

School Quality Framework

Giving families a more holistic understanding of school quality

In 2013, BPS developed a system for measuring school quality that looks holistically at what makes a high-quality school experience for students and families. The Boston Public Schools (BPS) believes that school quality is best determined by looking not only at how students perform on standardized tests but also how they grow from year to year, along with examining certain key areas of a school, such as its culture. The School Quality Framework (SQF) provides families more comprehensive data on how schools perform on a broad range of measures. Access to this expansive amount of data will help families make better-informed and more customized school choices. BPS has continued to improve the School Quality Framework each year to give families a clearer picture of their school choices.

Framework Score	
Tier 1	65-100
Tier 2	55-64
Tier 3	45-54
Tier 4	0-44

The School Quality Framework evaluates schools in five areas: student performance, teaching and learning, family, community and culture, leadership and collaboration, and access and opportunities (see Figure 1 below). Within each area, BPS has identified outcomes and measures relevant to these diverse aspects of school quality. Under the SQF, a school will receive a score from 0-100 based on measurements in the five areas. These scores correlate to a school quality tier from 1-4 that is used for the purpose of school choice.

Figure 1: School Quality Framework Domains and Outcomes



Improvements for 2018 School Quality Framework calculation

More current assessment data

In order to make comparisons from one year to the next, the same state assessment must be administered in consecutive years. This meant that the assessment data used for previous SQF calculations was several years old. For example, the prior calculation of the framework in fall 2017 used assessment data from 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 when students in grades 3-8 took the PARCC assessment. With the administration of Next Gen MCAS starting in 2017, BPS is able to use the latest student assessment data and also have consistency across years. As a result, the 2018 SQF calculation provides a more timely indication of whether a school's students are improving in these core areas.

Better School Climate Survey data

The 2018 calculation includes two years of consistent survey data on the perceptions of students, teachers, and families about their current school. Additional indicators from the school climate surveys have also been included in the 2018 SQF calculation in order to better incorporate the voices of students, teachers, and families.

School ratings now include data on what students, teachers, and families perceive as strengths and weaknesses of their schools. For example, we include questions on:

- *cultural sensitivity*
- *attitudes toward learning*
- *parent engagement*
- *teacher collaboration*
- *curriculum*
- *teachers' interest in students*
- *perceptions of the safety of schools*

How this update affects school choice lists

School Quality Framework ratings are for the benefit of families to give them information about schools. Now that current state assessment data can be included in the SQF calculation, BPS will use the data along with the other data in the framework to assign schools to tiers 1-4. This means that some schools may be in a lower quality tier than they were before. It also means that families making decisions on where to send their children to school will do so with a more current understanding of each school.

We are balancing the need to provide families with full information and the need to maximize school choice options for families. As such, the updated data from 2017-2018 will be utilized to add schools to choice lists, rather than completely revise choice lists. Specifically, based on the 2018 SQF calculation, additional high-quality schools will be added to 2017 choice lists. For the 2019-2020 school choice season, approximately 99% of families will have the same school options that they had last year as well as additional high-quality schools that the framework suggests. In a few rare instances, families may have a school from their 2017 choice list removed as part of the process of updating SQF data. This approach enables the district to present the most current school quality information and to maintain school choice lists.

Next steps for measuring school quality

A major goal for 2019 is to build out the Student Access and Opportunities domain of the framework and incorporate data on the outcomes from this domain into next year's calculation. Until now, there hasn't been relevant data available to measure this domain, so the SQF working group has worked hard to identify available data. BPS has identified a number of areas where schools offer varying non-academic supports and programs that are appealing to families, such as art, technology, social emotional, nutrition, and health programs, among others. Families may benefit from this additional information in finding a good fit for their child. All schools offer supports in some areas like health, but schools that dedicate more resources in particular area would be highlighted.