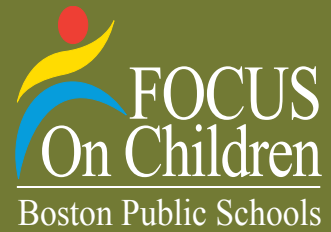


# familymatters

A newsletter from the Boston Public Schools to strengthen home-school connections

August 2009 ★ [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org)



## A message from the Superintendent



Dear Families:

As summer vacation comes to an end, we look forward to welcoming families and staff to a new and exciting year in the Boston Public Schools. In the weeks ahead, you and your child will prepare for a successful start to the school year. At open houses and other back-to-school events, your child's principal and teachers will be ready to work with you to forge strong home-school partnerships.

Together, we will continue to raise the bar to ensure that every child achieves proficiency and graduates from high school college-ready and success-bound. From pre-school programs through high school, we have set high standards for every student. Our "Acceleration Agenda" is designed to close achievement gaps and offer a challenging, enriching array of learning experiences in every classroom of every school.

As always, families remain our most valued partners in great teaching and learning. You have entrusted us with our community's most precious resource—our children—and we take this responsibility very seriously. In turn, we rely on you to support our students every step of the way, and we welcome your ongoing participation to ensure their success.

Thank you for your commitment to the Boston Public Schools. Have a great start to the school year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol R. Johnson".

Dr. Carol R. Johnson  
Superintendent

## Get Ready for School!

Start planning *now* for a smooth start to the new school year

Believe it or not, the first day of school is almost here! Students in grades 1–12 start on Thursday, September 10. Kindergarten classes start on Monday, September 14. *Remember: attendance is very important.* Be sure children go to school on the first day—and every day!

### Here are some ideas to help you get off to a great start.

- ▶ **Be sure your child is in good health.** Schedule doctor and dental checkups. Discuss any concerns you have about your child's emotional or psychological development with your pediatrician. Your doctor can help you to begin addressing any potential issues before school starts.
- ▶ **Review school information.** Read the material sent by the BPS central office and your child's school as soon as it arrives, and keep it handy. (You may want to keep it together in a big envelope or file folder.) You should receive information about your child's teacher, school supplies, after-school activities, school calendar dates, bus transportation, health and emergency forms, and volunteer opportunities.
- ▶ **Mark your calendar.** Make a note of important dates, especially back-to-school and parent election nights.
- ▶ **If you moved over the summer,** you must go to a Family Resource Center with proofs of your new address. Visit the BPS Web site or call the Hotline for details. Make sure the school has your new contact information.

### Back-to-School Hotline

☎ 617-635-9046

Help with school assignments, transfers, transportation, and other school questions.

Hours of service are Monday through Friday as follows:

August 24–September 4, 2009 ■ 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

September 8–18, 2009 ■ 7 a.m.–6 p.m.

- ▶ **Get back on schedule.** Return to school-year bedtime and mealtime schedules (especially breakfast) a week or two before school starts. Children need at least 9 hours of sleep so they are not over-tired or overwhelmed by school work and activities. Be sure to include pre-bedtime reading in the schedule.
- ▶ **Turn off the TV.** Encourage your child to play quiet games (not video games), do puzzles, color, or read as early morning activities instead of watching TV. This will help ease your child into a positive school routine.
- ▶ **Hold off on the shopping.** Boston public schools provide nearly all the supplies your child will need, so wait until you get in-

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## Come to the 2nd Annual Boston Public Schools Back-to-School Jamboree!

Saturday, September 5 ★ 11 a.m.–3 p.m. ★ City Hall Plaza

Celebrate the new school year! Join other BPS families for fun activities, performances, prizes and giveaways, health screenings... and lots of information and resources to get kids and families off to a great start!

Sponsored by BPS Office of Family & Student Engagement  
 ☎ 617-635-7750 • [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org)

### Get Ready for School (continued)

formation from the teacher before you go shopping. Your child *will* need a backpack, and older children should bring a notebook and pen or pencil on the first day. It's a good idea to label backpacks, lunch boxes, etc. with your child's name. Before you shop for school clothes, check with the school to confirm dress code/school uniform guidelines.

► **Identify a place for homework.** Older children might choose to study in their room or a quiet area of the house. Younger children usually need to be where adults can help and encourage them, such as at the kitchen table or in the living room, away from the TV.

Source: nasponline.org. Authors: Ted Feinberg, EdD, NCSP, and Katherine C. Cowan, National Association of School Psychologists. Adapted by Boston Public Schools.

### New Video Game Ratings a "Winner" for Families

Before you buy or rent a video game for your child, check the rating symbol and rating notes on the package to make sure it's appropriate for your child's age.

Ratings are provided by the non-profit Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB), [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org).

### Fall is Back-to-School Time for Parents, Too!

Parents are their children's first teachers. School teachers go to college to learn their profession—but where can parents go? Starting this fall, BPS parents can go to Parent University.

This new education program aims to increase the capacity of parents to be successful teachers, learners, leaders, and advocates for school improvement and strong communities.

#### How does it work?

Parent University will offer three Saturday learning sessions plus weekday sessions in the coming school year. Parents earn University "credits" by attending classes and participating in school-based activities. Those who earn the required number of credits will "graduate" in June.

Parents may enroll in the University at any point during the year.

#### What are some of the class topics?

Among the offerings are: Seeing Ourselves as Leaders, Navigating BPS, Assessing Student Progress, Things Kids Do that Drive Us Nuts, Basic Computer Literacy, Credit Smart, and Understanding How Your Child Learns Math.

#### Are there tests?

No! Parent University values the knowledge and experience parents bring. Everyone succeeds.

#### Is childcare available?

The University provides childcare, family sessions, and lunch for participants and their children.

#### How much does it cost to attend Parent University?

It's free to all Boston Public Schools families.

#### For information and enrollment, contact:

Cyntoria Grant  
 Parent University Coordinator  
 Office of Family & Student Engagement  
 ☎ 617-635-7750  
 OFSE@boston.k12.ma.us



Countdown to Kindergarten will host local kindergarten events in 17 neighborhoods this August and a free celebration for all *new* BPS kindergartners at The Children's Museum on Tuesday, September 1, 4:30–7:30 pm. Details: [countdowntokindergarten.org](http://countdowntokindergarten.org) and [bostonpublicschools.org](http://bostonpublicschools.org) > Events

# Travel to school (and home) safely!



The Boston Public Schools transports about 45,000 students to and from school each day. This school year, the BPS fleet of more than 700 vehicles will travel 8.5 million miles!

Before the new school year begins, it's important for every family in Boston to talk about traveling safely between home and school.

## If your child takes a bus to school:

- ☑ Before the first day of school, **walk to and from the bus stop** with your child to be sure he is familiar with the walking route. Make sure he knows the bus number and stop location.
- ☑ Make sure your child is wearing **identification**: her name, the name of the school, bus number, and a phone number where you can be reached.
- ☑ Give your child **clear instructions** about what to do if a morning pick-up bus is late. Should he continue to wait at the bus stop, or return home? Should he call you from a cell phone?
- ☑ Talk to your child about **good behavior** on the bus. Every child is expected to follow the driver's instructions, remain

seated for the entire ride, and pay attention for her stop.

- ☑ Be sure your child knows what to do when he is **dropped off** after school. Should he wait for someone, walk home, or go somewhere else? Keep in mind that the bus driver is allowed to leave a child at the stop even if no adult is there to meet the child. However, if the child seems afraid to be left alone, the driver may keep the child on the bus until the parent can be contacted.
- ☑ **Talk to other families** at your child's bus stop and, if possible, get their phone numbers. You might want to arrange to accompany one another's children to their homes if a parent is unexpectedly late.

## If your child walks to school:

- ☑ Make sure the teacher and principal know if your child is allowed to **walk home alone** or if she will be **picked up**.

## All students:

- ☑ Make sure the school has **up-to-date contact information** for you and other guardians or caretakers.

## If you have questions:

- ▶ Contact your child's school
- ▶ Call the Back-to-School Hotline
  - ☎ 617-635-9046, or
  - Transportation Department
  - ☎ 617-635-9520
- ▶ Visit the BPS Web site: [bostonpublicschools.org/transportation](http://bostonpublicschools.org/transportation)

may be able to make an adjustment. But remember that students may have to walk several blocks to their bus stop.

**About alternate transportation.** BPS may be able to drop your child off at a stop other than your home (such as an after-school program) if you request. Certain restrictions apply. For details, call the Hotline or Transportation Dept. or visit any BPS Family Resource Center.

## familymatters

A publication of the Boston Public Schools Communications Office, in collaboration with the BPS Office of Family & Student Engagement.

### BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

26 Court Street ■ Boston, MA 02108  
[www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org)  
 ☎ 617-635-9000

### BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Rev. Gregory Groover, Chairperson  
 Marchelle Raynor, Vice-chairperson  
 Helen Dájer ■ Alfreda Harris ■ Claudio Martinez  
 Michael O'Neill ■ Elizabeth Reilinger  
 Carol R. Johnson, Superintendent

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We welcome the children of this city into the Boston Public Schools, where effective teaching and learning prepare all of our students to achieve at high levels, and where the entire community works together to focus on children.

### NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Boston Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, disability, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation, and does not tolerate any form of discrimination, intimidation, threat, coercion, and/or harassment.

## Translations of *Family Matters* are available on our Web site and at your child's school.

- ▶ *Asuntu di Família* sta dispunivel na **Kabuverdianu** na [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org) y na skola di nhos kriansa.
- ▶ Nou gen *Family Matters* disponib an **Kreyòl Ayisyen** nan [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org), epi nan lekòl pitit ou an tou.
- ▶ 家庭事態 是用中文印發, [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org) 網址和孩子的 學校備索。
- ▶ *Assuntos de Família* está disponível em **português** no [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org) e na escola dos seus filhos.
- ▶ *Assuntos de Família* está disponible en **español** en [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org) y en la escuela de su hijo/a.
- ▶ *Arrimaha Qoyska* waxa la helayaa iyagoo ku qoran **Somaali** ee [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org) iyo dugsigaa ilmaahaaga.
- ▶ Quý vị có thể tìm đọc bản tin *Family Matters* bằng tiếng **Việt Nam** tại trường của em quý vị hoặc trong trang web: [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org).

## More about School Transportation

**About the bus.** All BPS buses meet all federal and state safety standards. Full size buses do not require seat belts. All buses are equipped with two-way radios and GPS (Global Positioning System) so they can be located in an emergency.

**About the bus stop.** If you think your child's bus stop is unsafe or too far from your home, contact the Transportation Dept. or the Back-to-School Hotline. We



# Boston Public Schools

# CALENDAR

## 2009–2010

- August 25-27 ..... New Teacher Institute: First-year teachers report
- September 7 ..... Labor Day: No school
- September 8–9 ..... All teachers and paras report
- ▲ September 10 ..... Students in grades 1-12 report, including grade 1 in ELCs and EECs: Full day of school
- ◆ September 14 ..... Kindergarten students report, including EECs and ELCs
- September 15 ..... Students in Special Education Early Childhood programs report
- October 12 ..... Columbus Day: No school

- November 11 ..... Veterans' Day: No school
- November 25 ..... Early release for students and staff
- November 26–27 ..... Thanksgiving Recess: No school
- December 24–January 1 ..... Winter Recess: No school
- January 4 ..... Students return from recess
- January 18 ..... M. L. King Jr. Day: No school
- February 15 ..... Presidents' Day: No school
- February 16–19 ..... February Recess: No school
- February 22 ..... Students return from recess
- March 17 ..... Evacuation Day: No school
- April 2 ..... Good Friday: No school
- April 19 ..... Patriots' Day: No school
- April 20–23 ..... Spring Recess: No school
- April 26 ..... Students return from recess
- May 31 ..... Memorial Day: No school
- \* June 9 ..... Last day for seniors
- June 17 ..... Bunker Hill Day: No school
- June 23 (or day 179) ..... Early release for students
- ▼ June 24 (or day 180) ..... Last day of school: Early release for students

- June 24 is the 180th school day, if no days are lost due to cancellations.
- June 30 is the 184th day required for calendar purposes.
- No graduation program should be scheduled before June 9, 2010.
- ▶ All BPS offices and Family Resource Centers closed.

### Major Religious & Cultural Holidays

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Aug. 21* ..... Ramadan begins   | March 30 ..... Passover begins  |
| Sept. 19–20 ..... Rosh Hashanah | April 2 ..... Good Friday   |
| Sept. 20* ..... Eid al-Fitr     | April 2 ..... Orthodox Holy Friday  |
| Sept. 28 ..... Yom Kippur       | April 4 ..... Easter  |
| Oct. 17 ..... Diwali            | April 4 ..... Orthodox Easter   |
| Nov. 26 ..... Thanksgiving      | May 9 ..... Mother's Day  |
| Nov. 27* ..... Eid al-Adha      | June 13 ..... Father's Day  |
| Dec. 12–19 ..... Hanukkah       | Observance of Jewish and Islamic holidays begins at sundown of the preceding day. |
| Dec. 25 ..... Christmas Day     |   |
| Dec. 26–Jan. 1 ..... Kwanzaa    |   |
| Jan. 1 ..... New Year's Day     | * Estimated   |
| Jan. 6 ..... Three Kings Day    |   |
| Feb. 14 ..... Chinese New Year  |   |

#### SEPTEMBER 2009

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#### OCTOBER 2009

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#### DECEMBER 2009

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#### JANUARY 2010

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#### MARCH 2010

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#### APRIL 2010

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#### MAY 2010

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#### JUNE 2010

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#### JULY 2010

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#### AUGUST 2010

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▶ Extenuating circumstances and/or inclement weather may necessitate changes to the calendar during the year. Visit [bostonpublicschools.org](http://bostonpublicschools.org) for current information.