

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN
FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION¹

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released a follow-up district review report of Boston Public Schools (BPS) in May 2022. While the May 2022 district review report notes that BPS has made some progress since March 2020, key findings include that district leaders have not prioritized two BPS functions (special education and transportation) that are in crisis; the district's system for managing, responding to, and resolving complaints is not responsive to parent and guardian concerns and does not support the physical, social, and emotional well-being of all students; the district lacks the capacity and systems to drive improvement in the lowest performing schools; the district demonstrated a disturbing lack of urgency in improving special education services; the district is not ensuring all English learners receive appropriate ESL instruction; the district lacks the necessary systems and internal controls at the central office and school levels to ensure accurate data reporting on key indicators; transportation services are significantly and inequitably affecting student learning time; and despite some progress in identifying and addressing facilities in need of renovation and repair, the district lacks a comprehensive, long-term master facilities plan and a coherent preventive/deferred maintenance plan.

Mayor Michelle Wu, on behalf of the City of Boston and the Boston Public Schools, agrees to pursue urgent corrective action to immediately address the concerns identified in the 2022 BPS follow-up district review report.

Mayor Wu, working with Boston School Committee and the Boston Public Schools, will be responsible and accountable for meeting the requirements of this Systemic Improvement Plan, and agrees to:

Student Safety

Support the physical, social, and emotional well-being of students and ensure a safe school environment, specifically:

- By August 15, 2022, begin using an improved, robust system for managing, responding to, and resolving complaints from parents and guardians.
- Respond in a timely manner to parent and guardian concerns, including allegations of bullying.
- Respond in a timely manner to complaints received from DESE's Problem Resolution System.
- By August 15, 2022, commission an independent student and staff safety audit, including an evaluation of the role of safety officers in schools and the interaction of the

¹ Nothing in this Systemic Improvement Plan limits any authority, including statutory and regulatory authority, of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

schools with the Boston Police Department. BPS will implement changes based on the findings of the audit. The audit will be conducted by an individual or entity approved by DESE.

Transportation

Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, improve on-time school bus arrival rates and eliminate uncovered bus routes (i.e., bus routes that are scheduled but not run), specifically:

- Achieve a district-wide school bus on-time arrival rate of 95% each month. The on-time arrival rate includes all bus routes.
- Ensure 99% of BPS school buses will arrive at school within 15 minutes of the start of the school day.
- Have zero uncovered bus routes.
- Report on-time arrival rates to DESE each month.

Facilities

Provide engaging, welcoming and safe environments for students and staff that are conducive to teaching and learning, specifically:

- By June 30, 2023, create and implement a comprehensive, long-term master facilities plan and a coherent preventive/deferred maintenance plan.
- To address the pressing need to upgrade the basic infrastructure in some schools, by June 30, 2023, fully renovate all student bathroom facilities in 15 BPS schools, the selection of which will be approved by DESE. Such renovations will be subject to inspection by DESE.

Special Education

Undertake a reconstruction of BPS special education services so that inclusion is at the foundation of special education in every school, and the disproportionate placement in substantially separate programs of students of color will be significantly reduced, specifically:

- By August 15, 2022, engage a consultant or hire a highly effective special education leadership team whose members have a proven track record of success working in urban school districts and who will work with a sense of urgency on restructuring special education services.
- By November 1, 2022, develop and implement a district-wide inclusion policy that incorporates specific models for high-quality, inclusive education. To implement the policy effectively, the district must finalize an inclusion plan for all schools that is based upon robust community engagement. To address the urgent need for inclusion for all students with disabilities, the plan will include short-term objectives.

- By August 15, 2022, develop a policy and procedure manual on special education. BPS will train staff on effective implementation of the policies and procedures as part of the professional development provided at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year.
- By August 15, 2022, create a special education task force relating to the McKinley Schools that will be co-chaired by the chair of the Boston Public Schools' Special Education Parent Advisory Council and a representative named by DESE.

English Learners

Provide high-quality services to all English learners, specifically:

- By August 15, 2022, finalize its Strategic Plan for Multilingual Learners.
- By August 15, 2022, develop a system to ensure that all English learners, including English learners with disabilities, receive all appropriate ESL instruction.
- Consistently meet the terms of its successor agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice.

Transformation Schools

Improve teaching and learning in BPS's lowest performing schools (see list of Transformation Schools in Appendix A), specifically:

- By November 1, 2022, develop and implement a plan to equitably fund its lowest performing schools.
- By October 1, 2022, consolidate the number of plans required for Transformation Schools into one clearly articulated, robust, evidence-based Quality School Plan for improvement at each school.
- Effectively support the development, implementation, and progress monitoring of the Quality School Plans at each Transformation School.

Data

Put in place the necessary systems and internal controls at the central office and school levels to ensure accurate data reporting, specifically:

- By August 15, 2022, put controls in place within the central office and all schools to ensure that data reporting requirements are met in a timely and accurate way.
- By August 15, 2022, an independent data auditor hired by DESE to analyze BPS data on a regular basis, will be provided office space in BPS and receive full access to all BPS data across all academic and operational functions. The auditor's review and analysis will be available to the City, BPS, and DESE.
- By August 15, 2022, a data advisory board, whose members will be selected by DESE, will be provided office space in BPS.

Accountability

Establish enhanced accountability measures, specifically:

- Provide DESE with a quarterly progress report from Mayor Wu on the matters set forth in this Systemic Improvement Plan. The first quarterly progress report will be due on August 22, 2022.
- Provide quarterly updates from Mayor Wu to the BPS community, including the newly established McKinley Special Education task force, on BPS’s progress on the matters set forth in this Systemic Improvement Plan. The first quarterly community update will be provided in September 2022.
- Acknowledge that the targets established for the matters set forth in this Systemic Improvement Plan are initial targets that demonstrate their ability to make immediate progress, and that additional targets will be developed by DESE and the incoming superintendent within 30 days after the superintendent’s employment with BPS begins, or no later than September 30, 2022, whichever comes first. If, after 30 days, BPS and DESE are unable to reach agreement on additional targets, DESE will set the targets. These additional targets will include student achievement metrics.

Performance Management Framework

- Continue to work in collaboration with DESE on developing a Performance Management System for all BPS schools.

Mayor Wu agrees that in addressing the concerns identified in the 2022 BPS follow-up district review report and implementing the Systemic Improvement Plan, she will always put the interests of BPS students first, ahead of adults.

For the City of Boston,
for herself and on behalf of the
Boston Public Schools

Mayor Michelle Wu

Date: _____

Appendix A

Transformation Schools

For purposes of the Systemic Improvement Plan, the BPS schools identified as a “Transformation Schools” include:

Washington Irving Middle School	Roslindale
James P. Timilty Middle School	Roxbury
Madison Park Technical Vocational High School	Roxbury
David A. Ellis Elementary School	Roxbury
Higginson/Lewis K-8 School	Roxbury
Lilla G. Frederick Middle School	Dorchester
Brighton High School	Brighton
Dearborn STEM Academy	Roxbury
Sarah Greenwood K-8 School	Dorchester
Young Achievers K-8 School	Mattapan
King K-8 School	Dorchester
Blackstone Elementary School	South End
Community Academy of Science and Health	Dorchester
James J. Chittick Elementary School	Hyde Park
John D. Philbrick Elementary School	Roslindale
Lyon High School	Brighton
Mario Umana Academy	East Boston
Excel High School	South Boston
Orchard Gardens K-8 School	Roxbury
Roger Clap Elementary School	Dorchester
Samuel W. Mason Elementary School	Roxbury
Edison K-8 School	Brighton
Mission Hill K-8 School*	Jamaica Plain
Curley K-8 School	Jamaica Plain
Condon K-8 School	South Boston
Charlestown High School	Charlestown
English High School	Jamaica Plain
TechBoston Academy	Dorchester
James W. Hennigan K-8 School	Jamaica Plain
Joseph Lee K-8 School	Dorchester
Henry Grew Elementary	Hyde Park

*On May 5, 2022, the Boston School Committee voted to close the Mission Hill K-8 School, effective June 30, 2022.