



The Boston Opportunity Agenda

Third Annual Report Card

November 2013

A Historic Partnership

Founding Partners and Investors

Barr Foundation

The Beal Companies, LLP

The Boston Foundation

Boston Public Schools

Catholic Charities Archdiocese
of Boston

City of Boston

Combined Jewish
Philanthropies of Boston

Robert & Myra Kraft Family
Foundation

Nellie Mae Education
Foundation

New Profit Inc.

United Way of Massachusetts
Bay and Merrimack Valley



United Way
of Massachusetts Bay
and Merrimack Valley

Table of Contents

Introduction | 2

About Us | 4

Boston Opportunity Agenda Goals and Measures Update | 6

A Strong Educational Foundation | 14

On Track for High School Graduation | 18

High School Completion & Postsecondary Attainment | 20

Opportunity Youth | 23

Adult Learners & Postsecondary Attainment | 25

Additional Funders | 27

Honoring Mayor Menino | 28

Introduction

Dear Friends,

As this report goes to press, our city is changing. We're engaged in selecting a new mayor for the first time in 20 years, the Boston Public Schools are searching for a new superintendent and two of our local community colleges have new presidents.

What better time for all of us to reflect? In this report, we look at improvements that we have seen in the cradle-to-career educational pipeline, the areas where we have made modest progress but still have a great deal of work to do, and the places where we have failed to see the gains that are needed to ensure that Boston is a city of opportunity for all. This report card is designed to aid in that process of reflection.

We hope that by continuing to focus on key indicators—readiness for kindergarten, reading proficiency in 3rd grade, graduation from high school and college—this report card will prompt community leaders and program providers alike to take a step back and evaluate our programs in terms of their collective impact.

What have we learned so far?

- ★ We have made extraordinary progress in getting more of our youth to complete high school and earn college degrees. But our successes in these later stages of the “pipeline” should not obscure the fact that we've made so little progress at the beginning of the pipeline: Less than one third of our 3rd-graders are reading at grade level, and for the past 10 years that number has never climbed above 37%. **We must make strengthening kindergarten through grade 3 a priority in this city.**
- ★ The business, philanthropic, higher-education and nonprofit communities are eager to continue partnering with the public sector to achieve the Boston Opportunity Agenda's goals. **Our next mayor must continue to create new ways for partners to engage with the city, our schools and other governmental institutions.** Likewise, he and his administration will need to remove barriers that limit information sharing, prevent stakeholders from becoming engaged and ensure that there is transparency as well as accountability in education reform.

★ Focusing on quality programs that deliver services is important, but that strategy alone is not enough to ensure success. **We must continue to build cross-sector collaborations and educational pathways** that leverage the assets, knowledge and thought partnership required to produce rapid change on a grand scale. Our kids can't wait.

★ During this time of change when multiple stakeholders will jockey for position with our new leadership and administration, **the new mayor and other civic leaders must keep the focus on achieving the educational goals that we have laid out for our city and its learners of all ages.**

Boston is unique. Our schools are urban leaders in a number of key measures: high-school graduation and college-completion rates and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in English and Math. Still, at best we are performing at a C-level. This isn't good enough for our kids. We can show the rest of the country—and perhaps the world—how a great city can pull together to make great things happen for all of its residents. Let's get started.

Ray A. Hammond

Reverend Ray Hammond
Chair

Kristin McSwain

Kristin McSwain
Executive Director



About Us



The Boston Opportunity Agenda (BOA) 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.

While Boston has many exciting programs and organizations that focus on providing opportunities for individuals, the Boston Opportunity Agenda is a long-term partnership focused on achieving system change that will ultimately affect all Boston residents.

Over the past several years, the Boston Opportunity Agenda member organizations have used three organizing principles to guide our collective work and network structure. The partnership is governed by the CEOs of each member organization who identify strategic issues facing our educational pipeline in whole or in part, formulate the Boston Opportunity Agenda priorities and strategies, and provide a call to action for community stakeholders.

The Three Principles

Keeping key performance measures in public view is critical to driving change.

Accurate and timely data is a call to action and an accountability mechanism. Through our annual report card, forums, evaluations and community dialogues, we aim to educate ourselves and the greater Boston community on our challenges, progress and collective impact.

Our investments must produce immediate gains and long-term systems change.

BOA investments are designed to expedite the positive educational outcomes for underserved individuals currently in the education pipeline while surfacing the long-term changes that must be made in our systems to ensure success for all. Our investments also focus on building networks and delivery systems rather than increasing the capacity of a single organization or program.

Collective impact is required to achieve our goals.

Only by mobilizing the nonprofit, philanthropic, business and governmental communities to align resources and increase efficiency and effectiveness will we ensure the overall success of Boston's educational pipeline. We have created multiple ways for others to join us:

- 🔄 **Investing Partners** contribute financial and human resources to BOA priority initiatives.
- 🔄 **Philanthropic Partners** align their education investments to support BOA priority initiatives or advance BOA goals. They share common data collection, tools and analysis.
- 🔄 **Community Partners** join one of the priority investment networks and align one or more of their education programs in support of BOA goals. They share common data collection, tools and analysis as well as participate in continuous improvement work.

Our current partners are identified in the programmatic updates section of the report card. To learn more about becoming a Boston Opportunity Agenda partner at any level please contact Kristin McSwain at Kristin.Mcswain@bostonopportunityagenda.org.

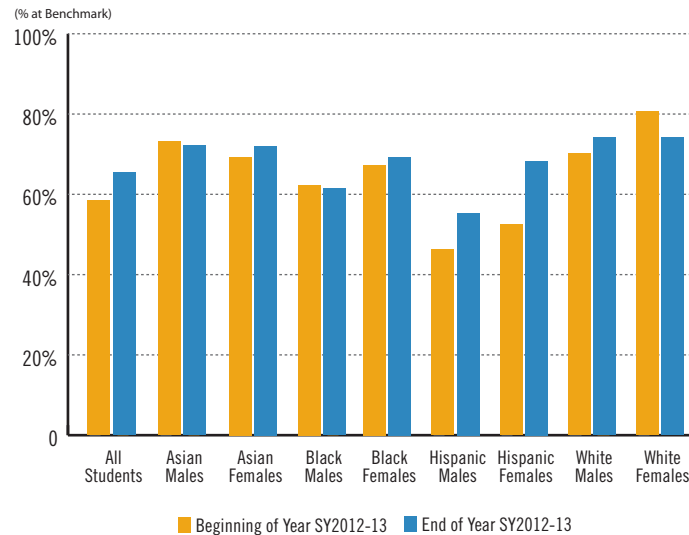
Our mission is to ensure that all Boston residents have access to the education necessary for upward economic mobility, civic engagement and lifelong learning for themselves and their families.

A Strong Educational Foundation

Early Literacy: Percent of Entering Kindergarteners Achieving the DIBELS* Benchmark

Base 2008 / 2009	Current 2012 / 2013	Annual Change	Goal 2013 / 2014
54%	59% (66% at end of year)	↑	75%

What's Under the Hood: DIBELS NEXT* in Kindergarten



How are we doing?

The DIBELS assessment is given when children enter kindergarten and when they leave. This year we see another increase of two percentage points for kids entering kindergarten. Kindergarten achievement is also strong, with 66% of students finishing the year at benchmark. In order to maximize the time students spend in kindergarten and improve on these gains, the Boston Public Schools is implementing a new K-2 curriculum that aligns with the Common Core State Standards and 21st-century skills.

Why does it matter?

Children who participate in high-quality early education programs are 40% less likely to repeat a grade, 30% more likely to graduate from high school and more than twice as likely to go to college. They develop better language skills, score higher on school readiness tests and have fewer behavioral problems once they enter school. Finally as adults, they have higher annual earnings and are more likely to be homeowners.

*The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade.

"Why does it Matter" source: Strategies for Children, "A Report on the Cost of Universal, High Quality Early Education in Massachusetts."



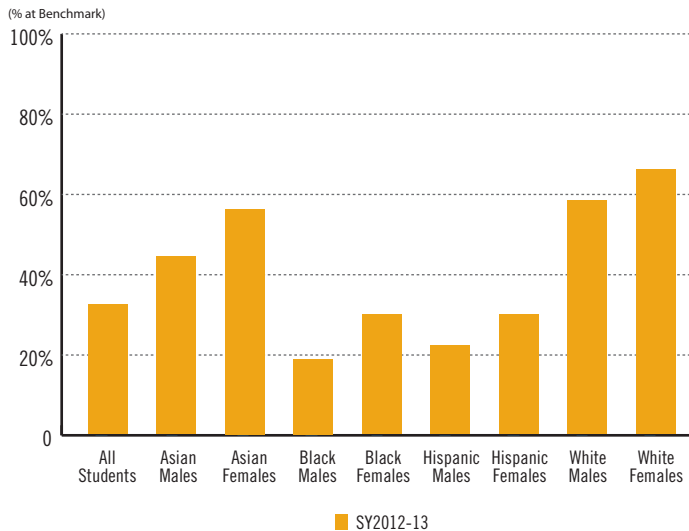
A Strong Educational Foundation

3rd-Grade Reading Proficiency

Base 2008 / 2009	Current 2012 / 2013	Annual Change	Goal 2013 / 2014
31%	32%	↓	75%

What's Under the Hood:

Proficiency for 3rd Grade MCAS ELA by Race and Gender



How are we doing?

Reading proficiency as measured by the MCAS continues to fall in Boston and across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As detailed later in this report, the Boston Public Schools has created and vetted with a panel of local experts a plan to improve the quality of literacy instruction, align the curriculum with the Common Core Standards, and increase the rigor of classroom texts.

Why does it matter?

From 1st to 3rd grade, students are learning to read and from 4th grade on they must be able to read to learn. “One in six children not reading proficiently in 3rd grade fail to graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than that for proficient readers,” says the Annie E. Casey Foundation. “Black and Hispanic children who are not reading proficiently in 3rd grade are about twice as likely as similar white children not to graduate from high school.”



“Why does it Matter” source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, “Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation”

On Track for High School Graduation

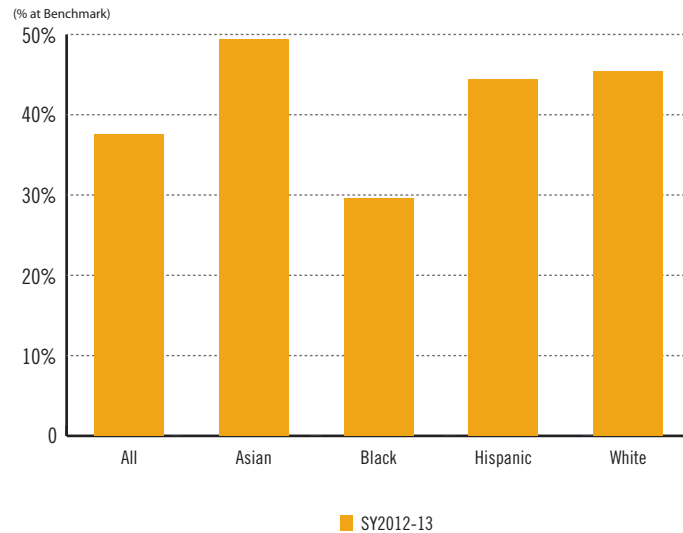
Percent of Non-Exam 8th Graders Who Are Enrolled in Algebra 1

Base 2008 / 2009	Current 2012 / 2013	Annual Change	Goal 2013 / 2014
4%	38%	↑	40%



What's Under the Hood:

Percent of Non-Exam School 8th Graders Who Took Algebra I



How are we doing?

Boston has made great strides in expanding access to 8th-grade Algebra for all students. In partnership with EdVestors, BPS has expanded the Algebra enrollment while providing wraparound supports for teachers and students in the form of professional development, summer programming and coaching. As a result, 62% of non-exam school students enrolled in 8th-grade Algebra achieve a C or better on the final exam, allowing them to pursue Geometry or Algebra II in 9th grade. This is up from the 2010-2011 baseline of 22%.

Why does it matter?

Frequently referred to as a “gateway” or “gatekeeper” course, Algebra is the first in a series of higher level math courses required for success in work and life. Offering Algebra in the 8th grade increases academic rigor and allows students to pursue higher levels of mathematics coursework throughout their high-school career. Research has shown that with each additional level of math completed in high school, students increase the likelihood that they will complete a Bachelor’s degree.

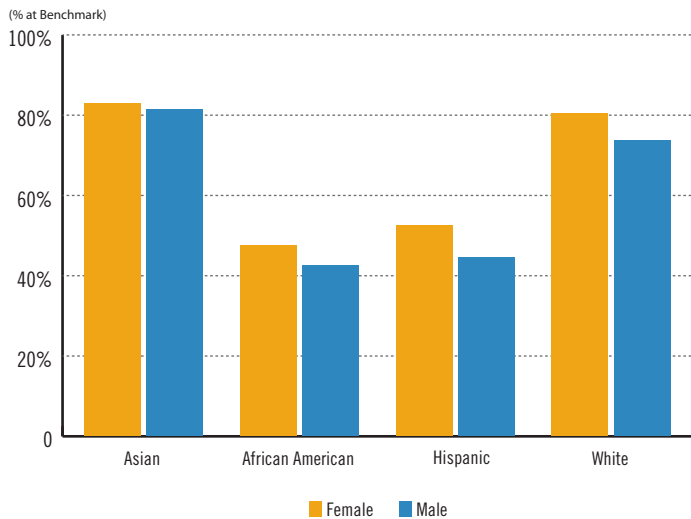
“Why does it Matter” source: U.S. Department of Education, “Answers in the Tool Box: Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns and Bachelors Degree Attainment.”

High School Completion

Percent of 10th Graders Who Pass All MCAS Tests*

Base 2008 / 2009	Current 2012 / 2013	Annual Change	Goal 2013 / 2014
44%	55%	↑	75%

What's Under the Hood: Percentage of Grade 10 Students Passing ELA, Math, and Science By Race and Gender



*It is important to note that with the graduating class of 2013, the standards for graduation increased from “needs improvement” on ELA and Math to “proficient” on ELA and Math and “needs improvement” in Science.

“Why does it Matter” source: Center for Labor Market Studies, “The College Enrollment and Graduation Experiences of BPS Graduates.”

How are we doing?

There is much good news to celebrate in Boston’s 10th-grade MCAS scores. Student gains in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math continue to outpace those of the state. While the achievement gap persists, the disparity between African-American and white students decreased by 8 percentage points in ELA and 7 percentage points in Math. The gap for Hispanic students also narrowed in Math by 4 percentage points. Finally, more than half (55%) of the Class of 2014 has met the graduation standard, a 14-point increase over the Class of 2010, when the new standard was first implemented.

Why does it matter?

While many in the general population understand that proficiency on the MCAS is necessary in order to graduate from high school, MCAS proficiency also serves as an indicator of whether a student will enroll in and complete postsecondary education. “Not only are students with stronger reading and math scores more likely to attend college, but they are also much more likely to enroll in 4-year colleges and graduate with a Bachelor’s degree.”



High School Completion

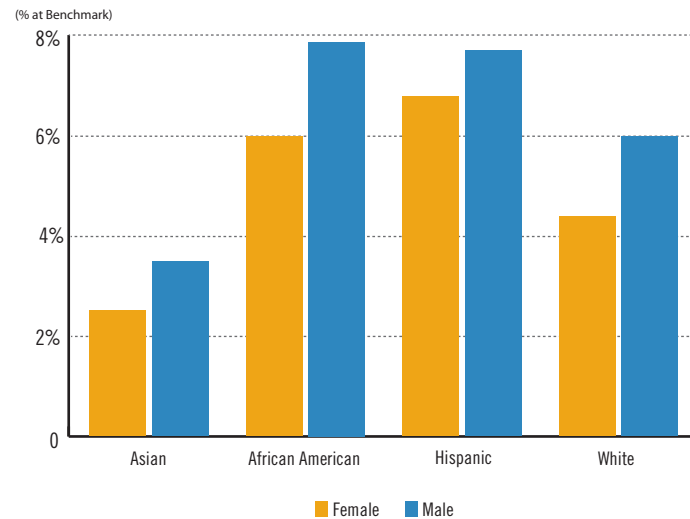
Annual Dropout Rate

Base 2008 / 2009	Current 2011 / 2012	Annual Change	Goal 2013 / 2014
7.3%	6.4%	↑	<3%



What's Under the Hood:

Annual Dropout Rates by Race and Gender



How are we doing?

The dropout rate for the 9th-grade cohort (first-time 9th graders in 2007) decreased for the fourth year in a row to 19.6%, while the annual dropout rate in Boston increased less than 1% over the past three years. This is a tremendous achievement for an urban school system—particularly one experiencing more stringent MCAS graduation requirements over the same time period. Regardless, the city's dropout prevention stakeholders are increasing their efforts to keep teens from leaving school. The Boston Opportunity Youth Collaborative, described later in this report, will spend the next several years focused on re-engaging and retaining disconnected young people.

Why does it matter?

Lost lifetime earnings in Massachusetts for the class of 2010 dropouts alone will total nearly \$3.7 billion, according to the Alliance for Excellent Education. If the state's male graduation rate grew by just 5%, the Massachusetts economy would see crime-related savings and additional revenue of about \$115 million each year.

"Why does it matter?" source: U.S. Chamber of Commerce, "The Ugly Truth: A State-by-State Snapshot of Education in America"

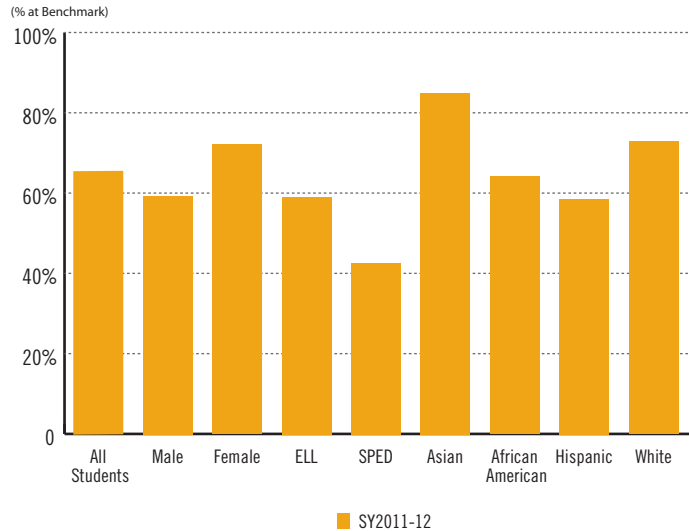
High School Completion

4-Year Graduation Rate

Base 2008 / 2009	Current 2011 / 2012	Annual Change	Goal 2013 / 2014
61.4%	65.9%	↑	80%

What's Under the Hood:

4-Year Completion Rates by Race, Gender, ELL and SPED Status



How are we doing?

Boston continues to have one of the highest urban 4-year graduation rates in the nation. This year we see increases across a number of student subgroups—male, female, low income, English Language Learners (ELL) and students with disabilities—in addition to the overall increase of 1.5 percentage points. Modest gains were made by Asian, Black and Hispanic students while the number of white students completing in four years declined. While a decrease in the 4-year graduation rate for white students is not ideal, the rate for that group still remains high at 73.2%. Finally, the 5-year graduation rate continues to increase and is now at an aggregate of 70%.

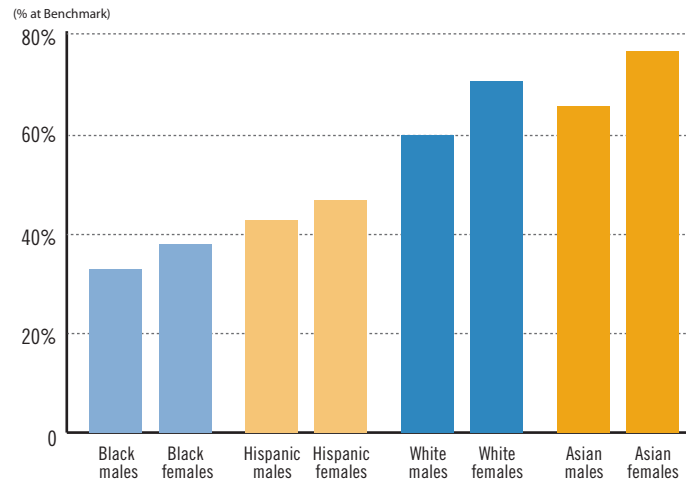


Postsecondary Attainment College Completion

Base 2008 / 2009	Current 2011 / 2012	Annual Change	Goal 2013 / 2014
35% (class of 2000)	49.3% (class of 2006)	↑	70% (class of 2011)



What's Under the Hood: 6-year College Graduation Rates, BPS class of 2006*



*Students who enrolled in postsecondary institutions the first year after high-school graduation.

“Why does it Matter” source: Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown University, “The College Payoff.”

How are we doing?

More than 49% of the BPS Class of 2006 who enrolled in college obtained an Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree within six years. Boston leads the nation in tracking and improving urban college completion. While much more work remains to achieve the college-completion goal of 70% for the BPS class of 2011, Boston has made significant progress to date and stands poised to prove that a high level of college completion is possible for a large urban district in the United States.

Why does it matter?

A postsecondary degree is essential for success in Greater Boston’s knowledge economy, where more than half of all job vacancies require at least an Associate’s degree—a percentage that is expected only to grow. In addition, a typical Bachelor’s degree holder will earn \$1.9 million more than a high-school dropout over the course of a lifetime.

Adult Learners

Percentage of 25- to 64-Year-Olds with Postsecondary Credentials

Base 2011	Current	Annual Change	Goal 2025
47%	N/A	N/A	60%

In Boston, more than 200,000 adults do not have the education and training that they need to secure jobs that will support themselves or their families. In a regional economy where more than half of the job vacancies require at least a 2-year degree, 41% of adults over age 25 lack such credentials or do not have the educational background to attain them.

The Boston Opportunity Agenda has spent the past year working with a diverse group of stakeholders (including nonprofits, universities and businesses) to examine our Adult Learner goal. While it's important to build pathways for adults from the Adult Basic Education (ABE) system to postsecondary opportunities, it is only one small element of what is necessary. The Boston economy needs more high-quality postsecondary education and training pathways and workers who are well-prepared to succeed in them. In addition to Bachelor's and Associate's degrees, these pathways must include training for certificates that are portable, have economic value, and meet the needs of employers.

Our new goal, that 60% of the adults in Boston between the ages of 25 and 64 have a postsecondary credential by 2025 (only 47 percent now do), aligns with the national goal put forward by the Lumina Foundation. By joining a growing cadre of communities aligned with Lumina, we will be able to share our challenges, learn from other cities and celebrate our successes. There is much to do for the 33% of our working-age adults who hold a high-school diploma or equivalency or have some college. At a minimum, we must:

- 🔄 Continue to improve our college-going and completion rates for high school students;
- 🔄 Work with ABE providers and colleges to ensure that adult learners earn credentials that lead to careers;
- 🔄 Encourage employers to design in-house education programs that create career pipelines for incumbent workers; and
- 🔄 Identify new and emerging career opportunities specific to our region and train Boston residents to fill them.



A Strong Educational Foundation

Thrive in 5



Boston's future prosperity depends on the health and well-being of our youngest children. From neuroscience, we know that a child's brain develops more rapidly in the first few years of life than at any other time. That growth depends on good health, positive experiences, and nurturing relationships to create a strong foundation for lifelong learning, a foundation currently demonstrated by school readiness.

Thrive in 5, launched in 2008 by Mayor Thomas M. Menino and United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, aims to ensure universal school readiness for all of Boston's children. By partnering with families, early education and care providers, health providers and others, Thrive in 5 builds community capacity to support school readiness, strengthen the quality of existing services, expand and create programs to address unmet needs and measure progress to ensure accountability so that each child enters kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life.

Community Partners: ABCD-Head Start, ASPIRE Institute, Associated Early Care and Education, Avid Technologies, Boston Association for the Education of Young Children, Boston Children's Hospital, Boston Children's Museum, Boston Family Engagement Network, Boston Medical Center, Boston Public Health Commission, Boston Public Library, Boston Public Schools, Catholic Charities, City of Boston, College Bound Dorchester, COMPASS, Countdown to Kindergarten, Crittenton Women's Union, Deloitte Consulting, Dorchester Boys and Girls Club, Dorchester House Multi-Service Center, Dorchester

South WIC Program, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, East Boston Head Start, East Boston Social Centers, East Boston WIC Program, East Boston YMCA, EDC, Ellis Memorial Early Education Center, Escuelita Boriken/Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción, Family Nurturing Center, Family Service of Greater Boston, Grove Hall Child Development Center, Horizons for Homeless Children—Edgerley, It's a Child's World, Joseph M. Smith Community Health Center, Laboure Center, Little Folks Community Day Care, MA Department of Early Education and Care, MA Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, Mujeres Unidas Avanzando, N.I.C.E. Inc., Paige Academy, Partners Health Care, Rosa Parks Child Care Center, S.M.I.L.E. Preschool, Smart from the Start, South Boston Neighborhood House, The Food Project, Tufts University, University of Massachusetts Boston, United South End Settlements, Vital Village, Wellesley Centers for Women, Wesley Child Care Center, and Wheelock College.

Results

Thrive in 5 and its cross-sector partners have made progress toward this goal through three citywide strategies:

Boston Children Thrive

Boston Children Thrive (BCT) is a place-based initiative that engages the whole community in supporting children's healthy development and readiness for school. Currently, BCT operates



in five neighborhoods where 13,000 children 5 and under—one-third of the city's young children—live: Allston/Brighton, East Boston, the South End/Lower Roxbury, Dudley and Fields Corner. Using a model that facilitates parent engagement and community building, BCT hub agencies in each neighborhood coordinate with parents and dozens of community-based organizational partners, including health centers, family support programs, WIC, libraries, and early education and care providers to deliver a full calendar of opportunities for families to support their children's early learning. Parents are actively involved as leaders in the BCT communities, serving as parent partners who reach out to neighborhood families as well as plan and lead activities and events to connect more families to the BCT network.

BCT's focus on partnering with parents as leaders has been an effective strategy for engaging families with children most at risk for the achievement gap, with more than 2,500 families enrolled in the neighborhood BCT campaign. Of enrolled adults, 82% are people of color; 57% speak a language other than English; 58% were born outside of the United States; 51% have a high school diploma or less—all higher proportions than the neighborhood averages. In addition, 55% of families had not participated in early childhood/enrichment activities in the six months prior to enrolling and 58% receive one or more forms of public assistance, including WIC and food stamps.

Ready Educators

High-quality early care and education programs produce great results for kids, particularly those most at risk. Thrive in 5's Ready Educators strategy is designed to move Boston's early

care and education programs to the highest quality, using child-outcome data to drive program improvement and innovation. For example, Boston K1DS, a pilot project of the Boston Public Schools and Thrive in 5, improves the quality of community-based preschool classrooms by implementing key aspects of the BPS pre-kindergarten (K1) program. This model provides children in the 14 Boston K1DS pilot classrooms with the same high-quality early learning offered by BPS, but on a full-day, full-year basis that meets the needs of working families. Alongside Boston K1DS, Thrive in 5 is also piloting a new approach to quality improvement in 10 early education programs and five family child-care homes. This approach involves creating program improvement plans that focus on what matters most: good child outcomes.

The School Readiness Pipeline

Information on the developmental progress of young children is critical to ensuring that, as a city, Boston is prioritizing the early education needs of its youngest residents and helping to prepare them for kindergarten. The School Readiness Pipeline is a groundbreaking effort to build a universal screening system to measure children's development across the early years and into kindergarten. Data collected from the Pipeline will provide a snapshot of how Boston's children are doing collectively and individually. With Pipeline data, families, teachers, health providers and city leaders will be able to take a data-driven approach to investing in early childhood, making informed, strategic decisions to tailor support and valuable resources to the children, families and communities most in need.



A Strong Educational Foundation

3rd-Grade Reading Proficiency



Despite our rich array of programs devoted to improving literacy from birth to age 8, only 32% of Boston’s 3rd graders are reading at grade level. For the past decade, that number has never been higher than 37%. In order to begin to address this challenge, the Boston Opportunity Agenda is working in two different arenas—with the Boston Public Schools to improve teaching and learning and with the literacy community to address student supports and family engagement.

Teaching and Learning

At last year’s annual report-card presentation, former BPS Superintendent Carol Johnson announced on behalf of Mayor Menino the formation of an external Literacy Expert Panel. This body was convened by the Mayor and the school district to assist BPS in ensuring that all third graders have mastered the prerequisite language and literacy skills necessary for success in later grades. Co-chaired by the Superintendent and Dr. Catherine Snow, Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the panel engaged educators from four other area institutions:

Dr. Maria Brisk, *Lynch School of Education, Boston College*

Dr. Devin Kearns, *School of Education, Boston University*

Dr. Theresa Perry, *Africana Studies and Education, Simmons College*

Dr. Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, *Education, Wheelock College*

In July 2013, the panel made five recommendations based on their review and discussion of BPS data, an analysis of the literacy challenges facing BPS, strategies and implementation efforts to date, and the remaining challenges and opportunities to strengthen planning for the future. A summary of the recommendations is as follows:

- 🔄 Redefine professional education so that it increases adults' capacity to support and assess children's language and reading development. This includes organizing it, focusing it on good instruction, incorporating sufficient information about assessment, and getting teachers to participate;
- 🔄 Develop models of curriculum that build students' skill in using the English language while also enriching their world knowledge;
- 🔄 Use data productively to inform instruction so that formative assessment is thought of as a process embedded in instruction;
- 🔄 Provide prevention and intervention to students who fail to progress as expected in order to reduce student discouragement and referrals to special education; and
- 🔄 Expand and strengthen partnerships with families to focus on improving children's language and reading.

These recommendations and strategies for their implementation are fully discussed in the Literacy Expert Panel report. They provide a guide for BPS, the Boston Opportunity Agenda and other stakeholders as we moved forward in implementing plans over the next several years to improve language and literacy instruction district wide.

Student Supports and Family Engagement

There is currently no network of organizations that has articulated a plan to work together to address Boston's reading proficiency challenges. The Boston Opportunity Agenda has initiated a facilitated conversation, led by Community Matters, with early education providers, libraries, Boston Public Schools, tutoring and literacy providers, as well as those engaged in professional development and research on literacy acquisition best practices to explore the creation of a literacy network. The group has identified two priority issue areas in which they will engage over the next six months: high-quality instruction and awareness/family engagement. They will also be working with Strategies for Children and Dr. Nonie Lesaux of the Harvard Graduate School of Education to complete a landscape analysis of language and literacy supports across the city.

Community Partners: Associated Early Care and Education, BELL, Boston Plan for Excellence, Boston Partners in Education, Boston Public Library, Boston Public Schools, City Year, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Education Development Corporation, EdVestors, Family Nurturing Center, Foundation for Children's Books, Friends of the Library, Generations Incorporated, Greater Boston Jewish Coalition for Literacy, Hill for Literacy, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción, JumpStart for Young Children, Raising a Reader, Reach out and Reach, ReadBoston, Wheelock College and YMCA of Greater Boston.

The Boston Opportunity Agenda is working with the Boston Public Schools and the literacy community to help more 3rd graders read at grade level.

On Track for High School Graduation

Summer Learning Project



The Boston Summer Learning Project (SLP) is a citywide effort aimed at advancing a year-round expanded learning system that connects school, out-of-school time and summer learning. Launched by the Boston Opportunity Agenda in 2010, the project aims to reverse summer learning loss; improve skills associated with school, college and career success; and deepen school-community partnerships.



Co-managed by the Boston Public Schools (BPS) and Boston After School & Beyond (BASB), SLP serves high-needs students, identified largely by principals, who are not likely to find their way to summer programming on their own. During the summer of 2013, the SLP involved 51 BPS schools and 18 community partners who collectively provided more than 1,700 students with structured and engaging summer learning opportunities. Teachers and community partner staff co-manage the programs, jointly developing and delivering academic and skill-building content and experiences for students that build on the unique characteristics of the partner organization. During the summer of 2013, 11 additional summer providers also used the same measurement tools as SLP to measure their program quality. The sites are sharing the results as well as demographic and attendance information to inform continuous improvement across Boston's summer providers.

Community Partners: Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL); Boston Family Boat Builders; Boston Private Industry Council; Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston; Center for the Arts; Crossroads 4

Kids; Community Music Center of Boston; Courageous Sailing; Dorchester House; Freedom House; Hale Reservation; Horizons at Dedham Country Day School; Hyde Square Task Force; Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA); The Laboure Center; The Learning Project; MathPower; Sociedad Latina; MIT Office of Engineering; Phillips Brooks House Association; Stepping Stone Foundation; Sportsmen's Tennis and Enrichment Center; Tenacity; Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center; USS Constitution Museum; YMCA of Greater Boston; and Zoo New England.

Results

Finishing its fourth year, the Summer Learning Project has provided more than 4,500 high-needs students in grades 2 to 12 with educational, engaging and enriching learning experiences designed by schools and their community partners. By participating in the national demonstration on summer learning conducted by RAND, we are building the evidence base that summer learning loss is real and can be stemmed by high-quality programming. The Summer Learning Project was recognized in 2013 by the National Summer Learning Association, which awarded it the New York Life Excellence in Summer Learning prize. Equally important, the Summer Learning Project has built a strong framework for integrated school-community partnerships with a suite of measurement tools that report on student academic and skills outcomes, impact on teachers, and programmatic quality.

Academic Progress: Based on the Survey of Afterschool Youth Outcomes (SAYO-T), the average SLP student's math skills grew by 17% and ELA skills increased 9%. English Language Learners' skills grew by 33% and 32% in math and ELA respectively. RAND is conducting a long-term randomized control trial to document learning gains made by students.

Skill Development: Teacher observations from the SAYO-T across all 23 sites show significant gains in communication, initiative, engagement in learning and positive relationships.

Impact on BPS Teachers: Ninety-five percent of BPS teachers who worked at SLP sites reported that, as a part of their summer work, they expanded their network of colleagues who positively influence their professional development. Eighty-eight

percent feel more connected to their students, and 81% learned classroom strategies and instructional approaches by participating in SLP.

Impact on Community Partners: SLP partners gain access to high-quality training and coaching from the BPS, the Center for Collaborative Education and the Program in Education, Afterschool & Resiliency. An independent evaluation from the National Institute on Out-of-School Time found SLP partners had a stronger academic content focus in their programs and more and better relationships with schools as a direct result of participating in SLP. Evaluators have also found an increase in use of quality program practices among SLP providers as measured by the Afterschool Program Practices Tool between summers 2011 and 2013.

Finishing its fourth year, the Summer Learning Project has provided more than 4,500 high-needs students in grades 2 to 12 with educational, engaging and enriching learning experiences.



High School Completion & Postsecondary Attainment

Success Boston: A College Completion Initiative



Designed to dramatically increase the college-completion rate of Boston graduates, Success Boston focuses on three key strategies to ensure that Boston Public Schools students are “Getting Ready, Getting In and Getting Through.”

Getting Ready

The Boston Public Schools is committed to improving student readiness for college and career. “Getting ready” focuses on increasing the academic rigor of students’ high school courses, expanding 8th-grade Algebra and Advanced Placement courses,

offering new academic credit recovery courses in Boston’s high schools, increasing college advising at all high schools and ensuring that 100% of eligible students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). BPS also will adopt Common Core State Standards and assessments that are designed to increase student readiness. By supporting academic programming in this way and strengthening advising activities, students and their families will be better prepared and well positioned to make informed choices about postsecondary pathways.



Getting In

Beginning with the class of 2009, the Boston Foundation and a number of nonprofit partners began providing transition coaching and summer supports for up to 300 students per graduating class. The Boston Private Industry Council, uAspire, American Student Assistance, Bottom Line, Freedom House, and Hyde Square Task Force provide one-on-one and group advising around both academic and non-academic barriers—as well as transition support for the first two years of college. They work in partnership with colleges’ student support services; together they are establishing a common standard of practice and an integrated system of transition supports for all students.

Getting Through

Coordinated by University of Massachusetts Boston, 37 area colleges and universities are offering BPS graduates supports they will need to earn a degree. In addition, they have committed to track Boston student progress and encourage students to use on-campus support services. A committee of financial aid liaisons is working with uAspire to promote FAFSA completion, streamline financial award letters, and establish financial aid liaisons on campuses. Together the colleges are also exploring strategies to broker on- and off-campus employment opportunities and internships that promote persistence and career exploration.

Community Partners: American Student Assistance, Boston PIC, Bottom Line, Bunker Hill Community College, College Bound Dorchester, Freedom House, Hyde Square Task Force, Roxbury Community College, Sociedad Latina, UMass Boston and uAspire.

Results

Getting Ready

While there is still a great deal of work to do, the school district has made progress in expanding access to 8th-grade Algebra and AP courses during the past three years. Through its partnership with EdVestors, BPS has been able to increase the percentage of students with access to Algebra instruction. At the same time, BPS partnered with the MASS Math + Science Initiative to expand enrollments in AP classes while maintaining passing rates needed for college credit. Investments in increased academic rigor are beginning to increase student preparation for postsecondary programs.

College enrollment rates have grown steadily in Boston. The Class of 2007 had achieved a cumulative enrollment rate of 76.7% just five years after high school, while in comparison the Class of 2000 had achieved a 73% enrollment rate 12 years after high school graduation and the Class of 2003 approached a 75% enrollment rate after nine years. For the Class of 2009, the cumulative enrollment rates were 75.9% just three years after high school. It is important to note that these are cumulative enrollment rates, and there are sizable enrollment gains made after the first year after high school.

Getting In

Through a rigorous case-management approach, transition coaches from nonprofit organizations provide students with help in a variety of ways. The coaches assist with financial-aid documents; help students navigate the transition between high school and college; foster the development of time-management and other life skills; and aid in exploring majors and careers. Intermediate benchmarks track student performance (GPA), persistence (re-enrollment) and progress (accumulation of credits toward a degree). Results from the 2011 cohort of Success Boston show continued student progress:

- 🔄 84 % of students maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher;
- 🔄 83% re-enrolled in college in their sophomore year, compared to 76% of non-exam school students in 2008, our baseline year;
- 🔄 67% of students moved from remedial to credit-bearing courses by the end of their freshmen year.

Another 300 students from the Class of 2012 have received support from the transition coaches and nearly 285 graduates from the Class of 2013 will receive support for two years of their college careers. In addition, a close partnership with the University of Massachusetts Boston, Roxbury Community College and Bunker Hill Community College has increased the coaching capacity (by working with the office of student supports at each campus). These partnerships have resulted in almost 2000 students receiving coaching support since 2009. This “embedded model” is described in greater detail on page 22.





Getting Through

Success Boston partners established financial aid liaisons on twenty campuses that serve as the “go-to” resources for BPS graduates and the transition coaches. Equally important, seven local universities, including the entire UMass system, established common financial-aid terminology and developed a standardized insert letter that goes into all award notices for BPS student-aid packages. The letter helps students and parents to decode the types of funding being offered by each institution and enables them to compare easily across institutions.

- 🔄 Seventy-eight percent of BPS graduates from the class of 2011 returned for their third year at UMass Boston compared to 64% for the BPS class of 2008,
- 🔄 BPS graduates on track to complete degrees (2.5 GPA/24 credits/6-year graduation) increased annually from 26% in 2008 to 53% for the class of 2012.

The presence of the community-based coaches has expanded the capacity of the UMass advising and student-support staff and built a strong bridge between the university and organizations serving BPS graduates in the communities in which they live and work. This model provides a unique opportunity for college success to be owned simultaneously by community organizations and higher education institutions. It supports Success Boston’s ambitious goal of increasing degree-completion rates while also expanding responsibility for students’ college success, building a culture in high schools, neighborhoods and higher education institutions that provides all Boston’s students with the supports they need to earn a postsecondary credential.

Although it is too soon to know definitively, Success Boston’s theory is that this enhanced support will mean that more students graduate from college. The six-year college graduation rate has increased to 49.3% for the high-school Class of 2006 (up from our baseline of 35% for the Class of 2000), which is widely believed to be attributable to improved academic readiness. While we move close to the interim goal of a 52% completion rate for the Class of 2009, the supports provided by the embedded model should accelerate degree completion.

Updated enrollment, persistence and completion data is expected to be available in early 2014.



Equally successful is a pilot project started at UMass Boston which has expanded to Bunker Hill and Roxbury community colleges. Dubbed the “embedded model” by participants, UMass Boston brought transition coaches to campus and placed them in the Advising Center. Coaches regularly attended staff meetings and trainings and developed joint programming with UMass staff. This model enabled the coaches to serve more students, serve those students more effectively, and connect them more easily to academic and other support as well as co- and extra-curricular activities.

The increased capacity provided by the embedded model allowed all BPS graduates who enrolled in fall 2010 to have either a nonprofit coach or a UMass advisor. Early evidence of this collaboration has been promising:

Opportunity Youth

Boston Collaborative for Opportunity Youth

During the past several years, Boston has made solid progress toward increasing 4-year high-school graduation and college-completion rates. At the same time, our high-school dropout rate has been inching higher. A deeper analysis of the data behind these trends shows that it may be possible to increase our gains in these areas significantly by increasing our focus on people we are calling “Opportunity Youth.” These young people, ages 16-24, are disconnected from both school and work. According to the 2010 American Community Survey, there are more than 12,000 such young adults in our city. Surprisingly, 72% of them have a high-school diploma or equivalent but either have never attempted postsecondary education or have tried and dropped out.

In February, the Boston Opportunity Agenda, the Hyams Foundation, and the Boston Private Industry Council convened a group of more than 50 practitioners and others invested in serving the Opportunity Youth population. Since that time we have accomplished the following:

- 🔄 Secured a grant from the Aspen Forum for Community Solutions to engage in a yearlong planning process that culminates in a citywide plan for Opportunity Youth. The plan includes the development of pathways from GED to postsecondary education and career.
- 🔄 Hosted a mayoral forum focused on elevating the issues and challenges of Opportunity Youth.
- 🔄 Secured a grant for the Boston Youth Service Network (BYSN) from Strive Together National that will help them to further



develop their network goals and outcomes as well as to establish mechanisms for tracking them. BYSN is a group of community-based organizations working collaboratively to provide alternative education and employment pathways for youth at risk.

- 🔄 Invested in ways to include youth voices by funding BYSN and DSNI to hire youth leaders who will participate in planning meetings and conduct focus groups with Opportunity Youth. This is to ensure that the final plan includes pathways that resonate with young people.
- 🔄 Begun to collect the baseline data necessary to set future goals across the Opportunity Youth pathways.



As we move forward, the Collaborative intends to bring together the current programs in Boston that serve Opportunity Youth while at the same time identifying gaps in current services that must be filled to create strong pathways for young people. As a part of the Aspen learning community, we hope to leverage not only the knowledge and assets of Boston but also the lessons being learned across the country.

Community Partners: ABCD Ostiguy High School, Ben Franklin Institute of Technology, Bird Street Community Center, Black Ministerial Alliance, Boston Asian Youth Essential Services, Boston Day and Evening Academy, Boston Public Schools, Boston Youth Service Network, B-PEACE for Jorge, Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Bunker Hill Community College, City of Boston, College Bound Dorchester, Committee for Public Counsel Services, Commonwealth Corporation, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Diamond Educators, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Executive Office of Health and Human Services, ESAC, Executive Office of Public Safety, Freedom House, Health Resources in Action, High Risk Youth Network, Higher Ground, Hull Lifesaving Museum, Hyams Foundation, Hyde Square Task Force, Inquillinos Boricuas en Acción, Jewish Vocational Service, Local Initiative Support Collaborative, Mass Communities Action Network, Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services, Multicultural Dropout Outreach Collaborative, New Profit, Partnership Advancing Community Together, Rennie Center, Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, Roca, Road to Opportunity Root Cause, Roxbury Community College, Roxbury Youthworks, StreetSafe Boston, Sociedad Latina, State Street Corp., Teen Empowerment, Teen Futures, Trinity Church Foundation, Urban College of Boston, X-Cel Inc. Adult Education Services, Year Up, Youth Build Boston, Youth Jobs Coalition, Youth on Board, Youth Opportunity Unlimited, Youth Transitions Task Force and Youth Violence Prevention Funder Learning Collaborative.

Adult Learners & Postsecondary Attainment

The Adult Opportunity Network

The Adult Basic Education (ABE) system that serves adult learners has been focused for many years on preparing students for a high school credential or English competence for everyday life rather than for success in postsecondary education and today's workforce. Changing this focus requires the ABE system to strengthen partnerships with the workforce development and community college systems, leverage additional resources and build its instructional and counseling capacities to improve student transitions from ABE coursework to college and technical certificate programs.

The Boston Opportunity Agenda created the Adult Opportunity Network in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Service and World Education, Inc. It aims to dramatically increase the number of Boston adults who are ready for college and career by creating a networked system of adult-education providers offering a clear pathway from ABE coursework to postsecondary education that results in a certificate or degree with labor-market value. Launched in June of 2011, the initial two networks are each comprised of three Boston-based providers.

The Adult Opportunity Agenda defines college and career readiness as a set of overlapping career, college, academic and personal readiness skills and knowledge needed by adults to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career pathways.



The four areas of readiness are:

- 🔄 Academic Readiness—content knowledge, study skills and strategies for college level reading, writing and algebra;
- 🔄 College Knowledge Readiness—the ability to navigate college culture and admissions and financial aid processes;
- 🔄 Career Readiness—the ability to articulate a realistic goal that is aligned with labor-market data and identify the steps along one’s education and career pathway;
- 🔄 Personal Readiness—the capacity to anticipate challenges, proactively secure supports and juggle multiple commitments while managing stress and time.

Together, each funded Adult Opportunity Network has identified educational service gaps to be filled through a coordinated continuum of shared services.

Community Partners: Jewish Vocational Service, United South End Settlements, International Institute of Boston, El Centro del Cardenal, Notre Dame Education Center and the YMCA International Education Center.

Results

The Adult Opportunity Network agencies worked with the National College Transitions Network/World Education, Inc. to create a uniform set of standards, competencies and curriculum for use by ABE educators. Together they:

- 🔄 Developed and disseminated the Adult Opportunity Portfolio Guide—a set of uniform lessons designed to promote student awareness, aspirations and skill development in all four areas of college and career readiness;
- 🔄 Provided training and coaching to ABE educators on curriculum delivery;
- 🔄 Built multisite networks that include transition and pre-transition to college courses;
- 🔄 Strengthened the college going culture of all six ABE organizations as demonstrated by students increased college going knowledge.

These generous investors have made the Boston Opportunity Agenda's accomplishments possible

Annie E. Casey Foundation	Klarman Family Foundation
Paul & Edith Babson Foundation	W. K. Kellogg Foundation
The Beal Companies, LLP	Robert & Myra Kraft Family Foundation
Boston Children's Hospital	Marjorie L. and James M. Lober Fund
Boston Public Health Commission	Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care
Boston Rising	Herman & Frieda L. Miller Foundation
Margaret A. Bush	The National Summer Learning Association
Deloitte LLP	Partners HealthCare
Eastern Charitable Foundation	Harold Whitworth Pierce Charitable Trust
Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust	Charles S. and Zena A. Scimeca Charitable Fund
Ford Foundation	W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation
Frieze Family Foundation	Matthew J. & Gilda F. Strazzula Foundation
Hamilton Company Charitable Foundation	Sunrise Fund
The Hayden Foundation	Sally Sutfenfield Webb Fund
Hildreth Stewart Fund	The Wallace Foundation
Nancy R. Karp	Charles A. Walsh, III

This report would not be possible without our data partners: the Boston Indicators Project and the Boston Public Schools Department of Research, Assessment and Evaluation. We thank them for their assistance in analyzing and reporting on the enclosed metrics. Any errors are of course our own.

Honoring Mayor Thomas M. Menino



This report card is dedicated to Mayor Thomas M. Menino. He ran for mayor 20 years ago pledging to reform the Boston education system. At the time, the Boston Public Schools was a failing system by every measure. As demonstrated by this report card, tremendous change has happened during that time for students and their families. Boston has full-day kindergarten and pre-K, the majority of BPS students have access to physical-education and arts programming, community partners are engaged at every level to assist in educating the whole child, and our citywide conversation about college is not focused on whether Boston's young people are going to college, but rather on whether they are graduating. This is a solid foundation on which to build. We thank him for his tireless efforts on behalf of all of Boston's learners.

The Mayor receives a signed jersey from students at Success Boston's Fall 2013 Kickoff. The "70" reflects the Mayor's goal of a 70 percent college-completion rate for BPS graduates.



www.bostonopportunityagenda.org