



DESE Review Update

Superintendent Dr. Brenda Cassellius

Timeline for 2020 MOU/Covid-19

Fall 2019

- DESE conducted initial district review
-

March 13, 2020

- BPS enters into MOU with DESE with specific focus areas
-

March 17, 2020

- BPS moves all schools to remote learning in response to the pandemic
-

**March 2020 -
June 2021**

- BPS responds to COVID-19 and implements remote/hybrid learning:
 - **Food:** More than 7 Million meals to students and families
 - **Technology:**
 - Hand-delivered 20,000 Chromebooks, 7000 hotspots, 1000 Comcast vouchers.
 - 6000 new teacher laptops, video cameras in every classroom, 40,000 additional Chromebooks for hybrid learning
 - **Instructional supports:**
 - Clear expectations for instructional support, blended learning PD to all teachers, grade and subject level lesson plans
 - Cloud based learning supports including Lexia, ST Math, Nearpod and Imagine Learning
 - **Health and safety supports:** Investment in school based Infrastructure, air filters
-

Priority Areas in the 2020 MOU

BPS priority initiatives:

- Teaching and learning in Transformation School
- Equitable access to student support through MassCore and a reduction in chronic absenteeism
- Supporting students with disabilities by increasing number students in least restrictive environment and reducing the disproportionate placement of students of color in substantially separate programs
- Improve the student transportation system
- **Improve** interpretation and translation services and develop and launch a plan to improve supports for English Learners

DESE priority initiatives:

- Teaching and learning: Prepare a cohort of 15 BPS schools for entrance into DESE's Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning
- Equitable access to student supports by brokering partnerships for schools that do not have strong partners
- Educator diversity and effectiveness: Help BPS recruit and retain a diverse and effective educator workforce
- Facilities: Assist with upgrading essential facilities such as student bathrooms
- Develop an earned autonomy model for BPS schools.

Strategic Initiatives and Responses

Quality Guarantee

1. **Academics:** High quality ethnically and culturally responsive curriculum, instruction and career pathways
2. **Enrichment:** Access to arts, sports, student government, and safe places to go before and after school
3. **Facilities:** Modern buildings with access to science labs, technology, libraries, gymnasiums, and performance, supportive and green spaces
4. **Student & Family Supports:** Resources for families so our students, families, and communities can thrive

Equity-Centered Policy Development

- Removing unfair barriers and shifting the approach to [attendance](#) and [grade level retention](#),
- [MassCore college and career ready graduation standards](#),
- [Exam Schools](#) admissions ,
- Seal of Biliteracy
- [Student privacy and data sharing policy](#)
- Updating the [code of conduct](#),
- New grading practices
- Accountability practices to hire a [diverse workforce](#).

Evidence of Impact of Strategies

- **BPS is outperforming most other urban districts across the Commonwealth**
- **BPS is far outperforming its urban peers on NAEP**
- **There is evidence of successful movement and implementation of literacy practice consistent with the Science of Reading and Mass Literacy Guidance.**
 - High-quality standards-aligned and culturally-sustaining curriculum materials
 - Strong tier 1 phonics grade K-2 and tier 2 and 3 across K-12
 - Daily work with complex, enabling, and culturally affirming and relevant text including reading, writing and speaking from grade level materials across every class
 - Intentional knowledge and language building across all academic disciplines
 - Job-embedded professional development and coaching
 - Investments in tier 2 and tier 3 resources

Rationale for the 2022 Review



MA DESE Commissioner articulated two reasons for the 2nd BPS review:

1. The BESE requested an update from the Commissioner about the status of BPS and the progress the district has made under the MOU. The Commissioner felt he needed a review to support his team's preparation and analysis for that update.
1. The review would provide an instructive roadmap for an incoming Superintendent.

Focus of the Review



Review of progress in six standards:

1. Leadership and Governance
2. Curriculum and Instruction
3. Student Support
4. Data and Assessment
5. Human Resources and Professional Development
6. Finance and Asset Management

DESE submitted a set of targeted Questions by standard to help focus the review which can be found [here](#).

Leadership and Governance:

- District Strategic Plan
- Advancement of instructional priorities, use of the district's Racial Equity Planning Tool, and increased accessibility for families and community members.

Curriculum and Instruction:

- Significant investments to strengthen core instruction
- Adoption of MassCore

Student Support:

- Enhanced English learner supports and outcomes through effective stakeholder engagement and investments in professional development, personnel, and infrastructure.

Human Resources and Professional Development:

- Strong pipeline, recruitment, and retention programs to increase the diversity of the educator and school leader workforce
- Robust menu of professional development offerings aligned to the district's Equitable Literacy focus

Assessment:

- Use of balanced assessment system
- Robust data inquiry coaching

Financial and Asset Management:

- Leveraging city capital funds, grants, and other one-time funds to support targeted school and student needs
- The "Quality Guarantee" framework
- Process and Engagement for ESSER funds

Positive Findings



Areas Identified for Growth



Leadership and Governance:

- Special education and transportation
- Transformation schools
- Leadership instability at the school committee, superintendent, and department level
- District-wide system for tracking strategic plan

Curriculum and Instruction:

- Variation in school-level implementation and lack of system to monitor quality of implementation
- Instructional quality and equitable access to advanced coursework at high schools
- Classroom practices were inconsistent in a way that did not benefit all students

Student Support:

- Special education in systemic disarray, lacking consistent policies and procedures and inconsistent learning opportunities in the least restrictive environment for all SWD
- Not all English learners receiving appropriate ESL instruction: no comprehensive ESL curriculum or clear instructional expectations, no systems to support and monitor the quality of EL instruction at the school level.
- School choice and assignment system does not provide equal access to high-quality schools for all students
- System for managing, responding to, and resolving complaints is not responsive to parent and guardian concerns

Areas Identified for Growth



Human Resources and Professional Development:

- Use of the educator evaluation system does not accomplish its essential goals
- Lack of mechanism to ensure that all educators receive high-quality professional development

Assessment:

- Lacks the necessary systems and internal controls at the central office and school levels to ensure accurate data reporting on key indicators, impacting BPS graduation and dropout rates

Financial and Asset Management:

- On-time bus arrival rates and uncovered buses remain unacceptable with a disproportionate impact on students with disabilities.
- Lacks a comprehensive long-term master facilities plan and a coherent preventive/deferred maintenance plan.

BPS Documents Shared with DESE

[BPS Opening Reflection to Review](#)

[BPS Post Review Reflection](#)

[DESE Draft Review](#)

[BPS Cover Letter outlining proposed edits](#)

[Final DESE Follow-Up Report](#)

Where do we see the report differently?

We agree that BPS has significant work to do. We also agree on the areas where the most dramatic improvement is necessary:

- Special Education
- Multilingual Learners
- Transportation
- Facilities

Next Steps

- The City of Boston and the MADESE are in discussions about next steps and will share an update in about one week.

Areas Identified for Immediate Improvement

by Commissioner Riley at the BESE Board Meeting May 24th

Student Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Improve the district's system for parental complaints● Respond in a timely manner to parent and guardian concerns● Conduct an independent safety audit
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Improve transportation on-time arrival rates● Address uncovered bus routes
Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Onboard high-quality leadership for special education● Improve special education policies and procedures● Reduce disproportionality of black and brown students in substantially separate programs
English Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Develop a system to ensure all English Learners received their federally-required services● Meet the terms of the U.S. Department of Justice successor agreement
Data Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Embed an independent data auditor at the BPS central office● Establish a DESE-appointed data advisory board
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Finalize a comprehensive master facilities plan● Continue bathroom renovations