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Boston Opportunity Agenda Report Card shows progress in high school graduation and college completion amidst concerns about early learning and third-grade reading

BOSTON – The 2017 Boston Opportunity Agenda Report Card, an annual measure of the City’s progress on key education metrics, found that high school graduation, college enrollment, and college completion rates continue to increase in Boston. The six-year college completion rate increased to 51.3 percent for 2009 graduates of the Boston Public Schools, an uptick from 50 percent for BPS graduates who completed high school in 2006. The report also found that the high school graduation rate went up for all three types of schools.

While this progress is very encouraging, the news was not as positive for efforts to build a strong educational foundation. In the 2015-2016 school year, 61 percent of incoming kindergarten students were determined to have the necessary early learning skills to succeed and progress, a decrease of three percentage points from the prior academic year. In addition, third-grade reading proficiency levels remained steady at 33 percent per the PARCC assessment, while Boston Catholic schools and Boston Charter public schools saw dips from 79 percent to 74 percent and 61 percent to 55 percent, respectively.

“Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh has called for free quality universal pre-Kindergarten. We believe the lack of growth in school readiness among our youngest students and in third-grade reading is further evidence to support the Mayor’s universal pre-K push,” said Kristin McSwain, Executive Director of the Boston Opportunity Agenda. “In this city where public education was literally invented, it is imperative that all of our children have access to a world-class education and graduate from high school and college career ready and well positioned to contribute to our highly competitive economy and way of life.”

The sixth annual Boston Opportunity Report Card, which reflects data on Boston’s entire education pipeline, will be released Thursday at a forum at the Bank of America.

For the 2015-2016 academic year, the volume of Boston Public Schools 10th-graders completing state

competency requirements and thus on track to graduate high school increased five percentage points to 64 percent, from 59 percent in 2014-2015. Boston Catholic schools and Boston Charter public schools saw 10th-grade proficiency dips from 94 percent to 92 percent and 88 percent to 86 percent, respectively.

For the first time in four years, the high school dropout rate increased slightly by .6 percent in Boston Public Schools for the 2014-2015 school year – the most recent year with complete data on this category. And while it isn't possible to accurately measure dropout rates for parochial schools, Boston Charter public schools have demonstrated very low dropout rates, with just .25 percent of students dropping out in the 2014-2015 academic year.

Since 2010, the Boston Opportunity Agenda, a historic education alliance between the public and private sectors, has tracked and measured academic performance in the Boston Public Schools, Charter public schools, and Catholic schools in Boston, home to more than 77,000 school-aged children.

“Our ambition is to build on almost 10 years of work in high school and college completion while simultaneously ensuring that the talent born and grown in Boston meets the needs of the 21st century economy of our city,” McSwain said. “However, while we are encouraged by the gains in high school graduation and college enrollment and completion, it is vitally important that we put energy and resources into ensuring our youngest students are fully prepared and set on a successful academic path.”

[The Boston Opportunity Agenda](#) is a public/private partnership among the City of Boston, the Boston Public Schools, the city's leading public charities and many local foundations to ensure that all Boston residents have access to the education necessary for upward economic mobility, civic engagement, and lifelong learning for themselves and their families. We fervently believe that by combining our resources, expertise and influence around a single agenda, we will have a greater impact on Boston's cradle-to-career educational pipeline.