

**The Roger Clap Innovation School Plan**

**‘Connecting Classroom and Community’**

**June 2, 2011**

**Roger Clap Innovation School  
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## ROGER CLAP INNOVATION SCHOOL INFORMATION SHEET

*This sheet must be included in all prospectus submissions.*

Proposed Innovation School Name:	<b>Roger Clap Innovation School</b>
Full/Partial Conversion or New:	<b>New</b>
Proposed School Address (if known):	<b>35 Harvest Street Dorchester, Ma 02125</b>
Primary Contact Name:	<b>Elie Jean-Louis</b>
Primary Contact Phone Number(s) :	<b>617.269.2640</b>
Primary Contact Fax Number(s) :	<b>617.635.6389</b>
Primary Contact Email Address:	<b>ejeanlouis@boston.k12.ma.us</b>

Existing School Name:	<b>Roger Clap Elementary</b>
Existing School Address:	<b>Same as above</b>

Proposed Innovation School opening school year: x 2010-11

Proposed duration of innovation plan (up to five years): x 5 years

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment	Total number of Staff
First Year	K0 to grade 5	147	11.5
Second Year	K0 to grade 5	150	11.5
Third Year	K0 to grade 5	152	11.5
Fourth Year	K0 to grade 5	155	11.5
Fifth Year	K0 to grade 5	160	12
...			
At Full Enrollment	K0 to grade 5	170	12

**Will this school serve students from multiple districts?** x No

## INNOVATION SCHOOL PROSPECTUS CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Proposed Innovation School Name:	<b>Roger Clap Innovation School</b>
Proposed City/Town Location:	<b>Dorchester (Boston), MA</b>

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this prospectus is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

**Signature of Authorized Person**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date 03/31/11**  
**for the Roger Clap parents: Karen Murphy and Kenny Jervis**

**Signature of Authorized Person**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date 03/31/11**  
**for the Boston Public Schools: Asst. Supt. Elie Jean-Louis**

<b>Authorized Person Information</b>	
Print/Type Name:	<b>Elie Jean-Louis</b>
Address:	<b>c/o Martin Luther King K-8 School 77 Lawrence Avenue, Dorchester, MA 02121</b>
Phone Number:	<b>617.635.6730</b>
Fax Number:	<b>617.635.9838</b>
Email Address:	<b>ejeanlouis@boston.k12.ma.us</b>

## INNOVATION PLAN CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Proposed Innovation School Name:	<b>Roger Clap Innovation School</b>
Proposed City/Town Location:	<b>Dorchester, MA</b>

Names of innovation plan committee members (no more than 11 individuals) selected in accordance with state law:

<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Vote to approve innovation plan</b>
Lead applicant member:	Elie Jean-Louis	<b>Yes</b>
Superintendent or designee:	Joe Shea	<b>Yes</b>
School committee member or designee:	Rev. Dr. Gregory Groover	
Parent who has one or more children enrolled in the school, or in the case of a new school, in the district:	Karen Murphy & Kenny Jervis	<b>Yes</b>
Teacher employed by district (selected from among volunteers)	Epifania Stevens	<b>Yes</b>
Teacher employed by district (selected from among nominees)	Kerry Trippi	<b>Yes</b>

submitted by the local teacher's union:		
Member: Principal	Justin Vernon	<b>Yes</b>
Member: Dorchester Historical Society	Earl Taylor	<b>Yes</b>
Member: UMass Boston	Dr. Patricia Paugh	<b>Yes</b>
Member:		
Member:		

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this innovation plan is true to the best of our knowledge and belief and has been approved by a majority vote of the innovation plan committee.

**Signature of Lead Applicant Member**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Roger Clap Innovation School has the solid building blocks of a neighborhood school. We value our size, with just 170 students at maximum capacity, our diversity, and our location. Over 60% of our students walk to school and our families speak eight languages. We consider our school to be a true neighborhood treasure. Despite all this, however, we have not been successful academically with our students, and it is time for dramatic change to increase achievement for all our students.

The Clap Elementary School's academic performance has been declining since 2007 for both ELA and Math and overall results remain well below the district average. For example, only 10% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders at the school are proficient at MCAS ELA while the district average is 30%. At the early grades, Clap students are losing ground in reading. Almost 17% of students in K2 to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade actually lose ground during the school year. The average CPI in mathematics is 49.6, which is very low for elementary schools. *For most tests, zero percent of our students are in the Advanced/Above Proficient category.* This is telling about the rigor of our curriculum, our pedagogical practices, and of the effectiveness of our program overall. Of all the testing last year for example, only 4% of students reached Advanced/Above Proficient in ELA at the fourth grade, and 1% reached that target in fifth grade ELA. All other tests had no students performing at Advanced/Above Proficient. Overall, approximately 84% of the students in grades 3-5 are in the Warning/Needs Improvement categories. The academic reality is even more somber with our students with disabilities. The school's special needs population has an average ELA CPI of 40 compared to the aggregate CPI of 61.2. In addition, 24% of our students are Limited English Proficient and another 28% have a first language other than English. These students are also struggling, and past efforts to provide interventions have not produced achievement gains.

As a result, in early October 2010, BPS proposed to close the Roger Clap Elementary School at the end of the 2010-2011 school year. Over the following two months the district engaged in extensive conversations with families and school communities about the proposed closures, merges, and extensions. In early December, based on feedback from these conversations, BPS proposed a revised plan with revised criteria to select schools. Under this proposal, the Roger Clap Elementary School would be closed but reopened as an Innovation School, under new leadership and changed staff, in Fall 2011. The revised selection criteria gave higher weight to parent's choice, among other factors. While the school's performance still merited closure, the district decided to reopen as an Innovation School based on several factors. The Clap was more highly chosen than other schools selected for closure. Also, given its small size and a very active, diverse and engaged family group, BPS academic leadership thought there was a high potential that it could be improved quickly with new leadership and staff. And, the school is unique within BPS in drawing a diverse student body: 25% are African-American, 29% are Hispanic, 37% are White, and 4% are Asian.

Under the final plan approved by the Boston School Committee, the Roger Clap Elementary School will close in June 2011, and a new school, the Roger Clap Innovation School, will open in August. A new Principal, Justin Vernon, will lead the school, and a newly reconfigured staff of highly qualified teachers, with strong backgrounds in urban education and differentiated instruction, as well as qualifications including dual or tri-certification in ESL or Special Education, will comprise the school. Due to the new budget formula, that staff will also be more robust than in the past, and will be committed to the full outline and promise of this plan as part of their hiring. We look forward to the opportunity to prove that our innovation will lead to greater student success. The core of our plan is as follows:

The Roger Clap Innovation School, located at 35 Harvest Street in historical North Dorchester, MA, will serve approximately 150 students in grades K0/K1 through 5 next year. The student population will reflect

the ethnic composition of the neighborhood: 34% White, 32% African American, 23% Hispanic, 8% Asian, and 3% other. Approximately 26% will be English language Learners and 21% students with disabilities. Approximately 70% will receive free and reduced lunch.

In developing our Innovation Plan, a key first step was to revise our Mission and Vision towards **more rigorous instruction** and our **core innovation ideas of a place-based curriculum with an emphasis on civic engagement and community commitment and dramatically increasing parent communication and support.**

**Mission:** The mission of the Roger Clap Innovation School is to ensure that every student regardless of his/her socio-economic, linguistic and academic history is educated to the highest level through a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum. Furthermore, the Roger Clap Innovation School will educate students to become knowledgeable of, civically engaged in, and involved in the service of their school, the local community, and the global community while being at the forefront of educational innovations and preparing its students for the demands of tomorrow's world.

**Vision: 'Connecting Classroom and Community':** The new Roger Clap Innovation School envisions a school that embraces a Place-based Curriculum model. Place-based education is the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens. Community vitality and environmental quality are improved through the active engagement of parents, community organizations, and environmental resources in the life of the school.

To realize this mission and vision, Roger Clap designed a series of innovative changes for the school, and those are driven by an overarching **theory of action**, comprised of the following four focus areas:

1. Establish a true “Community” School
2. Formalize and increase family involvement and communication
3. Build a professional culture of data analysis and collaboration to improve student achievement
4. Incorporate rigorous, innovative curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the fourth and fifth grades

In addition to these core changes, we will extend our instructional school day by a half hour; hire a diverse, highly qualified staff; provide extensive professional development beyond the contract; move to an inclusion model for special education students; infuse additional academic supports into the curriculum and increase the relevance through place-based curriculum and civic engagement projects; increase our student supports and interventions by adding staff, scheduling an intervention block during the school day and maximizing staff availability before and after school through flexible scheduling. We will also utilize budget autonomy to achieve our goal of increasing staff, providing professional development, creating summer school and February and April break academic offerings, and increasing technology throughout the building.

***We believe that by maximizing the autonomies granted through Innovation status and by systematically implementing the programs and policies outlined in this plan, that we will significantly increase the achievement of all our students.***

## **Roger Clap Innovation School**

### **Introduction**

On October 6, 2010 Superintendent Dr. Carol Johnson presented her “Redesign and Reinvest Plan” to the Boston School Committee that recommended among other things, the closure of the Roger Clap Elementary School and nine other schools in Boston. A series of school committee and school community meetings followed for the next two months outlining the elements of the plan and provided an opportunity for feedback from parents, teachers, students and many other interested constituents. In early December, based on feedback from these conversations, BPS proposed a revised plan with revised criteria to select schools. Under this proposal the Roger Clap Elementary School would be closed but reopened as an Innovation School, under new leadership and changed staff, in Fall 2011. The revised selection criteria gave higher weight to parent’s choice, among other factors. While the school’s performance still merited closure, the district decided to reopen as an Innovation School based on several factors. The Clap was more highly chosen than other schools selected for closure. Also, given its small size and a very active, diverse and engaged family group, BPS academic leadership thought there was a high potential that it could be improved quickly with new leadership and staff. And, the school is unique within BPS in drawing a diverse student body: 25% are African-American, 29% are Hispanic, 37% are White, and 4% are Asian. The Clap School community was directed by the Superintendent to apply for Innovation School status.

The applicant group who developed this Innovation School plan emerged from a larger group of committed members of the Roger Clap community, including parents, staff, and community partners. What follows is their vision for the new Roger Clap Innovation School.

The history of the schools in Dorchester has special interest owing to the fact that the town claims precedence in the establishment of the first free public school supported by the public treasury. Roger Clap himself was

taxed on his Thompson's Island property. He and his family were among the first settlers of Dorchester and were pioneers for public education. The Clap School is the second oldest in Boston and is a historical landmark.

The Roger Clap Innovation School has the solid building blocks of a neighborhood school. But like any urban school, there are many challenges to be met. This is a great opportunity to use the autonomy allowed by the Innovation model to create an environment that promotes the education and well-being of the whole child. This model will allow increased time for academic instruction, hands-on learning in the local community, opportunities to investigate the arts and sciences and healthy lifestyle through increased nutritional and physical education opportunities. This model will promote student achievement and proficiency and align the Roger Clap Innovation School with the Boston Public Schools' Acceleration Agenda.

The parents, teachers and partners of the school want to bring education back into the neighborhood in order to connect the classroom and community. Parents, community stakeholders, and educators will work together to create a Place-based education that will connect students with adult mentors, civic associations, colleges, and local businesses. We are committed to getting teachers and students into the community, into the parks and on the streets, and closer to the richness of the neighborhood and city, and will strive to align what is learned in school with real-life experiences in the community. In addition, we envision bringing the historians, the mayor and the environmental educators into the schoolyard and into the school. The RCIS will celebrate and support the values and diversity of the community and families that it serves. We want to immerse our students in local heritage, cultures, and landscapes; we want to use these experiences as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, the arts, and world language.

Projects such as studying Roger Clap himself will push teachers to help students hone two essential skills--analyzing primary documents and argumentative (opinion) writing, both of which are highlighted in the Common Core Standards and are pre-Advanced Placement (AP) skills which can be adapted and embedded in the elementary classrooms. We embrace the idea of using biography and place to illuminate broader historical concepts like immigration and migration, and the impact of geography on how people live their economic, social and political lives.

The Roger Clap Innovation School will be located in historical North Dorchester at 35 Harvest Street in Dorchester, Ma 02125, the same location as the current Roger Clap Elementary School.

In year one, we will serve approximately 150 students in grades K0/K1 through 5. The student population will reflect the ethnic composition of the neighborhood: 34% White, 32% African American, 23% Hispanic, 8% Asian, and 3% other.

Approximately 26% will be English language Learners and 21% students with disabilities. Approximately 70% will receive free and reduced lunch.

We value our size, our diversity and our location. Over 60% of our students walk to school. Eight languages are spoken by our families. It is and will continue to be a true neighborhood treasure.

### **Mission**

The mission of the Roger Clap Innovation School is to ensure that every student regardless of his/her socio-economic, linguistic and academic history is educated to the highest level through a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum. Furthermore, the Roger Clap Innovation School will educate students to become knowledgeable of, civically engaged in, and involved in the service of their school, the local community, and the global community while being at the forefront of educational innovations and preparing its students for the demands of tomorrow's world.

## **Vision**

### **‘Connecting Classroom and Community’**

The new Roger Clap Innovation School envisions a school that embraces a Place-based Curriculum model. Place-based education is the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students’ appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens. Community vitality and environmental quality are improved through the active engagement of parents, community organizations, and environmental resources in the life of the school.

The Roger Clap Innovation School will:

- Extend the curriculum beyond the scope of the classroom.
- Provide rigorous instruction that is tailored to meet students’ academic needs.
- Ensure that instructional interventions take place at all grade levels to bridge the achievement gap.
- Provide academic support to every student who needs it and enrichment support for those students who are performing above grade level or are academically advanced.
- Provide an environment that is safe and friendly, nurturing and socially inclusive.
- Foster a culture of lifelong learning by offering academic experiences that are relevant and meaningful to students’ lives.

- Ensure that every student meets his/her full potential by developing the whole child.
- Establish and maintain positive relationships with community members to carry out a rigorous and challenging placed-based curriculum to supplement the Common Core Standards.

The Innovation Planning Committee and additional parent and community representatives set following vision and hopes for the new Roger Clap Innovation School:

Current Roger Clap:	Roger Clap Innovation School will:
<p>Successes to build on: Small, diverse neighborhood school</p> <p>Consistent, caring staff</p> <p>Warm, nurturing environment</p> <p>Strong community of engaged parents</p> <p>A walk-to-school model that offers before and after school programming.</p> <p>A real community school model that extends beyond the normal school day</p> <p>Hard-working students</p> <p>Attention is paid to divergent</p>	<p>Organize the parent community to contribute more to the school, with a focus on academic supports.</p> <p>Frequently communicate with parents so they will be more aware of how students are doing academically.</p> <p>Help students come to school ready to learn</p> <p>Help students to focus on tasks at hand</p> <p>Expand arts and music offerings to the school</p> <p>Improve technological infrastructure and provide Smart Boards, sound systems and</p>

<p>learning</p> <p>Challenges to work on: Too many students aren't learning</p> <p>We lose students to other schools that have Advanced Work Classes</p> <p>We are not connecting with and involving most parents</p>	<p>mobile computer labs.</p> <p>Create a science center</p> <p>Make sure that the entire curriculum, including place-based education, is linked to standards</p> <p>Expand our partnerships</p> <p>Increase the number of adults in classrooms (e.g., student teachers, tutors)</p> <p>Create a data management system to track students' progress and identify those who need more support</p> <p>Implement tiered instructional strategies to assist students who are behind</p> <p>Have students performing at high levels</p> <p>Be a top destination school for parents</p> <p>Have consistent, well skilled staffing</p>
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## **Statement of Need**

The Clap Elementary School's academic performance has been declining since 2007 for both ELA and Math and overall results remain well below the district average. For example, only 10% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders at the school are proficient at MCAS ELA while the district average is 30%. At the early grades, Clap students are losing ground in reading. Almost 17% of students in K2 to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade actually lose ground during the school year. The average CPI in mathematics is 49.6, which is very low for elementary schools. *For most tests, zero percent of our students are in the Advanced/Above Proficient category.* This is telling about the rigor of our curriculum, our pedagogical practices, and the effectiveness of our program overall. Of all the testing last year for example, only 4% of students reached Advanced/Above Proficient in ELA at the fourth grade, and 1% reached that target in fifth grade ELA. All other tests had no students performing at Advanced/Above Proficient. Overall, approximately 84% of the students in grades 3-5 are in the Warning/Needs Improvement categories. The academic reality is even more somber with our students with disabilities. The school's special needs population has an average ELA CPI of 40 compared to the aggregate CPI of 61.2. In addition, 24% of our students are Limited English Proficient and another 28% have a first language other than English. These students are also struggling, and past efforts to provide interventions have not produced achievement gains. Lastly, girls outscore boys at all levels ELA of MCAS testing.<sup>1</sup>

Our school community realizes that past efforts have not produced success. The evidence of our poor scores is rooted in a need to expand and differentiate our curriculum to better meet the needs of students; better identify, track, and serve our students with disabilities and our

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[http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/ayp/ayp\\_report/school.aspx?linkid=31&orgtypecode=6&fycode=2010&orgcode=00350298&ayp\\_report\\_mode=DETAILED](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/ayp/ayp_report/school.aspx?linkid=31&orgtypecode=6&fycode=2010&orgcode=00350298&ayp_report_mode=DETAILED)

[http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/ayp/ayp\\_report/school.aspx?linkid=31&orgtypecode=6&fycode=2010&orgcode=00350298&ayp\\_report\\_mode=SUMMARY](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/ayp/ayp_report/school.aspx?linkid=31&orgtypecode=6&fycode=2010&orgcode=00350298&ayp_report_mode=SUMMARY)

[http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/performance\\_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=00350298&orgtypecode=6](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/performance_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=00350298&orgtypecode=6)

English language learners; and increase the rigor of our academic curriculum. This plan will address those areas of need and more, for as we have investigated our data we are clear on the urgent need for change. For example, the Investigations Math curriculum is not sufficient to meet our students' needs. We will incorporate additional math programs to supplement the curriculum and instruction. Similarly we are bringing in extensive new supports in ELA, such as Wilson and Reading Recovery. We will seek teachers with background in our new programs, we will provide extensive professional development for staff, and all staff will be evaluated on the effectiveness and results of their teaching.

# MCAS Tests of Spring 2010

## Percent of Students at Each Performance Level for Roger Clap

\* NOTE: Performance level percentages are not calculated if student group less than 10.

Data Last Updated on September 14, 2010.

Grade and Subject	Advanced/ Above Proficient		Proficient		Needs Improvement		Warning/ Failing		Students Included	CPI	SGP	Included in SGP
	SCHO OL	STAT E	SCHO OL	STA TE	SCHO OL	STA TE	SCHO OL	STA TE				
GRADE 03 - READING	0	14	30	49	39	30	30	8	23	67.4	N/A	N/A
GRADE 03 - MATHEMATICS	0	25	26	40	22	24	52	11	23	52.2	N/A	N/A
GRADE 04 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	0	11	10	43	48	35	43	12	21	47.6	N/A	17
GRADE 04 - MATHEMATICS	0	16	5	32	48	41	48	11	21	46.4	N/A	17
GRADE 05 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	4	16	39	47	26	28	30	10	23	67.4	76.0	21
GRADE 05 - MATHEMATICS	0	25	17	30	43	28	39	17	23	50.0	67.5	20
GRADE 05 - SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	0	15	4	38	48	36	48	11	23	43.5	N/A	N/A
ALL GRADES - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	1	16	27	52	37	24	34	8	67	61.2	46.0	38
ALL GRADES												

- MATHEMATICS												
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Complicating the picture for our school, Roger Clap loses students after the third grade. This is not an acceptable trend, and it means that we are currently below capacity (25 seats) largely because of the exodus of fourth grade students to schools with Advanced Work Classes (AWC) and the inability to attract new fourth and fifth grade students into the school. Currently only 27 of 50 possible students are assigned to the two grades. In grade four, 11 students left the school in the last two years because they were invited to the Advanced Work Program in other BPS schools. This disruption to our school and community is another aspect we are committed to addressing through our Innovation School.

In order to maintain enrollment in our upper grades, the school will embrace a new rigorous educational model similar to an Advanced Work Class with a challenging academic curriculum, which will motivate and empower students to take ownership for their learning. With Innovation School status we will provide a model that offers more flexibility, more autonomy, and affords parents and community stakeholders a sizeable opportunity to be included in both the teaching and the decision-making process. Our community needs to ‘sell’ our school to its neighbors. We aim to make the school attractive enough to prospective parents that we develop a waiting list of students at all grade levels.

The Roger Clap Innovation School believes that a “first class” education is paramount to the future of its students and their community. Therefore, all of the concerned members of the school community have pledged to help educate the whole child, academically, socially and emotionally. Students will be exposed to various academic skills and knowledge through projects, reading, research, place-based learning opportunities, and travel to locales of educational significance. Students will experience the relevance of what they learn.

Innovation School status with strong parental and community involvement will bring additional resources both in human capital and funding. Increased budget flexibility will ensure that resources will be allocated more wisely and adjustments can be made as needed, such as allowing the school to extend the school day for students. With curricular autonomy, the school can use other instructional materials to support the core academic standards and utilize a wide variety of formative assessments to evaluate learning. With staffing autonomy, an Innovation School leader can be more creative in terms of teacher assignment, specialization, and programming.

### **Primary Proposed Partnerships**

In addition to our partnership with all families, the Roger Clap Innovation School will formally partner with the Dorchester Historical Society and with UMass Boston. The Dorchester Historical Society will be working with Roger Clap as it creates its place-based curriculum. UMass Boston is a significant partner in assisting the school to identify and implement instructional priorities and in providing student teachers. In addition, adopting a Place-based curriculum will necessitate the building of strong partnerships with multiple additional community organizations and institutions. Additional partners are listed below. These organizations have committed to helping the school meet its academic, programmatic, social/cultural and financial goals as needed. Certain partners are already identified and others will join in the future:

**Dorchester Historical Society**, 195 Boston Street, Dorchester,  
Ma. 02125

[www.dorchesterhistorical society.org](http://www.dorchesterhistorical society.org)

**University of Massachusetts, Boston, School of Education**,  
Professor Pat Paugh

**University of Massachusetts, Boston, Extension School-  
Nutrition** program

**Urban Learning Farm**, Burrell Street, Boston, in conjunction  
with the Food Project, 10

Lewis Street, Lincoln, Ma. 01773 <http://thefoodproject.org>  
**Fit Kidz**, [www.Fitkidz.biz](http://www.Fitkidz.biz)- Before School Fitness Program  
**Family Services of Greater Boston**, [www.fsgb.org](http://www.fsgb.org)  
**John W. McCormick Civic Association**, 72 Roseclair Street,  
Dorchester, Ma. 02125  
[www.mccormackcivic.com](http://www.mccormackcivic.com)  
**Andrew Square Civic Association**,  
[www.andrewsquarecivicassociation.org](http://www.andrewsquarecivicassociation.org)  
**Columbia Savin Hill Civic Association**, 36 Saxon Street,  
Dorchester, Ma. 02125  
[www.columbiasavinhillcivic.org](http://www.columbiasavinhillcivic.org)  
**Massachusetts College of Art and Design**, 621 Huntington Ave,  
Boston, MA, 02115  
[www.massart.edu](http://www.massart.edu)  
**City Connects**, 140 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02135  
<http://www.bc.edu/schools/lsoe/cityconnects/>

The Urban Learning Farm will provide a great avenue for students to explore the world around them and learn about nutrition. The Massachusetts College of Art and Design will offer our students additional opportunities to learn about the visual arts. 'Fit Kidz' is just now starting its involvement in six Boston Public Schools beginning in February 2011, and will provide the physical fitness aspect that is critical to students' physical and mental health. The three Civic Associations mentioned above will provide tremendous support for school community gatherings, historical forums and fundraising activities. Four slots have been allocated to external partner representation on the Clap Innovation School Governing Board.

## **Roger Clap Innovation School Theory of Action**

The theory of action behind the transformation of Roger Clap Innovation School is to create a truly community based school. By (1) shifting our instruction and expanding upon our curriculum to focus on students and their communities, we will capture our students' imagination, support their learning, and institute rigorous, engaging curriculum instruction and assessment. We also (2) value the role of parents in our school, and know the power their presence can provide. To encourage that support, we commit to increasing supports and communication with parents, and in return we will request significant involvement on their part as well. We acknowledge our need to (3) use, analyze, and apply data as a means to understand, identify, and track our student's progress. Hand in hand with that data, we value collaboration as a means to share teacher and student work in an effort to continually improve teaching and learning and to specifically identify new approaches to improve performance. Lastly, we commit to (4) increasing the level of academic rigor as students progress from kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade with the implementation of AVID curriculum in grades 3-5 and Advanced Work Class curriculum in grades 4 and 5.

Our theory of action is supported by four major focus areas that will frame all changes at Roger Clap:

### ***1. Establish a true "Community" School:***

*All Roger Clap Students will learn about, experience and serve in their community.*

A key aspect of the Roger Clap Innovation School will be the emphasis on and use of the community as a resource and teaching opportunity. We see this "community" aspect as having three components: Place-based Curriculum development, Community Service for all students, and Civic Engagement.

Over the next several years, the curriculum at Roger Clap will be created based on the Common Core Standards, with place-based curriculum and additional programs infused to strategically meet students' needs. Place Based Curriculum will be developed using David Sobel's book "Place Based Education: Connecting Classrooms and Communities"<sup>2</sup> as a guide and resource. The school seeks to engage students through curriculum of interest to them. The community surrounding the school, as well as the history of Roger Clap himself, will provide ample opportunity for that curriculum and instruction development as well as the creation of authentic assessments based on this place-based curriculum. The **place-based curriculum** will grow with the students: it will focus on spheres of influence that expand outward as students move up in grade - from neighborhood to city to state to nation to world. Examples of projects related to this approach might include tracing the ownership of a student's home through deeds and other records, developing skills and techniques related to oral history and then interviewing a lifelong resident of their neighborhood, and learning how to access and read U.S. Census data online to identify shifts and trends related to population growth and demographics in Dorchester, Boston, Massachusetts, and the nation.

Beyond learning content that is relevant to students and tied to local history, **community service** will be a significant component of the curriculum. All students will participate in a community service project as an integral part of their curriculum and assessment. Similar to students learning about ever widening content as they move up in grades, curriculum and assessment will focus on community in the same developmental way: early grades would focus on knowing your community, two and three would expand to become involved in it, and finally the upper elementary grades would support their community through active engagement and support of the community through community service.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.antiochne.edu/ed/il/pbexcerpt.pdf>, <http://www.edutopia.org/david-sobel>

Examples of place-based curriculum with a community service component include: students performing an energy audit of the school and then conducting a campaign to reduce energy use, or third grade students while learning about Roger Clap serving as docents at the Dorchester Historical Society.

The next component of the place-based curriculum approach is **civic engagement**. We believe that a true community school has specific structures and innovation to build a culture of excellence. We intend to begin with regular school-based town hall meetings to share student achievements, applaud community service, discuss school and student progress, recognize students for merit, share civic engagement projects, and recognize parent contributions.

To accomplish and develop strong place-based curriculum and assessment, and to create varied community service opportunities, Roger Clap will **access neighborhood resources** as much as possible – for example, the Dorchester Historical Society (represented on the Innovation Plan Committee), UMass Boston (also represented), Roger Clap’s personal history, JFK Library, Castle Island, Savin Hill Neighborhood Association, and farming in the urban city. As well, the curriculum and instructional experiences will emphasize the diversity of the parent community, the neighborhood, and the city. The place-based curriculum will be standards-based, and will be rolled out over the first several years as time is devoted to developing the curriculum during professional development. We will most likely begin this process with a specific look at the writing and social studies curriculum.

***2. Formalize and increase family involvement and communication:***

*Roger Clap will support, communicate with, and utilize families in innovative ways.*

We believe that engaged and high performing students and a strong school community is built on a foundation of family involvement.

Today's families are working harder than ever to support their children as they go through school, and we seek to capitalize on that intent by meeting the new demands of parenting in new ways. We commit to dramatically altering how we communicate with families in order to get greater family involvement. Supporting our families directly translates to success for our students.

**We will support our families through the following activities:**

- **Family Contacts who speak the representative languages in our school.** A key component of communication in any school is accessibility. By publicizing family contacts with languages spoken, we believe we can allow more parents to comfortably access the school for any reason.
- **“Parent University”** – this is a Boston-Based, public, free program for parents or caregivers which focuses on parents/caregivers as teachers, advocates, learners and leaders.  
<http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/node/3781>. Roger Clap will campaign for 100% of our parents to attend Parent University.<sup>3</sup>
- **Student Data Showcase:** two times a year we will hold a data showcase night to walk parents through our student data and their progress and achievements.
- **Home-School Compact** will be developed, which will outline the expectations for the school, students, and families/caregivers, to include items such as communication, attendance, and uniform.
- **Increased communication via Google docs, Connect Ed and the Roger Clap Website: Student academic information may be confidentially accessible for parents via Google docs.** Meeting schedules and other notifications will go out in multilingual Connect Ed

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.necn.com/Boston/New-England/2009/11/02/Parent-University-begins-in/1257201177.html>  
<http://www.necn.com/Boston/New-England/2009/08/30/Parent-University-Involving/1251670636.html>

messages. Information about meetings, with agendas and notes, will be updated on the website by parent volunteers.

- **Absentee Email system** to accommodate families who may not be able to call in at the start of school we will establish an email notification option for absences.
- **Night classes** for parents/caregivers, to include such programs as “Technology Goes Home”, taught by teachers or family members.

The second “half” of our relationship with parents has to do with what they can bring to our community. Roger Clap Innovation School would not be an Innovation School without their commitment, expertise, and support. Our parents are committed to supporting the continued success and innovation of Roger Clap. To maximize parent involvement, we believe that formalizing structures for parent roles and creating new opportunities will both increase parent involvement and ensure that involvement continues over time.

### **Our parents will support us through:**

- Voluntary after-school enrichment activities related to parents’ interests, backgrounds, and expertise (one parent currently teaches a drama and music class.) For example, a professional chef might offer a 6-week cooking class, a professional journalist might help coordinate a student newspaper, a professional carpenter might oversee a single project based woodworking class.
- In-class academic support (via trained volunteer parents)
- Serve as a Lead Parent will coordinate and organize after-school activities and offerings
- Serve as translators

- Homeroom Parents will be the primary contacts for their group. They will act as a resource and communication conduit for all other parents in the class. They will communicate through phone, email, and the website, and they will provide contact sheets to parents in each class.
- Active involvement in the community service component of the curriculum
- Election to representative seats on the Governing Board
- Participation on the data team

### ***3. Build a professional culture of data analysis and collaboration to improve student achievement:***

*We will know how our students are performing and we will utilize data analysis and collaboration to improve achievement for all Roger Clap students.*

A crucial element of innovation and change for the Roger Clap Innovation School will be to build a professional culture that includes a **focus on data and tracking** as well as **time for teacher collaboration**. Through working with the Achievement Network (A-Net), we will create routines for data analysis, structure and schedule tiered interventions, and establish cycles for progress monitoring for all students. A-Net will also support the development of administrative and staff capacity to facilitate conversations about data and practice.

Additionally, the Roger Clap Innovation School will partner with the Perkins School, a traditional Boston Public School, for an innovative collaboration around math. MCAS data across both schools will be used to identify specific strands in which students are struggling. 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers from both schools will work collaboratively to better understand the Common Core Standards and to create new math curriculum maps that supplement our current, more conceptually based mathematics curriculum, TERC

Investigations, with a more procedural or operational based mathematics curriculum such as Singapore Math.

All staff will take part in an **additional 50 hours of professional development per year** beyond the contractual requirement, and they will routinely have time during the school day through **common planning time** to look at student work, track student progress, share lesson tips and tools, and generally collaborate for greater student achievement.

The purpose of data tracking and holding collaboration and professional development time for facilitated conversations around data and practice is to better monitor student progress, to more accurately assign and assess the effectiveness of tiered interventions, and to indicate opportunities and directions for our differentiation in class. We believe this time and the emphasis on data will increase achievement for all of our students, but in particular our ELL and Special Education populations, who have not had adequate tiered support or progress monitoring in the past.

#### ***4. Incorporate rigorous, innovative curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the fourth and fifth grades:***

*Roger Clap students will graduate from a rigorous, engaging school ready to perform at high levels in any middle school.*

A key change in the Roger Clap Innovation Plan will be to **incorporate Advanced Work Class curriculum at the fourth and fifth grade.** Many of the Clap's most successful students leave for Advanced Work schools after third grade. We believe that our community and the rigorous, place based education we will offer, combined with an Advanced Work accelerated curriculum, will allow Roger Clap to retain its students from Kindergarten to fifth grade.

All students in grades 4-5 will engage in the AVID curriculum. A curriculum that supplies thoughtful organizational systems for

students, teachers, and families along with routines aimed at creating a culture of academic success and higher order thinking. AVID and the Advanced Work curriculum will be advertised to parents as a way to maintain our community and parent involvement from kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

To support greater rigor at the fourth and fifth grades, Roger Clap will institute a **two-teacher team approach**. This will also allow the fourth and fifth grade teachers to team up, specialize in fewer subject areas, and to collaborate in their planning, instruction, assessment, and follow-through for students. Students will receive science and mathematics instruction from one teacher, and ELA and social studies from the second, with the added benefit that they will work with the same teacher team for two years.

As part of the focus on community, Roger Clap will establish **capstone projects** for the fourth and fifth grades with a judging panel of outside reviewers including parents and community members. Students would complete a capstone project as part of the civic engagement portion of the curriculum, and as part of our emphasis on getting technology into the hands of our students, we will create a technology component for these capstone projects. An example would be students visiting the state house and preparing letters around issues of importance to the Roger Clap community.

In addition to creating an academically challenging curriculum that matches that of Advanced Work Classes, fourth and fifth graders will also be able to participate in an expanded range of after-school opportunities, including speech and debate teams and a student government club.

### **Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

The Roger Clap Innovation School will selectively implement portions of the Boston Public Schools curricula as the core foundation of our

curriculum. However, curricular autonomies are needed to supplement some of the BPS curricula as outlined below.

### *Academic Supports*

Roger Clap will add a **.5 FTE Reading Interventionist and a .5 FTE English as a Second Language (ESL) in-class support position** (one teacher will function in both of these positions for a 1 FTE) to increase staffing and to better respond to ELL student needs. The Reading Interventionist/ESL teacher will work collaboratively with the resource teacher to offer students support in the classroom in our inclusion model, but they will also conduct pull out, small group instruction as needed, including during the intervention block and before and after school utilizing flex time. This model will allow multiple support personnel to collaborate in any one class at a time, for example, the first grade class may have the classroom teacher, a student teacher, the Reading Interventionist/ESL teacher and any parent volunteers to allow for maximized student supports and differentiation. **Our Resource Room teacher will be ESL certified** as we will ensure this through the hiring process. We believe that our ELL population has significant needs and that this more targeted support will make a substantial difference in student achievement.

We want to keep our ELL students in class as much as possible while still meeting their language learning needs. Therefore, our goal is to have **all teachers certified in ESL** as well as their content area or to have gone through **SEI training Categories I-IV** so that children can remain in class as much as possible. In addition, by scheduling an Intervention block and utilizing flexible scheduling with our resource and ELL/Reading Interventionist position, **we will provide additional before, during, and after school supports and instruction to our ELL students to maximize student time in the regular classroom.**

## ***Technology***

We commit that Roger Clap will increase hardware and software in the school to facilitate increased use of technology throughout curriculum, instruction, and assessment. We will focus on hiring teachers with facility using technology in their instruction, for example using smartboards or sharing powerpoint presentations as well as experience having students use technology during lessons or assessments, for example conducting a live webchat with students in China in Mandarin class, using web-based art programs, or creating, saving and editing poems. We will make a commitment to allocating funds toward new technology purchases (smart boards, laptop carts, educational and communication software etc.) and to professional development time to support teachers in integrating technology in these ways.

## ***Mathematics***

**In mathematics**, students will develop a thorough understanding of numeration and how to use multiple approaches to problem solve and explain their thinking process.

- In Mathematics, the **Investigations** models will be used in the primary grades with a strong emphasis on number sense. This curriculum gives students opportunities to experiment with different strategies and develop mathematical thinking.
- In the intermediate grades, a more traditional mathematical approach will supplement Investigations as the school prepares students for middle school algebra and more complex mathematical reasoning. An introduction to the metric system will also be included in the measurement unit in the upper grades.
- The Roger Clap Innovation School will partner with the Perkins school, a traditional Boston Public School, for an innovative collaboration around mathematics. MCAS data across both schools will be used to identify specific strands in which students are struggling. 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers from both schools will work collaboratively to better understand

the Common Core Standards and to create new math curriculum maps that supplement our current, more conceptually based mathematics curriculum, TERC Investigations, with a more procedural or operational based mathematics curriculum such as Singapore Math. \*See appendix

### ***Reading, Literacy and Writing***

**In reading, literacy, and writing**, students will use complex texts and be exposed to a wide variety of literary genres and comprehension strategies. We will organize our readings in every subject so each text forms a basis for language and knowledge needed for the next level of complexity. Additionally, all staff will receive professional development in some structured form of reading remediation, to include **Project Read, Wilson**, and/or **Reading Recovery** so that these instructional strategies can be integrated into their in-class instruction. Teachers who apply to work at the school who are already trained in these methods and programs will receive stronger consideration. Based on student needs, we will differentiate the professional development to ensure that appropriate grade level instruction and supports are provided. Students will learn the essentials of the writing process, the different genres of writing, and how to revise a literary piece using the ‘Six-Traits of Revision’. In addition:

- **Reading Street** will be used as the primary text for literacy instruction in the primary grades because it is rich in concept development, vocabulary building, and phonics- based.
- There will be a focus on reading and writing across disciplines based in a theory of language known as **Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)**, an approach to understanding how grammar functions that leads to academic success. Such genres include: narratives, procedures, descriptions,

explanations, and argument<sup>4</sup>. There is a clear connection between many of the new Common Core standards and a specific focus on academic genres in the elementary grades. Through reading and discussing mentor texts, as well as writing focused texts for authentic purposes, students learn the specific language features that they need to access a variety of complex texts. They also learn to control a greater range of language when writing with depth in a variety of subject areas. It is important for students, especially those who are learning English as a second language or who struggle with reading to receive explicit experiences where they learn to distinguish between the language they use every day and the language features of texts pertinent to the different subject areas<sup>5</sup>. At the Roger Clap Innovation School, teachers who develop a capacity to understand the forms and functions of academic language will be positioned to provide instruction that includes explicit and focused use of genre features in reading and writing. This is important to the Innovation Curriculum as the SFL framework provides a flexible but structured framework for connecting experiential and authentic learning of the place-based curriculum to academic literacy instruction.

- A **curricular calendar** will be used in writing classes, and students will have opportunities to write in different genres: descriptive, narrative, and poetry in the primary grades; expository, persuasive, and technical in the intermediate grades. Community aspects of civic engagement, community service, and place based curriculum will be infused into the writing curriculum as well.

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<sup>4</sup> Derewianka, B. (1990). *Exploring how texts work*. Newtown, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association

<sup>5</sup> Schleppegrell, M.J. (2004). *The language of schooling: A functional linguistics perspective*. Mahwah: Erlbaum

- In the intermediate grades, the **workshop model** will give students more opportunities as ‘they read to learn’. Students will be immersed in an environment rich in literature that includes informational texts, non-fiction, fiction, poetry, and drama. Classes will include time for short mini-lessons focused on key skills and the bulk of the lessons will be reserved for individual or group work so that students can authentically grapple and practice with the academic concepts of the day.

### ***Science:***

**In science**, the school will use inquiry-based science for application, and science texts that supports concept development and vocabulary mastery. Research shows that ‘interesting’ elementary science is a strong indicator leading to AP courses in high school.

- Science will be **inquiry-based** as well as place-based. We also have a new approach to staffing for its instruction. In K-3, a Science specialist will be hired (.6 FTE) for in-class support. In grades 4 and 5, the two teachers will divide up the work by specializing in two core subjects each. One will teach math and science, the other ELA and Social Studies. This will allow for all students to have greater access to the Science curriculum.

### ***Social Studies:***

**In social studies**, geography and history will complement each other to give students a thorough understanding of different customs, climates, topographies, and local efforts to construct a nation out of diverse people and cultures. **History Alive** will be used as the core curriculum in the intermediate grades. Students will read and create maps of the neighborhood with assistance from the **Dorchester Historical Society**.

- Teachers in grades 3 and 5 will be enrolled in the ‘**Teaching American History**’ grant with the BPS and the Institute for American Political History.
- Third grade students will learn about Roger Clap, Dorchester, and its environs as part of the place-based curriculum. As part of the spiral content of the curriculum, which starts more close to home in the early grades and then expands outward, students could for instance conduct deed research on their homes and learn the patterns of the development of the neighborhood.
- Fifth grade students will take a broader look at “community” as part of the US social studies curriculum at fifth grade. Here they will investigate issues and conduct community service that will focus on more complex issues with larger implications. For example, students may research an issue at the state level, write letters to their representatives, and visit the state house.

***Health and Nutrition:***

**In health and nutrition**, students will create connections between local farmers and the school. Within a mile radius there are over 160 backyard gardeners. Students, starting in kindergarten, will engage in a build-a-garden program with the assistance of the Food Project and the Urban Learning Farm and will be taught about the benefits of fresh vegetables and fruits. We will begin using **local lunch Thursdays** through the Farm-to-School initiative and look to expand to offer students more variety and healthier local options in each passing year. We will form a feasibility committee to research the possibility of altering our kitchen from a satellite kitchen to fully functional one, which will allow us to increase the partnership with the Urban Learning Farm.

Students will also become more fit and ready to start the day learn through our partnership with the Fit Kidz fitness program. Fit Kidz is currently and will continue to be offered before school.

### ***Art and Physical Education***

The school will implement art and physical education programming to tap into students' artistic creativity and athletic ability. Whenever possible, **these courses will be offered after the school day as well** to extend student learning time.

- Visual Arts will be provided by a .6 FTE teacher next year. The school will also team up with outside artists to bring additional resources to the school.
- Physical Education will be provided by a .4 FTE teacher next year.
- We will offer our students supplemental physical education through our partnership with the FitKidz fitness program.
- We will offer our students supplemental arts programming through our partnerships with MassArt.

### ***World Language:***

The Roger Clap Innovation School also understands its role in preparing students for a global economy. Roger Clap will offer **Mandarin** beginning next year for all students, kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. All students will take at least one sixty minute class per week.

Beyond changes to curriculum and instruction, Roger Clap realizes a need for greater tracking and support of its students. To address these needs, the following will be put in place:

#### ***1. Utilize the Student Information System:***

This system is currently being developed by the district and will be available in September beginning with tracking student attendance.

#### ***2. Establish a Data Team:***

There will be a Data team, which will meet at least once monthly for 60 minutes. The team will review student data across multiple indicators and assessments, identify students who are in need of

additional academic and social-emotional support, and match them with services. The Achievement Network will support the school in developing a culture that embraces data and is more facile with consistent progress monitoring. They will set up data systems, and will coach teachers and administration in data-based decision-making and facilitating conversations in a professional learning environment. Contracting with a highly esteemed data company like The Achievement Network in the initial years will establish a culture of data-based inquiry among staff. Once the data team is trained and capacity is reached, the company will no longer be needed. As a whole school, we will become more facile with data and progress monitoring. We believe this will significantly increase our ability to support our diverse population, particularly our Special Education and ELL students who are currently struggling with academic achievement at Roger Clap.

### ***3. Create an Early Warning and Intervention System to address academic and social needs:***

The school will adopt the RTI model of academic intervention, consisting of identifying students and tracking progress along three Tiers. Using data from newly created assessments and information from the teacher data teams, students will be assigned to various tiers of support. Tier 1 will be primarily in-class intervention through scaffolding, modeling, guided reading, and one-on-one conferring. Tier 2 will be out of class small group remediation and support provided primarily by the Reading Interventionist/ESL instructor or the resource teacher. Tier 3 will be out of class in small group or individual based, and will include remediation, re-teaching, and increased learning time opportunities, including before and after school tutoring, homework help, Accelerated Academies (MCAS support during February, April, and summer breaks), and Young People's Project (math literacy tutors for 3-5 graders, an outgrowth of Algebra Project). Our 30-minute Intervention Block will play a critical role in supplying Tier 2 and Tier 3 students with the academic supports they need to be successful.

#### ***4. Establish Formative and Summative Assessments, to include authentic assessment:***

To provide detailed tracking information and to better gauge student learning and understanding, Roger Clap Innovation School will focus on various assessments to monitor students' academic progress. In conjunction with establishing a data team with the help of the Achievement Network (A-Net), we will also establish a more cohesive, coordinated set of assessments for students, to include authentic assessments.

Every effort will be made that there is an assessment component for everything that is taught. In the primary grades, the school will use the DIBEL, and the TRC, Reading Street assessments, and the Mathematics Investigations (end-of-unit, mid-term and end-of year) assessments for mathematics. The school will use the Achievement Networks formative assessments in Mathematics and ELA in grades 3-5. Additionally, as the place-based curriculum is developed, significant attention will be paid to creating authentic assessments to gauge student learning and understanding from this new project-based, standards driven curriculum. The combination of embedded assessments, weekly/monthly and end-of-unit tests will ensure that individual students' academic progress is monitored and academic interventions are provided in a timely fashion.

#### ***5. Introduce AVID at grades 4 and 5:***

In addition to our curricular changes, Roger Clap Innovation School will introduce AVID, 'Advancement via Individual Determination'. This program, which started in high schools across the country, has caught on in hundreds of middle and elementary schools primarily because it teaches students how to develop study habits, read for content, take organized notes, and manage time. It is designed to help students prepare for and succeed in college. Next year, we will train our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade team on AVID and they will teach those crucial study skills and habits to our students as a means of increasing success.

***6. Move to an Inclusion model of Special Education:***

In special education, the school will adopt an inclusive philosophy and approach to special education. Every effort will be made to bring resource room services into the classroom. It is our goal that resource room services be provided as an intervention and that students would be discontinued successfully in less than two years.

We believe that significant attention to curriculum and assessment will lead to significant increases in student achievement.

**Schedule and Calendar**

We believe that a core change that is necessary to improve student achievement at Roger Clap is time. How we use it, how we structure it, and how much we have is paramount. In utilizing our autonomies, we will make the following changes contingent upon our discussions with affected collective bargaining groups pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §92:

***1. Increase the instructional school day by a half hour:***

The Roger Clap Innovation School will continue to follow a 180 day student school year (exclusive of summer school, Saturdays and/or Accelerated Academies; see below). We will use our autonomy to lengthen the direct instructional time by 30 minutes per day beyond the current contractual time.

***2. Offer extended day/year opportunities:***

Some teachers, with advanced notice, will be given flexible work hours as the school tries to better utilize teachers' time-on-task to increase instructional and enrichment opportunities for students. This applies to both teachers and paraprofessionals at the discretion of the principal. This flexible time will be used for multiple purposes. The school will offer **Accelerated Academies** during school vacations or Saturday classes during the period preceding the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System testing window for those students identified as needing additional

instructional opportunities. Additionally, we shall offer two weeks of our “Summer Spring Board” program to conduct academic diagnostics, build school culture, and give students a jump start to the school year each year to all of our 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students beginning this summer. These sessions shall be four hours per day during the two weeks preceding the start of the school year.

### ***3. Implement a block schedule:***

The school’s daily program will be based on hour-long periods so that teachers can participate in two hours of meaningful collaborative lesson planning weekly (see section on PD). The responsibility of annually establishing the master schedule is that of the principal (See professional development section).

### ***School Schedule: See appendix for full draft schedule***

7:30 – 9:20      Before-school: Fit Kids and homework help  
9:20 – 3:50      School day  
3:50 – 5:30      After-school:  
SES Tutoring – 17 kids tutoring  
MCAS boot camp during February and April vacations.

We seek to expand our before- and after-school programs. However, currently access for before- and after-school is an issue because of the lack of bus transportation. Therefore, we will continue to search for creative alternatives to get students who need the services to before- and after-school programs.

### ***Calendar and Schedule:***

- There will be a half hour added to the school day described in the teachers’ contract
- There will be 50 hours of additional professional development to the current hours required by teachers’ contract

- The Principal will have the option of creating a flexible work time for faculty.
- For the 2011-2012 school year, teachers shall receive a stipend in the amount equal to the contractual hourly rate for any hours in excess of 95 beyond the hours established for teachers in the collective bargaining agreement. This stipend shall be annualized and retirement worthy. In subsequent years, any increase in the 2011-2012 work day/year shall be compensated at the contractual hourly rate.
- The Principal will have the option of creating the school schedule annually without faculty vote
- 2 weeks of our “Summer Spring Board” program consisting of 4 hours daily for all teachers grades 1-5. (40 hours total). Participation in the “Summer Spring Board” program will be voluntary for Clap Innovation School faculty. Participants in the program shall receive the “contractual hourly rate” as established by the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Boston School Committee and the Boston Teachers Union.
- Except for the first year of the Clap Innovation School’s operation, staff shall be notified of any changes (from the previous year) to the summer work schedule by January 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Staffing**

A principal who will oversee school operations and curriculum implementation will head the Roger Clap Innovation School. A secretary<sup>6</sup> who will manage the day-to-day operations and a custodian who will be responsible for maintaining the physical plant will assist the principal. The school will accommodate approximately 150 students composed of one class per grade level, from Kindergarten 1 to grade 5. That will include two classes of early childhood students with disabilities. One class will be integrated (Kindergarten 0 and Kindergarten 1), with 10 general education students and 5 on

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<sup>6</sup> Hiring for the secretary position will happen in accordance with an agreement or resolution reached between the Administrative Guild (SEIU, Local 888) and Boston Public Schools pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §92.

educational plans, and the other will be substantially separate special education. Approximately 40 students are English Language Learners and at least 25 of these have ELD levels 1, 2, or 3.

Beside the classroom teachers who will be ESL certified and Category trained, four part-time specialist teachers and at least two paraprofessionals will assist teachers during instructional time. The specialists and paraprofessionals will be deployed where additional support is needed. A special education (resource room) teacher will also be employed to provide services to Special Needs students. Special Education Information Management System (SEIMS) work will be conducted during the teacher's planning and development time (P&D).

**In the initial stage, two instructional coaches** will be assigned to the school by the academic superintendent on a part time basis to facilitate common planning time (CPT) and work with the ILT and the Data Team. A teacher-in-charge will be designated and will oversee school operations in the absence of the principal. Additional instruction in the Arts and fitness activities will be contracted out to local agencies, and available during before and/or after school hours. The school will request specific autonomy granting their ability to contract with neighboring agencies for these services. Additional staff support will come from student teachers. We will increase our partnerships with UMass Boston and also seek other schools from which to recruit.

***Staffing Process:***

- The posting of vacancies at the Clap Innovation School shall be the same posting process as is currently in place for Pilot Schools and Turnaround Schools.
- The Principal shall have the authority to move staff to specific grade levels based on the teacher's certification and skills in order to match the specific needs of the school and students.
- The Principal shall have the authority to 'involuntarily excess' staff from the school on an annual basis provided notification is given by February 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Staff will be allowed to excess themselves with timely notification on or before February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Special Education Information Management System (SEIMS) work will be conducted during the teacher’s planning and development time (P&D).
- No permanent member of the Boston Teachers Union will be laid off as a result of the existence of the Clap Innovation School.

***Staffing Pattern:***

To support the initiatives of the school, and particularly our student population, our teaching staff will consist of the following:

Early childhood Classrooms:	2 FTE
K-I:	1 FTE
K-II:	1 FTE
Grade 1:	1 FTE
Grade 2:	1 FTE
Grade 3:	1 FTE
Grade 4/5: (1 SS/ELA, 1 Math/Sci.)	2 FTE
PE:	.4 FTE
Visual Arts:	.6 FTE
Foreign Language (Mandarin):	.4 FTE
Science specialist (focused on K-3)	.6 FTE
ESL in-class support:	.5 FTE
Reading Interventionist	.5 FTE
Paraprofessionals	3.5 FTE
Instructional Coach Support (2)	(from the district)
<i>and</i>	
Parent volunteers	TBD
Student Teachers	TBD

***Current teachers may reapply for their positions next year via the Transfer Posting:***

In the hiring or re-hiring process, every effort will be made to recruit dual or tri-certified teachers with teaching licenses in Elementary, ESL, and moderate special needs. We also will give priority to candidates who have completed SEI Category trainings I-IV. All teachers who have not already done so will be expected to complete Sheltered English Instruction Category Training I-IV as a condition of retaining a position. All staff will fully participate in Professional Learning Communities, and join at least one school-based teacher committee such as the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) or Data Team. Staff will be diverse (multi-cultural and multi-lingual) and represent the diverse student body.

***Values and Skills We Seek in Roger Clap Teachers:***

The Innovation Planning Committee has defined valued teacher traits for Roger Clap staff:

To ensure that instruction is delivered in optimal conditions, the Clap Innovation School teacher should demonstrate the following:

- Has positive relationship with students
- Has demonstrated outcomes in student achievement
- Is dual or tri-certified in Special Education and ESL
- Is SEI Category trained I-IV
- Is trained or willing to be trained in the Roger Clap math programs
- Is trained or willing to be trained in structured, rules-based reading program
- Deals with students' emotional health
- Recognizes and provides for individual differences
- Promotes students' involvement in their own learning
- Is creative and innovative
- Knows subject matter in depth
- Engages in professional growth activities
- Is consistent but flexible in dealing with student behavior
- Continually involves parents in student learning activities
- Consistently challenges students intellectually
- Sees themselves as integral to student learning and achievement

- Uses data to drive instruction
- Demonstrates facility with technology, incorporating it into curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Demonstrates cultural competency with diverse students
- Understands the importance of community and actively seeks out opportunities for students to engage in their local and global communities

The hiring committee will utilize these characteristics and skills as a basis for screening resumes and creating interview questions, and they will be used as criteria in reference checks. In addition, the committee will look at teacher's backgrounds, including professional development and trainings and experience with similar populations. Applicants with these skills and experiences will be priority candidates for Roger Clap.

***Teacher Responsibilities and Expectations:*** The Innovation Planning Committee has also set the following responsibilities and expectations for all Clap teachers:

- All teachers will be responsible for assessing their students on a regularly scheduled basis. Some of these assessments may require scoring open response questions.
- Teachers will collaboratively develop Individual Student Intervention Plans for each student based on MCAS results and classroom assessments.
- Teachers will be responsible for annually updating their Individual Professional Development Plans with approval of the principal.
- Teachers will engage in frequent communication with parents.
- Teachers will be expected to model up to three lessons for fellow staff members per school year.
- Teachers will be assigned bus duty within their contractual work-day at the discretion of the principal.
- Teachers shall schedule parent/teacher meetings with the principal in addition to the parent/teacher conferences required pursuant to the current collective bargaining agreement.

***The teacher hiring process*** for the first year will be conducted according to the following steps:

1. Recruitment and Advertising: Clap positions for initial staffing will be posted in the transfer posting on or about April 1, 2011. This will be open for 10 school days. The school will also look to recruit applicants from schools modeled closely to Roger Clap.
2. Hiring will be finalized by early May.
3. The Hiring Committee for the first year, whose responsibility it will be to screen resumes and conduct interviews, will include: the principal, up to 2 volunteer teachers from another school, 2 Clap parents, and one outside partner.
4. The above committee will serve in an advisory capacity to the principal, voting candidates up-or-down and providing the results of that vote to the principal to consider. However, final authority over hiring rests with the principal and Boston Public Schools.
5. Each interview will have a standard set of questions and a rubric.

Note: After the first year, personnel policies will follow the state's guidelines for innovation schools, which include the formation of a personnel subcommittee of the Governing Board that conduct interviews for new hires and include existing teachers.

The approved working conditions for the Roger Clap school will be communicated to all staff through; 1. Receipt of this plan, and 2. Receipt of a written document summarizing the approved working conditions. Potential staff will read and acknowledge receipt of this plan prior to contracting to be hired at Roger Clap.

### **Professional Development**

Professional Development at Roger Clap Innovation School will be focused on training teachers to dramatically improve achievement for all of our students. In such a small school and with diverse needs in our population, we believe that three major changes will lead to dramatically increased staff capacity. Those changes are below:

***1. Fifty (50) additional hours of professional development:***

The Clap School will design a professional development plan that trains all staff in effective instructional approaches. Every year, the teaching staff will go through a total of fifty (50) additional hours of professional development beyond their contractual work arrangement. Up to twenty-five (25) of these additional hours will take place before the start of the school year (late August/early September) and the rest will occur throughout the school year, as determined by the school schedule. In addition, Roger Clap Innovation School (BPS) may establish the position of “Instructional Leader”<sup>7</sup> (See Appendix for job description).

***2. Differentiated professional development:***

With a mix of whole-school, grade level, and content specific offerings, we believe we can substantially increase our collective skills and therefore the achievement of our students. Our Professional Development will include:

- Whole school:
  - Place-based curriculum training and support for curriculum development
  - Differentiated Instruction, with particular emphasis on Remedial Reading, Problem solving strategies, Second Language Acquisition strategies, SEI Categories I-IV, and Special Education inclusion best practices.
  - Data analysis, building a culture of data use and progress monitoring, data-based decision-making, and data walls.
  - Facilitation training for the data team and common planning time activities such as Looking at Student Work.

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<sup>7</sup> Establishment of the “Instructional Leadership” position will happen in accordance with an agreement or resolution reached between the Boston School Committee and the Boston Teachers Union through the American Arbitration Association (Joint Resolution Committee) #11 390 01034 10.

- Achievement Network training for facilitating conversations to monitor student academic and social needs, interventions, and progress (this is to be researched for a later year)
- Grade level:
  - Grade 4 and 5 will be trained on AVID
  - Depending on the grade and/or teaching assignment, teachers will be trained in appropriate reading programs, to possibly include Reading Recovery, Project Read, and Wilson.
  - Primary grade teachers will focus on Early literacy, phonemic awareness and phonics
- Content-Specific:
  - ELA will focus on consistent Reading Street implementation, Readers and Writers workshop, Six Traits of Revision, and SFL writing.
  - Mathematics training will be provided in K-5 through the Boston Public Schools Mathematics Department and other out-of-district offerings. Additionally, math teachers will examine the Mathematics Studio Program in which teachers learn and rehearse ‘mathematically productive teaching routines’ and use classroom video to improve practice.
  - Science and social studies will take district provided professional development as well as some off-site seminars to increase content knowledge.
  - The grade three Social Studies teacher will attend the Teaching American History’ seminar at BU

### ***3. Scheduled Common Planning Time:***

In addition to professional development time outside of the school day, weekly or bi-weekly common planning time will be established for teacher groups or teams.

At least one hour per week will be devoted to Common Planning Time, often referred to as collaborative planning sessions. The CPT will be administratively directed. Teachers will engage in inquiry practices such as reading professional books and articles, looking at classroom videos, and looking at student work and data. All teachers will be required to participate in teacher-led inquiry. A-Net will provide coaching and facilitation training for teachers using new techniques and structures for looking at student work, analyzing data, and other forms of collaborative work.

## **District Policies and Procedures**

### ***Governing Board:***

The Roger Clap Innovation School will use its autonomy to establish its own approach to governance and shared-decision making. A Governing Board composed of the school principal, teachers, parents, community leaders, business and/or university partners will provide ample representation of the different constituencies when discussing issues about school policies and procedures. The governing board will function as replacement for the school council as it relates to governance and decision-making. Specifically, there will be 13 members; the principal, four parents, four teachers, and four other members that represent the community. The principal will serve as co-chair; the second co-chair will be a community member elected by the members of the Governing Board and subsequently reinstated by an annual vote. All decisions that affect the educational process including: discretionary budget allocations, staffing, scheduling, curriculum, programs and delivery of service, will be subject to a vote by the Governing Board. This structure of governance will ensure that the school lives up to its vision of inclusiveness. The Governing Board will be responsible for developing their own by-laws and establishing term limits etc.

The Governing Board will be responsible for **evaluating the Principal's performance** and making recommendations to the Superintendent for the principal's continued employment. For the first year, the principal

will ask teachers to reapply for their positions. He will have the authority to hire and retain staff. After the initial year, **the Personnel Sub-Committee (PSC)**, a subcommittee of the Governing Board comprised of the Principal, two staff members, and two parents, **will be responsible for filling staff vacancies that may occur in the school.** The PSC will meet a minimum of four times a year but may be summoned by the co-chairs in case of an emergency staff opening. For this first year, teachers and other staff members who apply for positions will be interviewed by the hiring committee, as listed above. Thereafter, hiring will be the responsibility of the members of the PSC. This group will conduct interviews and make recommendations to the principal. The principal will accept the candidate if he agrees with a majority of the PSC members. The Roger Clap Innovation School understands that the staff and parent input in the decision-making process is vital to the success of the school. Therefore, an **Executive Board** made up of governing board representatives from both constituencies will convene at least every month to discuss curriculum, instruction, assessments, and professional development. Recommendations will be made to the principal and staff.

***Teacher Evaluation:*** An additional autonomy requested is for teachers to be evaluated using a modified performance evaluation instrument that includes the following addition to the Performance Indicators under Dimension 7: “Teacher’s instruction has resulted in significant student achievement as demonstrated in student assessment data maintained by Boston Public Schools.

***Miscellaneous:***

- Professional development schedule shall be established by the principal
- At the Clap Innovation School, the teacher evaluation process shall comply to the new regulations established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and include a performance indicator “Teacher’s instruction has resulted in significant student

achievement as demonstrated in student assessment data maintained by BPS.”

- The Principal shall have the authority to establish an “Instructional Leader” position as exists in Turnaround Schools.
- Principal may establish an inclusion model of instruction without regard to notice, class size, staffing or other provisions of the CBA regarding implementation of this model.

### **Budget**

The Roger Clap Innovation School will seek budgetary autonomy similar to that of the BPS’ Pilot schools. As with all BPS schools, the Clap will receive a student weighted funding budget in which dollars follow the students. This model empowers school-based decision-making to effectively manage and use resources as envisioned in the governance section (above). It also creates incentives for principals to increase enrollment and promotes school creativity and entrepreneurship in thinking beyond a staffing allocation methodology. Using the Student Weighted Funding model, the Roger Clap Innovation School budget will be approximately \$1.4 million for FY ’12.

Similar to Pilot schools, the Clap School also requests autonomy to **opt out of certain central discretionary services**, such as the district’s professional development, textbooks, or supply procurements, and instead receive the equivalent per pupil funds added to our budget allocation.

As well, the Clap Innovation School requests that **teachers and specialists be budgeted on their actual salaries** (vs. average salaries) after year one.

The savings based on these budget autonomies will be redirected and reinvested towards academic interventions and other essential services that support student achievement and bridge the achievement gap among the various ethnic and racial groups.

In order to preserve the financial stability long term for Roger Clap Innovation School, we also request the **autonomy to roll over any funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year**. We will also utilize our autonomy to establish an independent 501c3 organization will seek to open a **Development office** to further support fundraising efforts.

**In terms of the content of the budget and how we intend to utilize budget autonomy over time, we have established the following priorities and goals:**

**1. Increase staff:**

A key component driving our choices in allocating the Roger Clap budget is to maximize our greatest resource – the staff. In the past, our small school has struggled to differentiate and provide substantial opportunities for tiered interventions and supports. With the funding model and increased flexibility for budget, we will focus on allocating positions for maximum effectiveness. Combined with the autonomy to use flex scheduling and to hire outside agencies to provide some classes, we now have a core set of stable staff we believe will work for all our students.

**2. Provide substantial professional development:**

Hand in hand with a great staff and a great Innovation Plan is expanded time for professional development and monies for training – both of which will go a long way to ensuring effective implementation of our innovation strategies. These two areas will be budget priorities moving forward.

**3. Expand technology:**

We recognize that another significant area of need is technology – hardware, software, and training. We have identified an initial list of priorities and we will establish a plan for purchasing as much as possible in the coming years:

- Smart Boards or Mimio machines
- Laptop carts for use in classrooms

- LCD projectors
- Study Island program for mathematics
- Reading Fluency with Voice Recognition software
- Technology communication systems such as Googledocs and Edline

**4. Provide additional academic time for students:**

Summer is often a time for many students to lose academic ground. We believe that providing summer school for several weeks prior to the start of school will allow students to orient themselves to the school in terms of academic requirements and pacing of the day. We commit to this as a budgetary expense – to pay teachers and cafeteria staff stipends to conduct diagnostic tests, build school culture, orient students to the expectations and routines of the school year, and to begin academic behaviors. In February and April, budgetary allocations will be set aside to hire staff to provide targeted instruction for students in preparation for MCAS.

## **Capacity of Applicant Group**

The applicant group was originally comprised of parents and the school's current principal (who is also a Clap parent) but no teachers from the Clap School. Our Innovation Planning Committee has since added the new Principal, Justin Vernon, and two teachers from the Clap Elementary School, Estefania Stevens and Kerry Trippi. We have also formalized our partnership with UMass Boston, represented by Pat Paugh, and the Dorchester Historical Society, represented by Earl Taylor. (see letters of commitment in Appendix). This group is united and committed to providing the best possible education to the current student body of the Clap Elementary School. They see the Innovation School option as a mechanism to achieve our goal of creating a top-level elementary school that is intimately connected to its neighborhood, community and city. The parents in this group are comprised of at least a dozen individuals with many different talents and areas of expertise that demonstrate a tremendous array of knowledge and skill sets. We have parents who are professors, lawyers, former teachers, project managers etc.

The planning process utilized by the planning committee consisted of holding regular public meetings to discuss and brainstorm major areas of the plan, review data, and agree on the core components. An outside facilitator and writer was hired to support and conduct this process, and in between meetings, draft changes were made to the plan, which were then shared electronically with a parent and teacher yahoo group as well as discussed and agreed upon at each meeting. The final draft was reviewed and approved in a large group open meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

In addition to the new Principal, Justin Vernon, outside partners Patricia Paugh from UMass Boston and Earl Taylor from the Dorchester Historical Society, and the teachers Epifania Stevens and Kerry Trippi, below are examples of this applicant group's experiences and qualifications. All are current parents at the Clap School:

**Kenneth P Jervis** is the parent of two Clap students. He is a professional chef and small business operator involved in Food Policy and an advocate for the ‘Farm to Table’ supply line. Committed to the urban setting for public education and ensuring its equality for all, he will facilitate in the role as Lead Parent and act as liaison between the School Committee, District, parents and students of the Roger Clap Elementary

**Ian Gold** is the parent of a Clap second grader and prospective K-1 student. He holds a B.A. from the University of Massachusetts Boston, a J.D. degree from New York University School of Law, and is currently an Assistant Federal Public Defender. He attended Boston Public Schools, and is deeply committed to public education. He brings a background in social policy and commitment to social justice to the Innovation Planning Committee.

**Maria Cisterna Gold** is the parent of a Clap second grader and prospective K-1 student. She holds a Ph.D. from New York University, and is an assistant professor with the Hispanic Studies Department at the University of Massachusetts Boston. As member of the design team, she will serve as a liaison between the school and its institutional partner UMB. She will also oversee parent outreach to our Spanish speaking families of ELL students.

**Terri Gorman** brings professional managerial experience to the group. She is a board certified and Harvard trained pediatrician who has served for the past five years as the Medical Director for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center in Brighton. She is also an attending physician at Boston Children's Hospital.

**Gene Gorman** brings more than 15 years of communications experience to the group. In addition to an earlier career in journalism and marketing, he taught high school before deciding to pursue a career in higher education. He is currently completing his dissertation to fulfill the

requirements for a PhD in English and American studies from Boston College. Gene and Terri are parents of a Clap K-1 student.

**Karen Murphy** is a parent of a Clap first grader and a prospective K-1 student. She holds a BA from the University of NH and has been employed by Au Bon Pain for the last 12 years. She is the Franchise Development Manager for this successful company. Her work as a project manager for Au Bon Pain's Franchise Community entails managing several projects per year from design to build-out. Karen works with collaborative teams to build the cafes efficiently and cost effectively within a targeted budget. She tracks all changes that effect both cost and time.

The members of the Innovation Plan Committee knowingly and willingly submitted our individual resumes and or biographies along with the Roger Clap Innovation School Plan on March 31, 2011.

Together, we believe that through our collective skills and experience in education, management, finance, development, and law, we have the capacity and motivation to found and sustain the Clap Innovation School.

Please reference the appendix for resumes of the Innovation Planning Committee.

## **Timetable for Development and Establishment**

A new principal for the Clap Elementary Innovation School has already been selected by the Superintendent – Justin Vernon. During the spring, current Clap teachers will be requested to reapply for their positions. Vacant positions will be posted and potential candidates interviewed by the personnel sub-committee in concert with the BPS’ Department of Human Resources.

**The table below outlines approximate timelines:**

<b><u>Task</u></b>	<b><u>Start Date</u></b>	<b><u>Finish Date</u></b>
Formation of Innovation Committee	Mon 2/7/11	Fri 2/11/11
Plan Development	Mon 2/14/11	Fri 3/31/11
Innovation Plan Committee Approval	Mon. 3/28/11	
School Committee Hearing	April	
School Committee Authorization	May	
Implementation Grant	Thu 6/30/11	Thu 6/30/11

Starting in March, Roger Clap will be part of the enrollment process with the district, a school schedule and calendar will be created, and the budget will be drafted and reviewed.

Starting in April, the Principal will lead the hiring process for new staff. The hiring committee will conclude hiring if at all possible by the end of May. Summer professional development will be arranged and provided to train staff on the expectations and skills needed for opening the new Roger Clap Innovation School in late August. Staff will spend substantial time developing curriculum, instruction, and assessment and receiving professional development according to the 25 hours of professional development to be conducted in the summer provided we come to a resolution with the teachers’ union. As enrollment is finalized, parents will be inducted into the school, and will be provided with the school-home compact.

In September, the Governing Board will be created from members of the Planning Committee and other interested parties after information and presentations have been made to the larger School Parent Council, staff and community stakeholders.

### **Measurable Annual Goals**

The Roger Clap Innovation School is committed to meet the academic goals of the Acceleration Agenda established by BPS Superintendent Dr. Carol Johnson within the next two years of its inception.

- *Reading by First Grade: 80% of first graders meeting the Dibels benchmark by 2013.*
- *Reading to Learn by Grade 3: 100% passing the Third Grade MCAS and 85% Proficient.*
- *Skillful Analytical Writing in Grades 4 and 5: Fifteen (15) points higher than the baseline. (2009-2010).*
- *English Language Learners Acquire Academic Language Mastery and Fluency:*
- *90% of ELLS will move one or more ELD levels between grade spans, across all levels.*
- *Academic Growth for Students with Disabilities: 40% of students with disabilities will be in the high or very high growth categories for Mathematics and English MCAS.*

Approved by:

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Richard Stutman, President, BTU

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Carol R. Johnson, Superintendent

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Justin Vernon, Principal