

To: School Committee Members
From: Tommy Chang, Ed.D.
Re: The Partnership Fund
Date: November 28, 2017



Boston Public Schools (BPS) has been engaged in an ongoing effort to make our partnerships more transparent and equitable. We started this work last year with the launch of PartnerBPS.org, a website that catalogues all BPS partnerships and makes them accessible to students, families, school leaders and partners. Through this process, we found that there are an average of 28 partnerships per school. We are excited to leverage this dynamic BPS partnership landscape through the Partnership Fund, a strategy to increase equitable access to quality learning opportunities provided by school-community partners.

The Partnership Fund will be our first application of the Opportunity Index as a tool for allocating resources in a more equitable, coherent, and innovative way. Utilizing the Opportunity Index, we will allocate the Partnership Funds to a subset of schools that serve the greatest proportions of concentrated student need. This funding will ensure these schools have resources to secure partner organizations to provide services that best meet the unique needs of their school community.

Historically, BPS has earmarked a pool of central office funds to contract non-profit organizations to partner with a subset of schools across the district. Decisions about which partners are funded, how much funding they receive and which schools they serve were made by central office leaders. District-funded partnerships have not been equitably distributed across schools; schools have had little to no voice in selection of partners receiving district funding; schools and nonprofit organizations not receiving district partnership dollars have been unable to access this funding; and there has been no transparent or open system for accessing partnership funds.

Beginning with the FY19 budget cycle, BPS will utilize the Opportunity Index to equitably allocate a total of approximately \$5.7 million in Partnership Funds to a subset of schools identified as serving the highest concentrations of student need. Eligible schools will receive their per-pupil partnership funding allocation as part of their FY19 school budget. Using their Partnership Funds, schools will have autonomy to choose and fund one or more partners to provide ongoing direct services that best meet their needs and advance their school improvement goals.

Schools will receive their FY19 Partnership Fund allocations on December 8 as part of their school budget. From December 11-13, the district will provide optional office hours on the Partnership Fund to school leaders. There will be additional school-based technical assistance opportunities available from December 14 - January 11. Additionally, all schools will receive the Opportunity Portfolio, a menu of partners that have been pre-vetted as high quality service providers to guide them in their selections. Finally, Instructional Superintendents and central office will be meeting with schools to assess their needs and help match them with well-aligned and high quality partners.

We are excited to roll out this new, more equitable opportunity for our students. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to let me know.

