

# THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON



## Boston Public Schools Superintendent’s Performance Evaluation Dr. Brenda Cassellius, School Year 2019-2020

<b>Evaluator’s Name</b>	Jeri Robinson
<b>Date of Completion:</b>	July 23, 2020

<b>RATINGS</b>	<b>DEFINITIONS</b>
<b>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE (Exemplary)</b>	Performance far exceeded expectations due to exceptionally high quality of work performed in all essential areas of responsibility, resulting in an overall quality of work that was superior; and either 1) included the completion of a major goal or project, or 2) made an exceptional or unique contribution in support of unit, department, or district objectives. This rating is achievable by any employee though given infrequently.
<b>EFFECTIVE (Proficient)</b>	Performance consistently exceeded expectations in all essential areas of responsibility, and the quality of work overall was excellent. Annual goals were met.
<b>DEVELOPING (Proficient)</b>	Performance consistently met expectations in all essential areas of responsibility, at times possibly exceeding expectations, and the quality of work overall was very good. The most critical annual goals were met.
<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE (Needs Improvement)</b>	Performance did not consistently meet expectations – performance failed to meet expectations in one or more essential areas of responsibility, and/or one or more of the most critical goals were not met. A professional development plan to improve performance must be attached, including timelines, and monitored to measure progress.
<b>INEFFECTIVE (Unsatisfactory)</b>	Performance was consistently below expectations in most essential areas of responsibility, and/or reasonable progress toward critical goals was not made. Significant improvement is needed in one or more important areas. A plan to correct performance, including timelines, must be outlined and monitored to measure progress.

**UNDERSTANDS ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS SUPERINTENDENT**

**Corresponds to DESE Standard IV: Professional Culture**

- Demonstrates discretion and tact in their leadership
- Understands the political and ethical context to position
- Interacts effectively with the School Committee, City Council, and State on policy.
- Is able to effectively articulate the position of, and be a proxy for, the School Committee
- Interacts with the public and external stakeholders with respect
- Builds trusting relationships with their staff
- Acts with integrity

	<b>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>DEVELOPING</b>
	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>INEFFECTIVE</b>

**COMMENTS:**

I have been both encouraged and impressed by Dr. Cassius's Commitment to get to know Both the City of Boston and its many constituencies as well as all of its 125 schools spread over 135 campuses in the very earliest days of her tenure. Her willingness to listen and learn with and from many and all voices, from students, janitors, bus drivers , parents, teachers, school leaders, school committee members, civic and corporate leaders, community activist, clergy, etc, clearly indicated that all perspectives were to be taken seriously, and the concerns of those voices were incorporated into her thinking and decisions as both crafted the 5 year strategic plan and responded to the DESE MOU.

This has been quite a first year for Dr. Casselius there has been no normal work week. No time to ease into the work of the district. Creating and adjusting the strategic plan as a result of the DESE review, as well as moving forward with those plans, just as Covid pandemic caused schools to be closed was all quite unimaginable, but it happened. Dr. Casellius’s ability to rally the troops, both internal as well as across the city, was clearly the result in part to her earlier time spent getting to know the city during her 100 days tour. She has worked well with the Mayor and other elected officials to garner needed support for BPS- particularly notable the infusion of 100 million new dollars over a 3 year period, particularly now when many districts are facing cuts. I believe she is laser focused on making sure her advocacy results in positive changes for Boston students. She is not afraid

While most of her time during this year has been spent getting to know and gaining trust with both the community and parents, it will be critical to spend a year working internally to build trust, improve communication and adjust time-lines to reflect the new reality. Much needs to be done, but will only be successful if all voices are heard and respected

**COMMITMENT TO ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION**

**Corresponds to DESE Indicator I-E: Data-Informed Decision-Making, and Indicator IV-A: Commitment to High Standards**

- Understands the educational landscape of the Boston Public Schools and can speak to strengths, challenges, and successes
- Understands education policy direction of the Boston School Committee and can effectively articulate them to the public
- Is committed to improving education for all students in the Boston Public Schools, especially those in historically marginalized populations
- Recognizes the importance and appropriate role of school-level autonomy and shared responsibility between schools and central office departments
- Demonstrates a sharp focus on data in the continuous improvement of student performance
- Is committed to supporting teachers and schools to share best practice and research to improve academic achievement

	<b>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>DEVELOPING</b>
	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>INEFFECTIVE</b>

**COMMENTS:**

Dr. Casselius, with the support of her team has quickly assessed both the strengths and weaknesses of BPS schools. The many autonomies afforded many of our schools has often resulted in a system of confusion and inequities- especially for our highly mobile population of families. Dr. Casselius has begun the steps of creating an aligned curriculum for preK-12 literacy is a great first step. With the ultimate goal of adopting Mass Core for graduation-much needs to be done at every grade level , in every subject, with every teacher in every school for this to happen. I look forward to seeing the roll out of the literacy curriculum, and what will follow for math, science, social studies, etc. Dr. Casselius and her team are to be commended on their response to Covid 19. Through her leadership and support of many district and school leaders, the district quickly moved to on-line learning and put in place as many supports as possible for all students Although many things could not be in place immediately. The team worked tirelessly to provide families with many needs in addition to educational support and resources. The weekly community equity roundtable, kept partners and other advocates informed about districts efforts to support families and educate children during these trying times. This roundtable has evolved from a weekly update and feedback session to a robust partnership of district and community advocates and partners, working more closely together to solve problems and create new direction together. I hope this roundtable becomes a permanent part of the district's communication and partnership plans. The roll out of school-based equity round tables, and student support teams should become permanent.

**PRODUCTIVITY, ORGANIZING AND PLANNING**

**Corresponds to DESE Standard II: Management and Operations**

- Understands related position functions and performs daily activities without supervision
- Establishes effective and challenging task priorities
- Schedules time with staff effectively and resolves conflicts
- Manages calendar request in a timely manner
- Meets deadlines, demonstrates effective time use and simultaneous handling of several assignments
- Appropriately organizes work so others can find work in progress and/or necessary files and information, when necessary
- Ensures all contact whether by telephone, email, or mail with colleagues, families, and students is positive and productive in nature - constructive criticism followed by problem-solving suggestions
- Responds promptly, within 24 hours, to all internal and external requests whenever possible
- Shows initiative and demonstrates learning and expanding knowledge to further enhance performance

	<b>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>DEVELOPING</b>
	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>INEFFECTIVE</b>

**COMMENTS:**

Dr. Casselius is laser focused on moving agendas and meeting deadlines. She is right to see the urgency in many issues affecting the district. Her enthusiasm and urgency must be shared and understood by all. Boston’s history of autonomous schools makes change difficult. Dr. Casselius needs to continue to develop a strong leadership team to whom she can honestly delegate many of the critical issues that simultaneously must be dealt with. Moving forward, Dr. Casselius needs to be available to work internally, directly with her most senior leaders. External requests for interviews are necessary, but overwhelming. Perhaps a bi-weekly press conference// update could be scheduled for all reporters, vs, so many individual requests. In a world of ZOOM any number of folks could dial-in to a scheduled update, allowing Dr. Casselius more time to work internally.

**FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BUDGETARY CONTROLS**

**Corresponds to DESE Indicator II-E: Fiscal Systems**

- Uses resources effectively and conservatively and is a good steward of resources
- Forecasts accurately and maintains budgetary projections consistently
- Controls operating costs effectively, optimizing human and other capital
- Is resourceful in securing funding to accomplish goals and ensure team has capacity to follow through

	<b>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>DEVELOPING</b>
	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>INEFFECTIVE</b>

**COMMENTS:**

As stated in her self-evaluation, her work both pre and during COvid, have resulted in many positive outcomes for the district. It is too early to tell what will change as a result of our current fiscal situation. COVID changes are costly, and earlier plans may be altered or cancelled. Dr. Cassellius has a clear focus and understanding of the budget and finances of BPS and I am certain, will continue to make the best informed decisions moving forward.

**JUDGMENT/DECISION MAKING**

**Corresponds to DESE Indicator II-D: Law, Ethics, and Policies**

- Identifies and evaluates issues, reaches sound decisions and generates alternatives
- Takes into account the effects/impacts of decisions
- Understands the political nature of the position and takes care to see all sides
- Seeks prior advice and approval if needed before taking action
- Demonstrates well-balanced thinking between taking “risks” and practical consideration

	<b>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>DEVELOPING</b>
	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>INEFFECTIVE</b>

**COMMENTS:**

In a very short period of time, Dr. Cassellius has had to meet with and understand the needs and expectations of an extremely large and diverse group of community stakeholders, elected officials, school committee members, etc.

Dr. Cassellius clearly understands the political nature and the enormity of her job. She has inherited a land-mine of controversial issues and is doing a masterful job of listening to and advocating for the many conflicting goals and positions.

She has a good handle on the issues, the players and the conflicts. Moving forward, I hope she will work more closely with school committee members during the development of new initiatives, etc. This is suggested in the spirit of being supportive, and offering another or broader perspective vs micro managing.

**COLLABORATION/TEAMWORK**

**Corresponds to DESE Standard III: Family and Community Engagement and Indicator IV-E: Shared Vision**

- Is a good team player - demonstrates positive, motivated behavior, provides support, accepts guidance, and keeps an open door
- Keeps others informed of the status of initiatives, including the Strategic Plan, on a consistent basis
- Uses and values the talents of other staff and/or team members
- Provides support and feedback to team members
- Participates fully and collaborates with internal and external stakeholders
- Modifies individual objectives and desires to support the efforts of the team
- Demonstrates openness to new ideas and suggestions
- Shares responsibility for outcomes and workload equity
- Is dependable and can be counted on

	<b>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE</b>
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	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>INEFFECTIVE</b>

**COMMENTS:**

As I stated earlier, the events and accomplishments of this year felt like 5. Dr. Cassellius worked herself and her team extremely hard to deal with the many time-sensitive and conflicting demands of the district, DESE, Covid, to deal with both immediate and long term goals simultaneously. Covid's demands often delayed the sharing of critical presentations regarding changes in the district. I trust Dr. Cassellius' instincts to make the changes that are needed. There needs to be a better mechanism to share those facts with all school committee members, not just the co-chairs. Creating the new structure of open office hours for all members will work to remedy this situation. Once school is reopened, it will be helpful to be brought up to date on the new academic structure as it is being implemented.

Dr. Cassellius and her team's plate was full before Covid hit. In retrospect, I wish there had been an opportunity for the School Committee to call a timeout and work with the district to pause some of their on-going work or create new priorities so that folks weren't so overwhelmed.

**FOCUS ON EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE**

**Corresponds to DESE Indicators I-D: Evaluation; II-D: Law, Ethics, and Policies; III-C: Communication; and IV-A: Commitment to High Standards**

- Supports and actively builds a culture of excellence and equity
- Engages diverse stakeholders in decision making
- Provides effective supervision to direct reports through clear expectations, appropriate levels of feedback and support, and accountability for results.
- Ensures that all contact whether by telephone, email, or mail with colleagues, families, and students is positive and productive in nature - constructive criticism followed by problem-solving suggestions

	<b>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>DEVELOPING</b>
	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>INEFFECTIVE</b>

**COMMENTS:**

I would like to better understand the structure and goals of the new Strategy and Equity Office, as it transitions from the leadership of Dr. Rose. I have participated in the weekly Equity Roundtable and have been quite impressed with its evolution from a weekly district update and report meeting to a full collaborative with community members co-leading and presenting on issues. This has been a great format for many different voices to be heard and connected in ways not done in the past. That school based equity roundtables are also being developed is key. Now it is possible for more parents, teachers

and community partners to be part of the decision making progress in their schools. Post -pandemic,, I hope these groups will remain on-line to allow for a larger and more diverse group of participants.

**COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**

**Corresponds to DESE Indicator IV-C: Communications**

- Conveys clear and concise communications, listens well and responds appropriately
- Is tactful, candid, and consistent in words and actions
- Comprehends the importance of interacting positively with stakeholders
- Analyzes complaints and takes steps to address issues immediately
- Demonstrates flexibility with unavoidable tension and pressure
- Demonstrates respect at all times

	<b>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>DEVELOPING</b>
	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>
	<b>INEFFECTIVE</b>

**COMMENTS:**

Grace under fire, is the best way to describe Dr. Cassellius. Her public manner is always clear, inviting and collaborative. I have appreciated her openness to work with BSAC, her Youth Cabinet and the myriad of community partners. Her weekly”Check-in” provides an inspirational reflection for the week ahead. She has worked hard to quickly get to know the greater community and to become a major player.

Her response to the feedback she recently received from school leaders confirms her willingness to grow and reflect on the job. She will need to be able to allow others to respond to the many external requests, while she has time to work more closely with her most senior district leaders.



**GOAL PROGRESS (SEE EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PLAN, ATTACHED)**

**Ratings: Exceeded, Met, Significant Progress, Some Progress, Did Not Meet**

Goal #	Goal Rating	Comments
1	Met	Created and delivered 5-year strategic plan
2	Met	Secured \$100M in new budget from the city
3	Met	Partnered with DESE on District accountability review

**OVERALL RATING (Consider progress toward goals and performance categories)**

	<b>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE (Exemplary)</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE (Proficient)</b>
	<b>DEVELOPING (Proficient)</b>
	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE (Needs Improvement)</b>
	<b>INEFFECTIVE (Unsatisfactory)</b>

**ED EVAL ONLY: STANDARDS RATINGS**

**(Place an 'X' in the appropriate rating box for each standard)**

E	P	NI	U	
X				<b>Standard I: Instructional Leadership</b>
X				<b>Standard II: Management and Operations</b>
X				<b>Standard III: Family and Community Engagement</b>
X				<b>Standard IV: Professional Culture</b>

## Employee Development Plan (EDP)

Identify and describe 2-3 areas of strength and 2-3 areas for continued growth based on the categories above, as well as how you arrived at these areas.

Areas of strength	Areas for continued growth

Create 2-3 goals from the competencies evaluated in the process.

Develop SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented, and Time-bound.

Goal #	Goal	Measure of Success