



Boston Public Schools

POINTS OF PRIDE

Over the past fifteen years, the Boston Public Schools (BPS) has been transformed from a failing school district to one of the most renowned urban public school systems in the country.

On the **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)** in Mathematics – also known as the “Nation’s Report Card” – Boston 4th and 8th grade students’ gains exceeded the national average for all public schools, including suburban schools.

The BPS **four-year graduation rate** for the Class of 2009 exceeded 60% for the first time since the state began keeping data, while the annual dropout rate for the 2008-2009 school year reached the lowest point in more than two decades – 6.4%.

Superintendent **Carol R. Johnson** is a nationally acclaimed leader with successful track records of school and district transformation as Superintendent in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Memphis, Tennessee. Dr. Johnson serves as the Chairperson of the Council of the Great City Schools, and in 2008 won the National Association of Black School Educators (NABSE) Joseph E. Hill Superintendent of the Year Award.

BPS is the home of many **firsts in the nation**: first public school (Boston Latin School, 1635), first public elementary school (Mather Elementary School, 1639), first public school system (1647), first public high school (English High School, 1821).

In 2006, after four years as a finalist, Boston won the distinguished **Broad Prize for Urban Education** as the best city school district in the nation, earning \$1 million in college scholarships for BPS graduates.

Over the past several years, many **national media outlets** – including the *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *U.S. News & World Report* – have heralded Boston as a model for urban school district reform.

Forbes magazine rated Boston at the top of the list of the “Best Education in the Biggest Cities.”

U.S. News & World Report ranked **Boston Latin School** #38 on its first list of America’s 100 Best High Schools. The magazine awarded silver and bronze medals to seven other BPS high schools.

Two BPS science teachers have been winners of the **Presidential Awards for Excellence in Math & Science Teaching** in recent years.

Boston students have demonstrated consistent and sustained improvement on the state **MCAS** (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) exams since the tests were first administered in 1998.

Six BPS schools have earned accreditation from the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** for their early childhood programs.

In 2009, Superintendent Johnson opened **Newcomers Academy**, an innovative dropout prevention program to support immigrant high school students who arrive in the U.S. during the school year with limited English skills.

In September 2009, BPS opened a **Re-engagement Center** to welcome former dropouts back to school. So far, the Re-engagement Center has helped more than 500 students transition back to school.

The **Laptops for Learning** initiative provides every BPS teacher with a laptop for classroom use.

“Nearly 15 years after the mayor and an appointed school board took charge of the Boston schools, the changes are obvious and sometimes remarkable.”

Los Angeles Times

“In the past 10 years, the Boston schools... have seen a steady upward trajectory of performance.”

The Washington Post

“Boston’s once maligned public schools have become a model by focusing on teaching.”



Technology Goes Home, which has been nationally recognized as a leading program that bridges the digital divide, has graduated over 3,500 families since its inception ten years ago.

Launched in partnership with EdVestors in 2008, the BPS **Arts Expansion Initiative** has raised \$1.6 million to date to ensure that every student in Grades K-8 has weekly arts experiences.

In 2009, BPS created **Parent University**, a unique learning experience specifically designed to help BPS parents support their children's learning.

In 2009, the City of Boston and the Red and Blue Foundation started the **Boston Scholar Athlete Program**, with the goal of raising \$7.5 million by 2012 to support athletics and academics in the BPS. The same year, BPS and the PlayBall! Foundation started the district's first middle school football league.

Also in 2009, the district opened its first **Montessori** program at the East Boston Early Education Center.

In 2006, Jessie Auger from the Hernandez K-8 School was named **Massachusetts Teacher of the Year**.

Ten Boston schools have been named **Compass Schools** by the Massachusetts Department of Education for outstanding MCAS performance.

Boston Magazine named four Boston schools – the Hale, Kilmer, Mason and Quincy elementary schools – among its list of the **100 Best Elementary Schools** in Eastern Massachusetts.

The Timilty Middle School and the McKay, Murphy and Sarah Greenwood K-8 Schools have won **National Distinguished Title I School Awards**.

Teachers from the Hernandez K-8 School were selected for *USA Today's* **All-USA Teacher Team**.

Boston has 22 **pilot schools**, including the **Boston Arts Academy**, the city's first public high school for the visual and performing arts. The district also has two Horace Mann (in-district charter) schools and plans to open at least four more Horace Mann schools.

Since 1998, Boston has guaranteed a **full-day kindergarten** seat to every five-year-old, one of the first school systems in the country to do so. BPS also offers more than 2,000 full-day "K1" pre-school seats for four-year-olds as well as some "K0" seats for three-year-olds.

The **Boston Schoolyard Initiative**, a public-private partnership, has attracted more than \$15 million to build and refurbish the City's public schoolyards. Since 1995, BSI has revitalized 75 schoolyards and partnered with BPS to develop the Outdoor Writers Workshop and nationally-recognized Science in the Schoolyard programs, helping hundreds of teachers use outdoor classrooms and schoolyards to enhance teaching and learning.

Boston families have access to twenty-eight **K-8 programs** spanning kindergarten through grade 8, up from only three such programs in 1995.

In 2004, the Boston School Committee, appointed by Mayor Thomas M. Menino, earned the first **Award for School Board Excellence** from the National School Boards Association, citing the board's key role in adopting policies to support standards-based reform and consistently balancing the district's operating budget.

Elizabeth Reilinger, former Chairperson of the Boston School Committee, won the prestigious **Richard R. Green Award** in 2007 from the Council of the Great City Schools for urban school board leadership.

Boston teachers, principals, and schools have won numerous state and national prizes and awards. Since 1997, ten Boston educators – including former Superintendent Michael G. Contompassis – have been selected for the highly competitive **Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award**.

Former Superintendent Thomas W. Payzant won the prestigious **Richard R. Green Award in Urban Excellence** as the nation's best city schools superintendent, **Massachusetts Superintendent of the Year**, and a *Governing* magazine **Public Official of the Year**.

In 2002, Mayor Menino founded **WriteBoston**, a program to improve the writing skills of students in seven of Boston's public high schools. In 2006, the Social Innovation Forum named the program "Social Innovator of the Year."

In the past 12 years, the capacity of **after-school programs** around the city has nearly doubled to 48,000 seats, with more than 110 programs. Since 1998, BPS has tripled the number of school buildings open until 5:00 p.m. or later for additional programming.

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*Comments / Questions: **BPS Communications Office**
617-635-9265 • communications@bostonpublicschools.org*