

## **Draft Memo Re: School Quality Work Group (SQWG) II**

In March 2016, BPS Superintendent Dr. Tommy Chang sent a letter to BPS school leaders explaining a new measurement system called the School Quality Framework (SQF), scheduled to be implemented in School Year 2016-2017. In this letter, the Superintendent informed school leaders of a one-year postponement (from 2015-16) agreed upon by School Committee. Additionally, the letter shared that the School Committee would seek input from school leaders, teachers, parents and students on ways to support schools and implement SQF. Dr. Chang also invited school leaders to share comments and questions on an online survey.

Meanwhile, the School Committee decided to reconvene the School Quality Work Group (SQWG) to lead the deliberations and manage the work of SQF implementation. SQWG II consisted of 21 community stakeholders, including school leaders, parents and students, who were invited to serve under the leadership of BPS School Committee Co-Chair Dean Hardin Coleman. Eight monthly meetings were scheduled during SY 2016-2017. In November 2016, Dr. Chang also recommended to the School Committee that the implementation for the SQF again be postponed, given shifts to PARCC assessments for students in Grades 3 - 8 and the state's "hold harmless" provision regarding these assessment results.

In November 2016, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) voted to create a new assessment for Grades 3 - 8 (and 10) called Next Generation MCAS to be administered for the first time in Spring 2017. At this time, the BESE also voted to hold all schools with students in Grades 3 - 8 "harmless" from being penalized in terms of the state accountability system as a result of performance on this new assessment.

Over the course of SY 2016-17, the SQWG II worked collaboratively with an internal BPS cross-functional team including the Deputy Superintendent of Strategy, Assistant Superintendent of Engagement, Executive Director of Data & Accountability, as well as staff representing the Offices of Data & Accountability, Engagement, OIIT, Finance, and Instructional Superintendents. The purpose of the group was to: 1) examine the recommendations and timeline for implementation of the SQF; 2) review the 2014 SQF policy; and 3) consider research-based evidence to support the use of multiple assessment criteria to measure school quality and to inform school choice decisions. SQWG II members were asked to serve as ambassadors for the implementation of SQF, and to assist with informing and communicating with school leaders, parents, students and community stakeholders of SQWG II progress.

Over the course of monthly meetings committee members deliberated three essential concerns: the equity analysis of the home-based assignment plan, tools for school-based assessment, and interim assignment tiers. The BPS team was asked to create informational reports based on this group feedback for further consideration.

- **Equity Analysis for the Home-based Assignment Plan**

- Form a task force including School Committee, SQWG II, researchers, and community members to obtain authentic data for school choice decision-making
- Create an RFP to hire an external consultant to complete the equity analysis.
- **Tools for School-Based Assessment**
  - School leaders expressed a vested interest in developing a reliable observational tool to fit into the SQF. Concerns were raised about the feasibility, frequency, and staffing/resources necessary, and leveraging existing resources
- **Interim Assignment Tiers**
  - Based on implications of Massachusetts moving to new assessments (PARCC/Next Generation MCAS) as well as state accountability changes under ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) interim assignment tiers (MCAS Tiers) are necessary for the 2017-18 school choice season

The committee also spent considerable time deliberating about the implementation of the SQF in SY 2017-18. Committee members were provided with the timeline for BPS school choice / student assignments in SY 17-18 and weighed this against important considerations regarding the fact that the state of Massachusetts will not be holding schools accountable for PARCC and Next Generation MCAS results in SY 2016-17. Given these contextual factors, the SQWG II members have concluded that it is infeasible to implement the SQF in 2017-18 and recommends to Dr. Chang and the BPS School Committee that implementation occur in SY 2018- 2019. They also recommend to use updated MCAS tiers for the purposes of school choice and student assignment in the interim.

Given the work of the School Quality Working Group in SY 2016-17, members will pursue completing the following deliverables in SY 2017-18:

#### **Develop Opportunities and Access Domain Metrics**

- Review existing work in this area
- Generate ideas for potential metrics
- Review BPS (Office of Data and Accountability) analysis of draft metrics
- Revise draft metrics based on analysis and feedback
- Recommend metrics for inclusion in domain

#### **Revise Framework to Incorporate Assessment and Survey Changes**

- Revise metrics to align with new climate surveys
- Revise/update assessment metrics related to MCAS to account for PARCC and Next Generation MCAS data
  - Consider revising framework to make possible calculations of tiers to align with MCAS fall data release and BPS school choice season

#### **Communication to Stakeholders**

- Provide feedback on communication plan for schools and to external stakeholders to maximize transparency and buy-in
- Communicate to constituencies as ambassadors of the School Quality Working Group and gather feedback
- SQWG II Host Stakeholder Information Sessions (Spring 2018)
  - Meet with BTU & Principal Associations
  - Meet with Parent and Student Advocates (i.e., CPC, BSAC)
  - Invite advocates and community stakeholders to city-wide meeting at Bolling Building

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