

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairperson and Members
Boston School Committee

FROM: Carol R. Johnson 
Superintendent

DATE: November 5, 2008

RE: Pathways to Excellence – Transportation Recommendations for Action

As part of the Pathways to Excellence proposals, we have examined our transportation costs and ways to achieve savings for the 2009-10 school year and beyond. In the current fiscal year, Boston Public Schools will spend more than **\$76 million** to transport students to and from school – an increase of 30 percent in five years.

When I presented the preliminary “Pathways to Excellence” proposals to you on October 1, 2008, I reintroduced several possible strategies to reduce transportation costs without compromising our educational priorities. I submitted several of these options for a preliminary discussion at the October 29th meeting.

At the November 5th School Committee meeting, I will recommend that we change the status of three of our citywide K-8 schools in order to help redirect dollars from transportation spending to educational improvements.

Background

As you know, high schools in the district are generally “citywide” – meaning any student in the city may apply to any high school, regardless of where he or she lives. Most of our high school students rely on public transportation. Nearly all elementary, K-8 and middle schools, however, are zone-based, meaning any student who lives within the assignment zone where the school is located is eligible to apply. Moreover, any student who lives within the walk zone of a particular school,

regardless of zone, also may apply to that school.

Currently, there are also five non-high schools that also maintain citywide status, enrolling 1,814 students.

- Young Achievers K-8 Science & Mathematics School
- Mission Hill K-8 School
- King Middle School
- Timilty Middle School
- Hernandez K-8 School

Recommendation

At the November 5th meeting, we are recommending action only on the change to three schools' citywide status: the new King K-8 School would become a West Zone School, the Young Achievers K-8 Science & Mathematics School would become an East Zone school, and the Mission Hill K-8 School would become a North Zone school. A sample map showing citywide distribution for Mission Hill is attached.

Below is a breakdown of each school and where their students draw from:

- New **King K-8 School** in Dorchester: West Zone, with cross-zone eligibility within walk zone distance for East **and** North Zone residents. The King currently enrolls students from:
 - East Zone: 113
 - North Zone: 34
 - West Zone: 97
 - **Total: 244**
- **Young Achievers K-8 School**, proposed for expansion and relocation to Mattapan: East Zone, with cross-zone eligibility within walk zone distance for West Zone. Young Achievers currently enrolls students from:
 - East Zone: 188
 - North Zone: 39
 - West Zone: 129
 - **Total: 356**
- **Mission Hill K-8 School** in Roxbury: North Zone, with cross-zone eligibility within walk zone distance for West Zone. Mission Hill currently enrolls students from:
 - East Zone: 48
 - North Zone: 36
 - West Zone: 85
 - **Total: 169**

Citywide status would change for these schools beginning in September 2009. **However, students currently enrolled in these schools will be allowed to continue to attend under citywide status until they graduate. Transportation would continue to be granted to siblings who receive sibling**

preference until the first sibling has graduated. After that, transportation would no longer be provided.

Example: **2009-10:** Sibling A is in Grade 7. Sibling B enters K2 under sibling preference. Both receive transportation.
 2010-11: Sibling A is in Grade 8. Sibling B is in Grade 1. Both receive transportation.
 2011-12: Sibling A graduates. Sibling B is in Grade 2 and does NOT receive transportation.

I am not recommending a change in citywide status for Timilty Middle School (an extended day program exploring dual enrollment and expansion to 6-12) or Hernandez K-8 School (a two-way bilingual program), given the limited availability of these programmatic offerings throughout the city at this time.

Together, the recommendations in “Pathways to Excellence” and conversion of three citywide schools are estimated to result in approximately **\$953,000** savings in transportation costs during the first year, and a cumulative savings of approximately **\$5 million** over five years.

I recommend that the School Committee remove citywide status from the new King K-8 School, Young Achievers K-8 School, and Mission Hill K-8 School effective 2009-10, with current students grandfathered and transportation extended under sibling preference until the first sibling graduates.

Attachment: Sample map of Mission Hill K-8 School citywide status