



## Equity Impact Statement for School Committee Proposals and Presentations

**Title:** SY 2021-22 Attendance Policy Revisions

**Date:** March 31, 2021

Was the [Racial Equity Planning Tool](#) used?  Yes  No

If yes, insert date(s) of REPT meetings and link to completed REPT here: Numerous meetings from Sept. 2019 to March 2021; [completed REPT here](#)

Did a member of the Division of Equity, Strategy and Opportunity Gaps review this statement?  Yes  No

BPS Racial Equity Planning Tool Sections	Summary/Rationale
<p><b>1. Proposal/Presentation &amp; Impact</b> <i>What are the proposal's/effort's desired outcomes, including in eliminating disparities? Who led this work/planning, and do they reflect BPS students' and families' group identities (key groups include individuals who are Black, Latinx, Asian, indigenous, immigrant, multilingual, and have Special Education experience)?</i></p>	<p>This proposal will overhaul the district attendance policy to ensure equitable and antiracist attendance practices. The district's Attendance Advisory Committee has led the two-year revision process, incorporating an extensive stakeholder engagement and data analysis. The revised attendance policy will better align with the antiracist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices BPS strives to uphold. Many of the punitive elements of the former policy disproportionately impacted Black and Latinx students, as well as English learners and those in Special Education.</p>
<p><b>2. Alignment with the Strategic Plan</b> <i>How does the proposal/effort align with the district's strategic plan?</i></p>	<p>The new policy aligns with these commitments in the strategic plan: 2.6 Reduce chronic absenteeism by ensuring that students are welcomed into joyful and engaging classrooms and where their unique needs can be met. 2.7 Make every school a safe space for every BPS student, offering the support and protection needed to learn, grow, and thrive.</p>
<p><b>3. Analysis of Data</b> <i>What data was analyzed? Was it disaggregated by race and other key groups? What did it show regarding disparities?</i></p>	<p>Current and historical data regarding students experiencing chronic absenteeism, receiving no credit grades, and who are on-track/off-track and/or on-age/off-age for graduation was disaggregated by race and membership in other historically marginalized groups. The analysis demonstrated higher chronic absenteeism across historically marginalized populations, including Black and Latinx students, as well as the disparate impact of punitive policies.</p>
<p><b>4. Stakeholder Engagement</b> <i>Who was engaged (quantity, key groups, and roles) and how, and what did that yield? What did students/families most impacted by this proposal/effort say?</i></p>	<p>The Attendance Advisory Committee's data findings were cross-referenced with qualitative data from key stakeholder groups, including students' voices as members of the Advisory Committee, and through the Youth Attendance Forum at the Bolling Building in September 2019. In addition, the Citywide Parent Council provided feedback and recommendations. The Youth Transition Task Force, a group convened monthly by the Boston Private Industry Council and composed of key community stakeholders, also offered feedback throughout the revision process. In addition, the Office of Opportunity Gaps partnered with us, providing expertise and findings from the field, as well as convening policy review groups. District leadership, legal staff, and Suffolk County Juvenile Court staff also contributed to identifying opportunities to shift the policy away from punitive elements, while aligning with broader grading, discipline, and enrollment practices.</p> <p>Consistently, students and families voiced concerns about the</p>

	<p>punitive aspects of the existing district attendance policy and described experiences they've had at the school level as the policy is implemented.</p>
<p><b>5. Racial Equity Strategies</b>  <i>How does this proposal/effort mitigate disparities and increase racial and other equity? What are possible unintended consequences? What complementary strategies will further advance equity?</i></p>	<p>This proposal will eliminate the provisions in the attendance policy that have perpetuated racial and other inequities, while using a more culturally and linguistically affirming lens to absenteeism prevention and intervention activities.</p> <p>To ensure the new policy is implemented with fidelity, there must be clear and consistent messaging to students, families, and staff, as well as widespread adoption of multi-tiered prevention and intervention practices by all schools. In addition, the policy shift requires ending the reliance on punitive “threats” to compel students to go to school.</p> <p>Without schools’ intentional focus on outreach to and engagement of all students, particularly those with high absenteeism, some students and families may not feel they “need” to be in school. Despite this risk, the policy changes are aligned with the district’s expectations around attendance outreach, prevention, and intervention, as well as the shift to more contemporary tracking systems, such as the Panorama student success platform.</p>
<p><b>6 Budget &amp; Implementation</b>  <i>What are the budget impacts? How will implementation ensure all objectives, particularly equity-related objectives, are met? What are the group identities of the implementation team, and will they bring an equity lens?</i></p>	<p>Minimal initial budgetary impact. The previous reorganization of the Supervisors of Attendance (SOAs) to focus on field activities, including direct school, student, and family support, as well as the district’s expansion of social workers and family liaisons, will enable implementation and consultative support. However, to achieve the district-wide shift away from punitive attendance practices, as intended by revising the policy, it will require clear communication to school leaders and staff from Executive Cabinet members.</p>
<p><b>7. Accountability &amp; Communication</b>  <i>How will impacts be assessed, documented and communicated to stakeholders? Who will be responsible?</i></p>	<p>Ongoing updates and monitoring of progress using quantitative and qualitative data with the Attendance Advisory Committee, Citywide Parent Council, and Youth Transitions Task Force.</p> <p>Our focus has been the implementation of a multi-modal approach to community engagement. Varied and consistent communication practices; that are culturally and linguistically sustaining, as well as establishing multiple forums for the community to engage in different ways, and proactively engaging key community stakeholders into planning committees, work groups, and task forces, has been essential to our ongoing districtwide attendance strategy.</p>