learn in Grade 3. To that end, BPS is paying careful attention to its measure of first graders meeting the DIBELS benchmark. DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) is a formative early literacy assessment. BPS is also monitoring the percentage of third-grade students passing the ELA MCAS, and the gap between the highest and lowest student subgroups in the ELA MCAS.

Boston Public Schools has set a goal of having more eighth grade students prepared to take Algebra I.

Boston Public Schools is also focused on ensuring that English Language Learners (ELLs) acquire language mastery and fluency. In order to monitor this, BPS is looking at the percentage of ELLs who move two or more MEPA steps within the same grade span, or one or more steps between grade spans, across all levels. MEPA is the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment.

BPS is monitoring graduation rates, SAT scores and the percentage of eleventh and twelve grade students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses as it focuses on graduating all high school students college-ready and success bound. BPS also monitors the dropout rate, a significant indicator of a school's effectiveness. 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. BPS expects the dropout rate to continuously decline.

### ***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 the 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 on or before the second Wednesday in April.
- 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 capital plan funds projects that support education and youth achievement in all neighborhoods across the City. The goals of the capital plan are to ensure that Boston's educational facilities are equipped to meet the needs of the City's families. Capital expenditures for schools between FY06 and FY10 totaled \$184.4 million. FY11 capital expenditures for schools are estimated at \$32.0 million. FY12 capital expenditures are projected at \$36.4 million.

The FY12-16 capital plan includes \$243.5 million for school facilities and technology. In FY12, \$36.0 million in new authorization is proposed. The capital plan includes the following:

- The "Redesign and Reinvest" initiative to renovate and prepare a dozen schools for the arrival of additional students in September. Among the schools scheduled for renovation are the Wilson, Cleveland, Umana, Dorchester Ed. Complex and the Ohrenberger.

- The Green Repair Program, funded through the Massachusetts School Building Authority, involves replacing roofs at four schools and installing new boilers in two schools. Schools scheduled for construction under this project include the Edison, Edwards, Irving, Lee and the South Boston Education Complex.
- A major renovation of the O'Bryant High School continues with the construction of a new entrance, science labs, and structural concrete repairs to be completed this summer.
- Continued support of the Schoolyard Initiative by constructing three new schoolyards at the Elihu Greenwood, Edison and Young Achievers schools.
- Implementation of the Student Information System for attendance tracking, grading/reporting, and student/parent communications.
- School technology infrastructure upgrades including servers, wireless access points, routers, switches, and network equipment.
- Feasibility studies, in partnership with the Massachusetts School Building Authority, are expected to begin for the Quincy Upper Pilot School and the Dearborn School.

In addition to these highlights, the FY12-FY16 capital plan includes maintenance projects for fire alarm replacement, classroom renovations and other internal and external repairs at schools throughout the City. Specific budget and scope of work information for each project is available in the Education section of Volume 2 of the FY12 Budget document.

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

