

# Student Opportunity Plan: FY 2021-2023

*Boston Public Schools*

## **Commitment 1: Focusing on Student Subgroups**

Which student subgroups will require focused support to ensure all students achieve at high levels in school and are successfully prepared for life?

The Boston Public Schools (BPS) is the largest and most diverse school district in Massachusetts. We educate roughly 53,000 students in 125 schools which represents 70% of the school-age children who live in Boston. Nearly one in every two students speaks a language other than English at home, and our students come from 139 different countries. Our student population is 42.5% Latinx, 33% Black, 14% White, 9% Asian, 1.5% Other/Multiracial, 32% English learners, 21% with disabilities, 7% English learners with disabilities, and 72% are economically disadvantaged.

Data analyses of multiple metrics by subgroups show the least equitable outcomes among Blacks, Latinx and students with disabilities:

- By race, Black students in grades K2-12 experienced the largest increase for out-of-school suspension rates, going from 3.3% in SY17-18 to 5.3% in SY19-20.
- Students with disabilities experience the highest rate of out-of-school suspension. The OSS rate for students with disabilities in grades K2-12 increased from 4.8% in SY17-18 to 6.5% in SY18-19.
- In SY18-19, the Average Scaled Scores in ELA for Latinx and Black students in grades 3-8 were 19.7 and 20.9 points lower than white students.
- In SY18-19, the Average Scaled Score in ELA for Economically Disadvantaged students in grades 3-8 was 14.8 points lower than Non-Economically Disadvantaged students.
- In SY18-19, the Average Scaled Score in ELA for students with a disability in grades 3-8 was 14.3 points lower than all students.
- 2019 ELA Performance Levels in grade 10, 34% of Black and 34% of Latinx students met or exceeded expectations versus 76% for White and 74% for Asian students.
- In SY18-19, the Average Scaled Scores in Math for Latinx and Black students in grades 3-8 were 20.7 and 22.5 points lower than white students.
- In SY18-19, the Average Scaled Score in Math for Economically Disadvantaged students in grades 3-8 was 15.2 points lower than Non-Economically Disadvantaged students.
- In SY18-19, the Average Scaled Score in Math for students with a disability in grades 3-8 was 14 points lower than all students.
- 2019 Math Performance Levels in grade 10, 35% of Black and 34% of Latinx students met or exceeded expectations versus 79% for White and 85% for Asian students.
- 2019 Advanced Coursework Completion – 51% of Black and 55% of Latinx students completed advanced coursework versus 81% of White and 86% of Asian students.

Black students and students with a special education designation are suspended out of school at rates significantly higher than other student groups. In reviewing progress by subgroups on MCAS over the past 3 years, the ELA and math average scaled score for Latinx and Black students has improved slightly. The same holds true for economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English language learners. By contrast, our White and Asian students saw greater gains on these metrics thus widening the gap in achievement.

Overall completion of the MassCore graduation requirement has steadily increased from 2016 to 2018 for all students. Although the rate fluctuated in 2017 for White and Asian students, a substantial gap in completion rate exists between Black and Latinx students. In 2018, fewer than a third of all Black and Latinx students completed the MassCore program of study, while half of all White and Asian students completed the program of study.

Data also show that BPS has room to grow in order to develop and sustain a diverse teacher workforce that represents the students we serve.

- Teacher diversity statistics are as follows: 21% Black, 10% Latinx, 6% Asian, 62% White, <1% Other.
- Positively, BPS has sustained and slightly grown its educator workforce diversity over the last 6 years going from 37.4% total educators of color in 2014 to 38.6% in 2019. Yet, even with this progress, teacher demographics do not represent the student population.

Among principals, diverse representation is also lacking.

- At the close of SY17-18, 16 school leaders left BPS. Roughly half were leaders of color, 43% were Black, 6% were Latinx, and less than 2% were Asian.
- At the close of SY18-19, 15 school leaders left BPS. Two-thirds were leaders of color, 47% were Black and 20% were Latinx.
- In summer 2019, BPS had 22 school leader vacancies due to resignations, retirements, promotions, and transfer. Seventy-five percent of the vacancies were filled by leaders of color.
- In SY19-20, there are 128 school leaders of which about half are leaders of color, 40% are Black and 9% Latinx.

After reviewing staffing data, we summarize the following conclusion:

- 1) BPS must develop a more targeted and strategic approach toward cultivating, recruiting, and retaining racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistically diverse school leaders.
- 2) BPS must develop “grow your own” programs, recruit within communities of color, and provide retention programs to attract and maintain educators of color. Although BPS outpaces other large cities in the US with 38% of its teachers being people of color versus a 28% national average, there is more we can do to hire and retain a workforce more representative of our student population.

After reviewing student data, we summarize the following conclusions:

- 1) BPS must take steps to reduce subgroup performance disparities, as the performance of English learners and students diagnosed with a disability is persistently lower across all grades and subgroups, especially Black and Latinx students. Further, disparities in student subgroup performance are significant and widening in some instances despite slight increases by Black and Latinx students. BPS must provide opportunities for all students to enroll in advanced coursework and additional support to complete it--as there are significantly less opportunities to enroll in advanced coursework in open enrollment high schools which comprise disproportionately of students of color, and completion of advanced coursework is significantly lower among Black and Latinx students.
- 2) BPS must make MassCore a graduation requirement for all schools, as completion of MassCore graduation requirements is significantly lower for Black and Latinx students.

## **Commitment 2: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Close Gaps**

What evidence-based programs will your district adopt, deepen, or continue to best support the closure of achievement and opportunity gaps? What resources will you allocate to these programs?

The Student Opportunity Act offers an opportunity for BPS to commit to additional evidence-based programs to close opportunity and achievement gaps among our student groups and further diversify our educator workforce. DESE has recommended that BPS allocate a minimum of \$1.8 million in Year 1 (FY21) incremental Chapter 70 funds for evidence-based programs.

BPS intends to use its Student Opportunity Act funds to deepen and/or deepen three new programs, and intend to make multi-year, sustained commitments to these priority areas:

1. Select and implement with fidelity Inclusionary and Co-Teaching models that enable English learners and students identified with a learning disability to have their learning needs met in the least restrictive classroom setting.
2. Expand existing programs and/or implement new advanced coursework offerings at all open enrollment high schools focused primarily on students under-represented in post-secondary education
3. Diversify the educator/administrator workforce through recruitment and retention

**Evidence-based Program #1:** Select Inclusionary and Co-Teaching models and professionally develop teachers and school leaders to implement with fidelity

Students impacted: Over the course of three years, over 10,000 English learners and students with disabilities will experience a service delivery model that ensures they can access the general curriculum in the least restrictive environment

Today's classrooms have students with a diverse range of abilities and needs that bring unique challenges to teaching in a standards-based learning environment. BPS will implement models of instructional delivery that allow teachers to leverage their collective strengths and expertise to design rigorous learning experiences tailored to meet the unique needs of all students. We must strengthen how we differentiate and deliver instruction with assurances that all students have full access to the grade-level expectations of the general curriculum. The world is inclusive, so we must provide students an inclusive education that prepares them for success within the broader community.

By summer 2020, BPS will select inclusive service delivery models that enable English learners and students identified with a learning disability to have their learning needs met in the least restrictive classroom setting. We will implement common inclusionary and co-teaching models district-wide to maintain consistent programming across schools.

To support initial program development, we will provide professional development for participating teachers and all stakeholders prior to the implementation of the program. Our professional development strategy will begin with a focus on our Suitable Professional Capacity Pool of educators. These educators do not have specific school assignments and will be deployed immediately to help implement our district-wide inclusionary and co-teaching models. We will implement coaching for implementation support to help teachers integrate their professional learning into their daily instructional practices.

We will also professionally develop school leaders so they have a strong understanding of the district's inclusionary and co-teaching models as they will be responsible for monitoring day-to-day implementation, address program challenges, and evaluate teachers. School leaders will receive training regarding best practices for creating master schedules that support the district's inclusionary and co-teaching models and evaluation of effective classroom implementation. Professional development for administrators will include best practice for conducting walkthroughs and formal appraisals. We will

support administrators in the development of an understanding of what good co-teaching looks like (not “one model,” but what structures should be in place) in order to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the program in the classroom. We will develop a remediation plan for co-teaching when authentic appraisal determines that one or both professionals are struggling with implementation. As with any new program, we expect full implementation of a mature district-wide inclusionary and co-teaching program to take three to five years.

**Evidence-based Program #2:** Support expansion and/or implementation of the International Baccalaureate Programmes and/or Advanced Placement at all open enrollment high schools

Students impacted: This effort will launch with a planning year for some and expansion for others in SY20-21. By year 3, we expect expansion and implementation to impact over 9,000 students in grades 7-12.

In close partnership with our open enrollment high schools, BPS will expand and/or implement high quality advanced coursework programming. Serving students who have been historically under-represented in post-secondary education will be a primary focus of this effort. Our advanced coursework programs will align to the MassCore graduation requirement.

We will hire two key staff members who will serve as project managers. These positions will initially have wide-ranging responsibilities, from building and maintaining a very strong and strategic relationships with high school leaders, leading program authorization processes, coordinating professional development, supporting master schedule design, organizing student supports, and monitoring of student outcomes.

In summer 2020, we will have teachers participate in Pre-AP and AP Workshops designed to help teachers and coordinators develop and deepen their programs to prepare students for the rigors of college. The workshops will provide our educators the opportunity to explore course frameworks, unpack exams, and dig into AP resources that will help them plan and focus instruction. Based on individual school and staff needs, some educators will participate in AP Summer Institutes which offer intensive professional development. Participants engage in 30 or more hours of content-rich training designed to strengthen how they teach their AP courses.

In SY21-22, most comprehensive high schools will begin serving grades 7-12. To support the transition of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades into our high school model, we will implement the Pre-AP program at schools where AP is offered. Implementation of Pre-AP will help ensure 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students experience grade-level appropriate instruction through focused course frameworks, instructional resources, and learning checkpoints. Students and teachers will be afforded the space and time for deep engagement with content. The Pre-AP experience will help ensure every student has access to a high-quality education that prepares them to successfully engage in advanced coursework in grades 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> and post-secondary education.

In SY20-21, some high schools will begin the consideration phase to decide if they want to explore the authorization process to become a Candidate school on the path toward becoming an International Baccalaureate World School. Schools that choose the IB Programme will implement the Middle Years, Diploma, and Career Related programmes.

The Middle Years Programme will address needs of students academically, socially, emotional and physical well-being while providing opportunities to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to further their education, career exploration, and lifelong learning. Furthermore, the program will aim to help students develop their personal understanding, emerging sense of self, and responsibility in their

community. The Diploma Programme, which is academically challenging and balanced, will prepare students for college, career, and life readiness as students gain access and exposure to intellectual, social, emotional and physical well-being in order to become full participants in a global society. The Career Related Programme will widen participation of already existing and future career pathways. The implementation of this programme will be aligned with students' career interests in order to provide access and a foundation to support personal career interest, as well as ensuring preparedness for success in the workforce.

To become a Candidate school, the head of school will participate in an IB workshop to become familiar with IB's programmes, philosophy, and authorization process. The school leader will also identify a coordinator of the programme, elicit community support, identify needed resources, and ensure the programme aligns with local and state requirements. The school leader will also arrange for educators to attend professional development workshops to ensure they have the expertise to deliver the IB's programmes. After authorization is granted, continuous professional development will be required to ensure the integrity of the IB educational frameworks.

**Evidence-based Program #3:** Increase participation in affinity group initiatives, expand Grow Your Own programming, and create recruitment pipelines at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Students impacted: Efforts to diversify our educator/administrator workforce have the potential to impact all of the 53,000+ students we serve.

As a district, we know systemic racism forms a barrier to onboarding teachers of color at every phase of the process, from college enrollment, to selection bias, to passage rates in our standardized teacher certification tests. Our goal as a district is to counteract the impacts of racism by applying aggressive, innovative interventions at every stage. Increasing diversity to reflect the population of students in our classrooms is a key goal.

Toward this end, we know we must work more strategically and intentionally to address the institutional practices and traditions that have implicitly and sometimes explicitly marginalized educators of color. There is a growing body of research that suggests all students benefit in many ways from having a teacher and/or administrator of the same race or ethnicity. With a growing body of research showing the positive impact of having a same-race teacher on students' long-run educational outcomes, we must initiate new strategies and strengthen existing strategies that have proven effective or promising. To recruit and retain talented and effective educators of color, we must do more to leverage our current employees who reflect, value, embrace, and celebrate the racial, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity we seek to expand.

Over the next three years, we will expand our affinity group programs. The BPS ALANA (African, Latino, Asian, and Native American) Educators Program occurs monthly. The program provides an opportunity for teachers of color, especially new teachers, to network with experienced teachers to learn from their expertise, experiences, explore career advancement opportunities, and engage in intellectual discourse. Currently, five percent of our 4,863 educators of color actively participate in BPS ALANA events. Our goal is to increase participation by 10% annually over the next three years.

Our School Leaders of Color (SLOC) Network is a hub for school leaders to meet quarterly. The network provides a place for school leaders to share their personal and professional experiences, ideas,

perspectives, and best practices. Participants focus on solution-driven discussions and practices. About half of our school leaders of color are members of the network. Our goal is to increase membership by 10% annually over the next three years.

The BPS Women Educators of Color (WEOC) Executive Coaching Leadership Program and BPS Male Educators of Color (MEOC) Executive Coaching Leadership Program are 9-month accredited programs designed to increase engagement, retention, and leadership rates for female and male staff of color with BPS. Sessions are led and facilitated by current and former female leaders of color for the women and male leaders of color for the men from BPS or certified instructors sponsored by UMass-Boston. Participants receive a valuable combination of executive coaching, research-based content, and structured opportunities for self-reflection and growth plan development. Over the last 4 years, WEOC has had 65 participants with 91% currently employed with BPS. Over the last 5 years, MEOC has had 67 participants with 76% currently employed with BPS. Over the next three years, our goal is to increase the number of participants in each program by 10% annually.

Over the next three years, we want to strengthen and expand our Teacher Cadet Program which focuses on recruiting teacher candidates from non-traditional populations who are more likely to reflect local diversity and more likely to stay in their communities. Teacher candidates include high school students, paraprofessionals, after-school program staff and other community members. We want to provide increased opportunities for underrepresented high school students to be mentored by educators and participate in classroom field experiences (such as tutoring and teaching opportunities with elementary and middle school students), take a specialized course introducing the teaching profession, receive one-on-one advising, conduct college visits, and attend a summer institute.

In January 2020, BPS launched an affinity group for employees who are graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) or members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC). We recognize that we cannot recruit those we do not know, and we cannot recruit from places where we do not go. The goal of this group is to leverage connections and relationships to build partnerships with HBCUs toward increasing access to educators of color. Ultimately, we want to create a pipeline for recruitment and hiring of HBCU students, alumni, and members of the NPHC to teach and lead schools in BPS

**Commitment 3: Monitoring Success with Outcome Metrics and Targets**

What metrics will your district use to monitor success in reducing disparities in achievement among student subgroups? Select from the list of DESE metrics or provide your own. *(Please note targets will be added to this section once SY 2020 data is released this fall.)*

DESE Outcome Metrics	Custom District Metrics
-average ELA scaled score	-participation rates in BPS affinity group programs
-mean ELA SGP	-percent of educators of color employed annually
- average math scaled score	-teachers of color retention rates
-mean Math SGP	-principal/headmasters of color retention rates
-mean student growth percentile on ACCESS for ELLs	
-advanced coursework participation rates	

**Commitment 4: Engaging All Families**

How will your district ensure all families, particularly those representing the student subgroups most in need of support, have the opportunity to meaningfully engage with the district regarding their students' needs?

Between August and December 2019, Superintendent Cassellius engaged in 125 school visits across 135 school buildings and 102 stakeholder and community meetings which resulted in input from more than 2,100 members of the Boston community. Corey Harris also met with the Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force. Five planned family and community engagement meetings were cancelled as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.

**Certifications:**

- By checking here, I certify that our district has engaged stakeholders in our district in accordance with the Student Opportunity Act

Please summarize your stakeholder engagement process, including specific groups that were engaged:

- By checking here, I certify that our district's school committee voted on our Student Opportunity Plan.

Date of Vote: April 29, 2020

Outcome of Vote: