

# Innovations in Education

## ***OVERVIEW***

The City of Boston is the birthplace of public education in this nation. With the unwavering support of Mayor Menino and the City Council, the Superintendent and School Committee are committed to providing a world-class system of innovative, welcoming schools that provide exemplary teaching to all students of the Boston Public Schools (BPS) system. The FY14 Budget provides the resources to continue to live up to that commitment.

Upon her appointment as Superintendent, Dr. Carol R. Johnson developed an ambitious agenda for BPS. In its fifth year, the Acceleration Agenda focuses on key priorities to ensure the success of all children regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic status. It is designed to close access and achievement gaps and raise academic performance in every school.

The FY14 Budget provides the financial blueprint for carrying out the Acceleration Agenda. With a keen focus on strengthening teaching and school leadership, closing the achievement gap, supporting school partnerships and extended learning time, all while serving an increasingly diverse population of students, BPS is working to make its budget more transparent and equitable.

Despite financial challenges, BPS has seen success in many areas. The graduation rate has been increasing, the drop-out rate has been decreasing, and BPS students are outperforming their urban peers around the nation in nearly every measure. The achievement gap is narrowing and BPS is leveraging additional resources and new authority to turn around underperforming schools. BPS remains committed to protecting these achievements and continuing the Acceleration Agenda.

FY14 presents both great opportunity and great challenge. BPS continues to face fiscal challenges as the cost of education rises and federal and state resources are reduced. Although the FY14 general

fund appropriation for BPS is increasing by 6.4%, external funds are shrinking with a projected decline of \$19.4 million, or 13.2%, from FY13. But there are also many opportunities to build on successes and extend academic progress as BPS prepares to implement a new school choice system that emphasizes quality closer to home. As this implementation goes forward, BPS is committed to adding dual-language, Innovation and in-district charter schools as well as full inclusion schools and to continuing the important work of improving quality in Turnaround and High-Support Schools.

## ***Quality Improvement Funds***

FY14 is a landmark year in the effort to provide every family with quality options close to home. BPS has developed a more predictable choice and assignment process, and recognizes the work remaining to improve equity and access to quality learning environments. To that end, Mayor Menino has committed \$30 million over three years in Quality Improvement Grant funds. The funds will be split between operating and capital investments.

These funds will help extend the successes of Turnaround Schools by preserving extended time, reinforcing partnerships and leadership support, making critical investments in facilities to provide students with cutting edge learning spaces, and maximizing efforts to capture savings. These one-time funds will help support the transition to the new school choice process while increasing quality in schools across the district. The City has also purchased property to serve as a school for downtown families in response to increased enrollment trends.

## ***BPS Operating Budget***

The BPS FY14 budget totaling \$937.4 million is an increase of \$56.2 million or 6.4%, from the FY13 general fund appropriation. Salaries and benefits comprise approximately 77% of the budget. The

FY14 BPS Budget invests in key priorities of the Acceleration Agenda. These include:

- Continuing the City's commitment to early childhood education and the needs of Boston's young families by adding 701 kindergarten seats available to four and five year old students as well as early childhood special education students;
- Expanding programs and services for English Language Learners (ELLs) and continuing to hire and train qualified ELL teachers;
- Prioritizing the creation of highly specialized inclusion programs for students with disabilities;
- Preserving extended learning time at Turnaround Schools;
- Supporting the expansion of school partnerships, particularly at Turnaround and High Support Schools; and
- Enhancing parents' ability to make well informed school selections with a new student assignment plan and selection tool.

### ***Central Services***

Schools depend heavily on centrally budgeted and deployed services. From custodians and meals, to family engagement, safety and human resources, central offices provide a variety of support to schools. FY14 will be the first year of moving to a network-based structure of linking schools to central services. Each network will link a group of schools with dedicated central office staff to allow greater responsiveness to school needs. This model reduces the number of schools within each team, streamlining service delivery.

A majority of students rely on transportation services to get to and from school. BPS is excited to embark on its new transportation contract, which promises greater efficiency and a collaborative partnership. BPS has a well maintained fleet, and will continue to increase the safety of students while getting them to their homes and schools in a timely fashion.

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

Weighted Student Funding (WSF) is the foundation of the Acceleration Agenda because it ensures resource equity for all students no matter what school they attend. The first year of WSF

delivered a budget that was easier to understand, more equitable, and reflective of students' needs. For FY14, the third year using this formula, BPS has refined this need-based method of funding. Before WSF, BPS allocated staff based on the number of programs and students in each school. This system was less effective over the years when BPS had to make difficult choices due to budget constraints. BPS now funds students, based on their academic need – not buildings, adults, or programs.

Under WSF, dollars follow students based on certain criteria and system wide rules. Each school receives a foundation budget to support essential staff. Then BPS calculates a per-student funding amount by assigning a value to various factors that differentiate student need. 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, ELL, off track 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students and vocational education students.

This budget reflects the ongoing efforts to refine weights. The difficult decisions made three years ago to fill empty seats and adopt a new funding structure – as well as the significant increase in the City's appropriation for FY14 – has allowed BPS to increase the total direct appropriations to schools by over \$30 million.

BPS continues their commitment to a smooth transition to WSF with a third year of providing one-time funding known as "soft landings". The goal of soft landings is to provide a transition period for schools to adjust their programmatic models and/or increase their enrollment for the following year. Two categories of schools (dual language programs and early education programs for KO students with disabilities) received additional funding in FY14. Because dual language programs are constrained by class size of 20:1 they are not sustainable under our current weighted student funding model. Therefore, the first soft landing provides additional resources to schools with dual language programs to enable them to maintain the current model. The increase for any individual school is capped at 4%.

The School Committee recently approved a revision to the early education center (EEC)/early learning center (ELC) model that allows BPS to provide more opportunities and serve more students with disabilities. In order to allow for schools to provide appropriate supports for this student population, a second soft landing will assign the weight for Early Childhood to all entry level students (K0) with disabilities.

BPS has recognized that even with the success of WSF, some adjustments are still needed. Special education schools have been held harmless while the appropriate weights and programmatic models are examined. BPS also has recognized academic research around the impact of poverty on learning. Therefore BPS has reduced the threshold of poverty support to 60% to support more schools with high concentrations of poverty. This has yielded an increased investment of \$2.6 million for these schools. Adjustments have also been made to accurately reflect the needs of ELL and special education students.

## ***BPS STUDENTS***

### ***Student Enrollment***

BPS enrolled 57,087 students for the 2012-2013 school year, an increase of 592 students from the previous year. The FY14 budget was built on a district wide projection of 58,271 students.

Student enrollment is the bedrock of the BPS budget. The preliminary stage of the budget process involves enrollment projections for each program, grade, and school. This projection is based on current data and historic trends. The projected enrollment at each school for the upcoming school year then determines the allocation of resources at the school level through the WSF formula. Further adjustments are made once enrollment is finalized. Schools that exceed their projected enrollment have their funding adjusted, ensuring that dollars truly follow the students.

### ***Student Diversity***

The BPS student population is racially and ethnically diverse. In FY13, the student body was 36.4% Black, 39.6% Hispanic, 13% White, 8.6% Asian and 2.5% multi-racial or other. Within those groups BPS students come from an array of

backgrounds and cultures. Approximately 47% speak a language other than English as their first language.

BPS seeks to ensure equal educational opportunities and prevent discrimination and inequalities based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, or learning ability. To that end, BPS has been engaging in conversations to find ways to incorporate culturally relevant material into the curriculum that will foster a celebration of the rich diversity in BPS.

### ***Student Assignment***

Mayor Menino challenged BPS to re-invent their student assignment process, and BPS has responded. With the tireless work of the External Advisory Committee appointed by the Mayor, BPS engaged thousands of community members, outside partners, stakeholders and academics to develop a tool to empower parents with clearer choices. This new method helps increase access and removes the boundaries of zones, shifting away from an outdated assignment method. BPS will be embarking on the work needed to implement such a landmark change to achieve quality close to home.

## ***PROGRAMS AND SERVICES***

Approximately 77% of BPS students are in regular education programs (including vocational, advanced work, and mainstream special education), 12% are in bilingual education or Sheltered English Immersion (SEI), and 9% are in substantially separate special education programs.

### ***Regular Education***

Regular education programs at BPS include early learning opportunities, kindergarten and grades 1 through 12. BPS regular education classes vary from classical academics to technology and the arts, and from advanced work classes to remedial and alternative education. In addition, adult basic education and evening high school programs continue to be a popular resource for Boston's adult community.

### ***English Language Learners***

BPS, 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 27,000 BPS students for whom English is not their first language.

A key component of Dr. Johnson's agenda is early interventions for at-risk youths. The Parthenon report on strategies for off-track youth issued in 2007 found that ELLs who enter BPS 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, BPS opened the Newcomers Academy in March 2009. Here students have a transitional program to help prepare fourteen to eighteen year old ELL students for successful entry into a diploma-granting high school. In addition, BPS has expanded enrollment at the Boston International High School, a school for ELLs that currently serves students from forty-eight countries.

BPS has made investments to expand ELL academic programs and teacher training. BPS expanded the number of Sheltered English Immersion programs in the district, employed 1,441 teachers with English as a Second Language (ESL) licenses and there are approximately 3,000 teachers who have category training. As a result of these efforts ELL students' MCAS proficiency rates across all grades have increased, including double-digit gains in the third and eighth grades.

### Special Education

BPS provides special education services in both public schools and special education private schools to approximately 11,160 students. This is an ever growing population as the practice of identifying special needs continues to evolve. For example, BPS is projecting a 12% increase of students on the autism spectrum. In keeping with its goal to enable all students to achieve high standards, BPS' 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, and 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. BPS has made great strides in this area by working to keep students in consistent settings with skilled professionals.

Special education teachers nurture the goals and objectives specified in each student's Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs). Speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, adaptive physical education teachers along with other specialists also provide services as determined through the IEP process.

BPS strives to serve more students within inclusive settings while always recognizing the need to provide appropriate services to all students with disabilities. While many special education students receive instruction in regular education classrooms and resource rooms, approximately 50% of students with disabilities are educated in substantially separate settings to successfully meet their special education needs.

In addition to mainstream or substantially separate placements in the district, 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 \$71,048 per year. Tuition rates are established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Rate Setting Commission.

In FY12, BPS implemented significant improvements to provide better services and deliver a higher quality education to our students with disabilities, and that work continues. Highly specialized programs have replaced isolated and discontinuous substantially separate classes. This change has allowed 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 has increased the number of schools in the Inclusive Schools Network from five to twenty-four.

### *Student/School Support Services*

BPS has reinvented how it delivers student support by shifting to a network based model. By working with school leaders, BPS has implemented a budget-neutral restructuring. Now, assistant superintendents have clusters of schools, and designated liaisons within the service departments. This creates a team of support for each school, made up of specialists working together across departments to support their designated schools. The network structure creates mutual accountability across departments and schools, and will enable assistant superintendents to take a more holistic approach to supporting schools with streamlined communication.

## ***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 creative educational ideas that can later be introduced to the entire BPS community.

In FY14, twenty-one pilot schools will be in operation, serving over 8,400 students, or 15% of BPS population. This population has grown in recent years due to the hard work of the following schools:

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 five Horace Mann charter schools operating in FY13: UP Academy of Boston, Boston Day and Evening Academy, Boston Green Academy, the Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers and the Dudley Street Neighborhood School. For FY14, BPS is pleased to welcome UP Academy of Dorchester as a sixth in-district charter. It will be operating at the former Marshall Elementary building. The Horace Mann Charter Schools are projected to serve 2,227 students.

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, measure their progress against the goals specified in their charter, and produce a formal annual report. In addition, site visits are used to assess progress.

Horace Mann charter schools were originally authorized under the Education Reform Act of 1993, which has since been amended by the Act Relative to the Achievement Gap - Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2010. There are now three types of Horace Mann charter schools, each with varying rules regarding teacher contracts, level of approval needed, and different origins. The four newest Horace Mann charters are all Type III, meaning they are brand new schools and do not require pre-approval by local collective bargaining units. Instead, notice is given in good faith to the involved unions with limited time for negotiation. If agreement is not reached within that time, the school may operate under the terms of its charter. The enabling law limits the number of Type III charters to 14 state-wide, of which at least 4 are reserved for Boston.

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***

An amendment to the Education Reform Act of 1993, Chapter 12 of the Acts of 2010, Act Relative to the Achievement Gap, also 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 goals for 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.

BPS is aggressively pursuing this new school model. The Roger Clap Innovation School opened in fall 2011, and three additional Innovation Schools opened in the fall of 2012: Madison Park, the Eliot K-8, and Margarita Muniz Academy. Muniz Academy follows a dual-language high school model similar to the Hernandez K-8, providing students with an opportunity to continue their bilingual studies. The school will serve up to 320 students.

Two of our turnaround schools, the Trotter and Blackstone, have been approved by school faculties and the Boston School Committee and are awaiting designation of their Innovation status by the Commonwealth.

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

Also in accordance with the Act Relative to the Achievement Gap, the Board of Education can grant charters to public schools that allow them to be 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 district 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 also lifts the 9% district spending cap most schools face, resulting in an expansion of the number of seats permitted to charter schools in Boston. 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 15% for FY14 and will grow by 1% each fiscal year until it reaches 18% in FY17.

Boston residents were attending twenty-nine Commonwealth charter schools in FY13; eighteen of which are in the City of Boston. The state Charter School Office expects that expansions will bring Boston to its 18% cap when those schools reach full enrollment in FY17. In FY13, 6,662 Boston students attend Commonwealth charter schools. In FY14, enrollment of Boston students in charter schools is projected to increase to 7,645 students.

*(For more information on charter school funding see Revenue Estimates and Analysis.)*

### ***Vocational Education***

BPS is committed to opening multiple pathways to success. Both the Mayor and Superintendent are seizing that opportunity with efforts to enhance programing at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School. By integrating vocational and academic work, BPS can reach students who are interested in real life experiences while involving the community with participating vocational professionals. This is just one example of alternatives BPS is providing to students throughout the city.

### ***Dual Language and Inclusion***

Extensive research has shown the benefits of innovative learning environments. BPS is committed to supporting students with language and disability needs. The Office of English Language Learners will be leading the effort to establish dual-language schools, with an anticipated opening for School Year 2014. Planning grants for these schools have been established through the Mayor's Quality Improvement Funds. Existing schools will work with central office and the community to build their own dual-language programs.

BPS has made great progress in providing options for inclusive settings. Since 2009, the percent of students in a partially or fully inclusive setting has risen from 46% to 56%, and the number of schools in the BPS Inclusive Schools network has risen from five to twenty-four over the same time frame. BPS has committed to developing a pathway for students throughout their tenure at BPS, as well as adding two additional schools to the network in FY14.

### ***EXTERNAL RESOURCES***

External funds are critical to the success of BPS. 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 \$127.9 million in external funds in FY14. The FY14 budget for external funds represents a decrease of approximately \$19.4 million or 13.2% from the FY13 budget.

Four areas that are decreasing significantly in FY14 are Title I, Title IIA, IDEA and the Federal School Improvement Grant. Without the increase in the general fund appropriation these changes would have created an even more challenging budget process.

### ***Federal Aid***

One of BPS' primary sources 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 programmatic requirements that BPS embraced. In FY12 Governor Patrick, along with forty other states, sought a waiver to many of the NCLB programmatic requirements; Massachusetts received this waiver in February 2012. Massachusetts' own educational accountability system will be the standard going forward.

Funding for students with disabilities is provided through another major source of federal funding, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This funding is a revenue source for the

district's comprehensive special education program. IDEA funding for BPS will decrease 5% in FY14 if sequestration occurs.

### **American Recovery and Reinvestment 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. BPS 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. BPS 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 of the later additions to ARRA was a \$4.35 billion allocation 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. BPS will receive \$32 million over four years with the goals of:

- Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance by

implementing the statewide evaluation framework.

- Ensuring 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.
- Increasing college and career readiness by increasing the number of students completing MassCore – a high school program intended to help high school graduates arrive at college or the workplace well prepared.
- Improving the academic performance of the lowest achieving schools.

FY14 will be the fourth and final year of this grant. Funds for the next school year will allow BPS to continue core curriculum development, invest in online professional development and support partnerships in some Turnaround schools.

#### School Improvement Grants

Another component of ARRA that is not recurring is the Department of Education's School Improvement Grant program. These grants were awarded 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 was awarded to 12 BPS schools over three years. This funding allowed BPS' lowest performing schools, also known as turnaround schools, 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 and literacy coaches. Mayor Menino remains committed to supporting these schools and provided a Quality Improvement Grant to support these efforts in the absence of Federal support.

#### Title I

Title I is a core area of funding for BPS. It is an entitlement grant designed to support the efforts to counter the impact of poverty on learning. This is the third consecutive year of ten percent reductions to this federal grant. BPS anticipates a

\$3.6 million decline for FY14, which brings the total three-year decline to \$11 million. Title I provides direct funding to schools with higher levels of poverty. In addition, Title I supports much of the Family and Student Engagement work, as well as some out-of-school and in-school learning opportunities for students. BPS' FY14 budget relies on the increased city appropriation to help absorb these decreases.

#### ***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 \$204 million in FY11, and \$205 million in FY12. In FY13 the City received \$208 million and projects \$209 million in FY14.

The school funding system in Massachusetts includes a mandated local level of contribution to education spending or a "local contribution" which is increased annually based on local resource changes measured by the "municipal revenue growth factor." The City has consistently met these requirements, and contributed beyond the level of funding required. State aid is then added to the local contribution to support a minimum level of total education spending called a "foundation budget."

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. Circuit Breaker funding was at \$12.9 million in FY13. BPS is projecting a reduction to approximately \$12 million for FY14.

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



## **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, BPS outlined three key goals, and set academic performance measures and targets to measure progress towards these goals. In addition, 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 FY13 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. These standards were in effect until February 2012 when a waiver was granted to Massachusetts. BPS will follow the Massachusetts state standards going forward.

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 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 BPS:

- 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. BPS 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.

BPS has set a goal of having more eighth grade students prepared to take Algebra I. In FY12, 34% of non-exam students were enrolled in Algebra I, up from 25% in FY11. Goals for FY13 and FY14 are 35% and 40%, respectively.

BPS 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 Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) steps within the same grade span or one or more steps between grade spans, across all levels.

BPS is monitoring the steady increase in graduation rates, SAT scores and the percentage of 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 is seeing encouraging progress and expects the dropout rate to continue its decline.

### ***Educator Evaluation***

Massachusetts was granted a waiver in 2012 to supplement elements of the No Child Left Behind Act with a unique framework. Under the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluations, teachers, school leaders, as well as the Superintendent, will complete a five-step annual evaluation cycle to inspire critical reflection upon their practice. The state wide model focuses on data based evaluations. Self-assessment will lead to goal development and action steps to achieve improvement. This model supports mutual accountability and participatory evaluation of performance.

## ***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 BPS. The School Committee appoints a Superintendent who serves as the Chief Executive Officer of BPS. 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 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.

As BPS continues to face a difficult fiscal climate, participation is more important than ever. Feedback from students, parents, school leaders and the community has helped stimulate meaningful conversations. Budget hearings, emails and open forums have helped inform decisions along the way.

the auditorium, and installation of a new fire alarm and sprinkler system.

- The Eliot School project expands classes into the former North Bennett Street School buildings to better accommodate its growing K-8 program.
- Acquisition of 585 Commercial Street in the North End. The building will be converted into a new K-8 public school in Downtown Boston.

### *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 and support the academic agenda of the district. Capital expenditures for schools between FY10 and FY12 totaled \$94.3 million. FY13 capital expenditures for schools are estimated at \$43.9 million. FY14 capital expenditures are projected at \$66.7 million.

BPS is currently developing a long-term strategic capital plan to inform investments in school facilities and technology. The capital plan includes the following:

- The first year of the three year \$15 million "Quality Improvement Fund for Schools" initiative renovates facilities to foster improvement at 15 high support or turnaround schools in the School Department's new student assignment plan. These schools include the Channing, Condon, Harbor, Hennigan, Higginson-Lewis, Irving, Lee, Marshall, Mattahunt, Mendell, Mildred Avenue, Perkins, Rogers, Trotter, Tynan, and Young Achievers.
- The Charlestown High School building improvement project replaces the entire HVAC system as well as upgrades lighting, replaces ceiling tiles throughout the building, upgrades to

