

COMPACT BETWEEN THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND BOSTON ALLIANCE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

As the birthplace of public education in the United States, Boston has long pioneered innovations. Elected officials, educators and residents have continuously voiced their perspectives about proposals, and the City both has succeeded and been challenged with change. The establishment of charter schools in the realm of public education has been no different. Our communities have expressed an array of sentiments about charter schools and the district, ranging from enthusiasm to distrust. In this context, where merely a year ago some City and charter school leaders viewed one another as the opposite of partners, this compact between the Boston Public Schools and Boston Alliance of Charter Schools is a significant milestone.

The compact builds upon school-to-school partnerships that individual charter and district principals previously forged to benefit all public school students in the City of Boston. Already, the compact has yielded promising accomplishments. For example:

- **Common enrollment calendar.** Compact partners are creating a common enrollment calendar as a first step toward building a universal enrollment system for all public schools. This will simplify the enrollment process for parents, who today face two entirely different timelines for applying for and selecting schools.
- **Shared professional development.** To build the capacity of all schools in serving families in need and students with disabilities, this year BPS will open its special education professional development to charter school staff. Codman Academy Charter School will convene social workers from charter schools with Family and Community Outreach Counselors from BPS to build a professional community where colleagues can solicit advice and resources for supporting students and families.
- **Common accountability system.** The district and charter schools are laying the groundwork for the adoption of common school metrics that would allow Boston's families to make apples-to-apples comparisons between schools, regardless of district or charter status. This school year, eight schools will share the quantitative data in the BPS School Performance Index and a team from each will visit the other, using focus group questions from the state's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's annual visits to charter schools.
- **Access to facilities in high-needs areas.** Maximizing funding for classroom instruction is part of the commitment to improving public education for all of Boston's children. Towards that end, BPS is developing requests for proposals for some vacant school buildings that charter schools might wish to lease. Charter schools are working to reduce BPS' transportation costs by recruiting more students from the neighborhoods in which they are located and/or leasing buildings in the communities they serve.

The following pages outline additional current and future outcomes. The section below documents broad commitments to one another and the strategies we will jointly employ. The timelines that ensue provide the specifics that will serve to hold us accountable to this compact.

COMMITMENTS

The Boston Public Schools and the Boston Alliance of Charter Schools together comprise the public education system for all of Boston's children. As systems, we share the crucial responsibility of providing the high quality education that prepares students for college, work and life.

In the interest of providing *all* Boston students and families with improved schools and broader choice, we are inaugurating a new culture of collaboration between the district and charter schools. The partnerships we will embark upon are aimed at adding value to the broader public education system rather than benefiting one party or another. We will support one another in a variety of manners, ranging from taking best instructional practices to scale to addressing significant budget challenges such as facilities and transportation. With students' best interests in mind, we will explore promising systemic innovations together. We also will hold one another accountable for addressing low performing schools.

We recognize that this partnership requires trust, mutual respect and close collaboration between our respective schools and systems. In establishing this compact, we have begun to work together, sharing ideas and perspectives. We have validated that we have more in common than unalike. Though this document simply represents the end of the beginning of our process, we believe that we have created an agreement that will lead to tangible, significant results for students, families and our City.

In order to realize our shared aims, each system makes the following pledges:

The Boston Alliance of Charter Schools commits to:

- a. Serve all types of students in the City of Boston, emphasizing outreach to, services for and retention of underserved populations including, but not limited to English Language Learners and students with varied special needs. Charter schools will also make public/share with the district institutional data regarding student demographics (such as ELL status, students in special education or foster care, students who are homeless, survivors of violence), mobility and achievement.
- b. Support the location of new charter schools in the neighborhoods with greatest need, by collaborating with the Boston Public Schools to analyze need (including grade configuration in an area).
- c. Minimize transportation costs to the Boston Public Schools by focused recruitment within the school's geographic community, when possible coordinating school start and end times with the district, and exploring the possibility of paying for transportation in exchange for access to district buildings or services.
- d. Share best practices and promising innovations with the Boston Public Schools.

The Boston Public Schools commit to:

- a. Respect and protect the autonomies of all public charter schools in the City, including charter school availability to all students.
- b. Incorporate the Boston Alliance for Charter Schools into strategic planning for reforms to the student enrollment system. The district also will engage the Alliance during public discussion and decision-making about the district's portfolio of schools, particularly when there will be changes to grade configurations or types of schools offered in a particular neighborhood.
- c. Explore leasing vacant or under-utilized district buildings to charter schools, possibly in exchange for charter assistance with transportation costs as well as broad participation in this compact.
- d. Explore opportunities to offer charter schools access to bulk purchasing.
- e. Investigate the possibility of establishing contracts for the district to serve particular special needs populations on behalf of charter schools, and explore methods of helping charter schools recruit and retain English Language Learners and students with varied special needs.
- f. Share with the Boston Alliance institutional data regarding student demographics (such as ELL status, students in special education or foster care, students who are homeless, survivors of violence), mobility and achievement.
- g. Share best practices and promising innovations with charter schools.

STRATEGIES

In order to make this collaboration a reality we, the leaders of the Boston Public Schools and the Boston Charter School Alliance will:

I. Co-construct and establish an Office of Compact Agreement

This neutral non-profit organization will serve as the governing body for the compact and will be charged with transparent oversight of shared initiatives, collaborative problem-solving, and securing and distributing financial resources for shared work. The Boston Public Schools and the Boston Alliance of Charter Schools will each have five representatives on the Steering Committee of this organization. For the first 2-year term, BPS Deputy Superintendent Michael Goar and Alliance of Boston Charter Schools Chair Kevin Andrews will serve as Co-Chairs.

II. Advance partnership work in the four areas central to this compact

As we built this compact, our colleagues identified four priority areas for collaboration: Teaching and Learning, School Portfolio, Student Supports and Systems and Accountability. We formed

working groups for each of these areas with district and charter school members. Each working group has already met multiple times, identified key strategies and action plans (below). Each group has also begun to tackle “quick wins” that are helping us build trust and strong working relationships between district and charter representatives, as well as demonstrate the immediate value of this compact.

With the signing of this compact, working group members commit to continue collaboration over the coming months and years to advance the key strategies delineated below. In some cases, working groups will delegate specific tasks to subcommittees of their group.

Strategies:

A. Teaching and Learning

1. Facilitate learning communities and shared professional development for district and charter teachers, instructional leaders and school heads in order to share best practices and explore innovations for broader application.
2. Increase the number of high performing teachers and leaders joining district and charter public schools by working with a local degree-granting and/or residency program to formalize and deepen a three-way partnership.

B. School Portfolio Working Group

3. Jointly develop and analyze a data set of student demographic information, school academic performance data and enrollment patterns in order to inform the vision for the portfolio of schools and strategic decision-making.
4. Enhance equitable access to high quality education for all students, including, but not limited to English Language Learners and students with disabilities, by discussing joint recommendations for the siting of schools and the use of public buildings, and developing a collaborative process for addressing student enrollment, assignment and transportation.
5. Explore opportunities to partner for bulk purchasing and/or services.

C. Student Supports

6. Expand student and family supports, particularly for children with special needs and English language learners, by building the capacity of district and charter staff to teach and provide services for them.
7. Open opportunities to participate in extra-curricular programs between district and charter schools within the Circle of Promise.

D. Systems and Accountability

8. Identify a tool and establish a process for evaluating the efficacy of individual schools, acknowledging the level of a school’s performance and making recommendations for expansion of successful programs or school turnaround plans and closures as needed.

TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTION PLAN

Objective

Enhance the efficacy of charter and district teachers and principals in closing the achievement gap. As stated in the compact, key strategies to accomplish this objective include:

1. Facilitate learning communities and shared professional development for district and charter teachers, instructional leaders and school heads in order to share best practices and explore innovations for broader application.
2. Increase the number of high performing teachers and leaders joining district and charter public schools by working with a local degree-granting and/or residency program to formalize and deepen a three-way partnership.

Overview

District and charter partners will build learning communities through joint instructional rounds and analysis of student work at the middle school levels. They will open professional development to colleagues from district and charter schools. The partners also will collaborate on establishing a shared school leadership pipeline, giving individuals the opportunity to serve as residents in both charter and district schools. Compact partners will measure the impact of these strategies by analysis of student scores on assignments as well as participation rates and satisfaction surveys by school faculty.

Methods, Measures and Timelines

1a) Instructional rounds and analysis of student work: Focus on effective teaching of writing at the middle school level

Since writing is a core priority for all schools, as well as BPS' professional development focus for middle schools, the Working Group leaders propose convening principals and teachers from select district and charter middle schools to define a practice question regarding the effective teaching of writing. With support from an outside facilitator, school faculty will visit one another's classrooms and together review student work. After writing, the group will focus on the effective instruction of middle school math.

In 2011-12, the compact partners will measure progress by analyzing participation and satisfaction through attendance records and qualitative surveys. In 2012-13, the measures shift to student performance. Partners will define measurable goals together, possibly building upon BPS' Acceleration Agenda academic targets.

Implementation Timeline (subject to revision upon meeting with experts):

Date	Action Step
Aug 10+31 2011	Meet: Outline working group’s short- and long-term strategies
Sep 21, 2011	Meet: Working Group + Writing and Instructional Rounds experts develop timeline and protocols for MS instructional rounds, identify long-term facilitator, strategize about how to broaden impact beyond participants
Oct 2011	Initial convening of principals and teachers to build relationships, set goals
Nov 2011	Convening to build relationships, talk about best writing practices
Dec 2011	Continuation on proven practices for effective writing instruction and calibration of the group
Jan 2012	Setting of norms and protocols for instructional rounds + debrief sessions
Jan-Jun 2012	Monthly school visits and discussions of student work
May 2012	Evaluate what is/is not working and revise plan for year two

1b) Expand access to shared professional development

There is great interest from BPS and the Alliance in sharing professional development opportunities with one another. As BPS opens its professional development related to special education to charter colleagues, the Teaching and Learning Working Group also is exploring additional venues for sharing such resources (including the Achievement Network and summer institutes). The most likely first shared PD will be a one- or two-session workshop on mapping the Common Core in the early fall of 2011.

2) Develop a shared leadership pipeline

In the interest of ensuring a greater percentage of Boston students in public schools have highly effective principals, the Alliance of Boston Charter Schools and the Boston Public Schools will develop a pipeline for school leader development. The model will take the best of leadership development from both types of schools and will offer in-depth residency experiences in both district and charter schools. This may mean residents spend five days per week for half a year in one school and switch to the other type of school second semester. An academic partner would offer courses (university TBD). The partners hope to build upon existing programs and are considering sending a cohort through a charter management organization training as well. Residents would receive a stipend and their coursework would be paid for in exchange for a three-year commitment to service in a BPS or Alliance school.

The leadership pipeline is being developed as a concept while instructional rounds and some joint professional development are implemented. The group recognizes that this is not an “early win,” but that the program has the potential of becoming the infrastructure for other teaching and learning partnerships in the compact.

SCHOOL PORTFOLIO ACTION PLAN

Objective

Ensure that resources are targeted efficiently to meet the needs of all students in Boston, based on a vision of a “portfolio” of different types of schools serving the unique needs of our students. As stated in the compact, key strategies to accomplish this objective include:

1. Jointly develop data-driven analyses of student demographic information, school academic performance data and enrollment patterns in order to inform the vision for the portfolio of schools and strategic decision-making in both types of schools.
2. Establish equitable access to high quality education for all students, including, but not limited to English Language Learners and students with disabilities, by discussing joint recommendations for the siting of schools and the use of public buildings, and developing a collaborative process for addressing student enrollment, assignment and transportation.
3. Explore opportunities to partner for bulk purchasing and/or services.

Overview

The School Portfolio working group has met multiple times since Spring 2011, and has already begun to deliver on elements of our key strategies. In 2011, the working group is focusing on demographic research and analysis, as well as reducing the costs of facilities and transportation. The group also will implement first steps towards universal enrollment. In 2012, the working group will decide whether and how to proceed with bulk purchasing.

Date	Action Step
Jun 13, 2011	Meet: Reviewed draft work plan. The Alliance of Boston Charter Schools shared survey of charter needs for facilities and thoughts regarding potential trade-offs
Jun-Jul 2011	BPS Office of Strategic Planning compiled maps and tables regarding student demographics by neighborhood and school enrollment (Where do students live and where are their schools? What is the demographic make-up of BPS? Of charters in the Alliance?)
Jul 27, 2011	Meet: BPS presented student demographic and enrollment information for analysis and discussion of school siting and leases. Discussed the next data set needed.
Aug 16, 2011	Meet: Discuss lease timeline and early wins towards universal enrollment
Aug 29, 2011	Meet: Ad hoc sub-group drafts 2011-12 enrollment proposal
Sep 7, 2011	Boston School Committee hears BPS facilities re-use proposal
Sep 12, 2011	Meet: Discuss streamlined process for sharing BPS student records with charters (for transfer students), follow-up on compact signing, leases
Oct 5, 2011	Meet: Ad hoc sub-group refines enrollment proposal based upon feedback from colleagues, merges calendars for 2012-13 enrollment
Oct 17, 2011	Meet: Enrollment proposal from sub-committee discussed with full group
Oct 19, 2011	RFPs for vacant BPS buildings released (tentative), followed by tours of available facilities the following week

Nov 11, 2011	Responses to RFPs due (tentative)
Nov 14, 2011	Meet: Discussion of demographic analysis (part II)
Nov-Dec 2011	RFP winners determined, lease negotiations finalized
Jan 2012	Charters who win leases take possession of buildings
Feb 13, 2012	Share mobility/churn/transfer data (for individual schools), analyze, and add to shared definitions
Mar 12, 2012	Meet: Explore bulk purchasing (BPS share menu of possibilities)
Apr 9, 2012	Meet: topic TBD
May 14, 2012	Meet: topic TBD
Jun 11, 2012	Meet: Share drop out, attrition and graduation data. Analyze and add to shared definitions. Decide whether/how to repeat data analysis process for 2012-13
Fall 2012	Charters open school within leased BPS buildings
Fall 2012	Explore aligning data resources

NOTE: Dates are subject to change

STUDENT SUPPORTS ACTION PLAN

Objective

Increase the capacity of all public schools in Boston to meet the individual needs students and families, and leverage resources for out of school time programming. As stated in the compact, key strategies to accomplish this objective include:

1. Expand student and family supports, particularly for children with special needs and English language learners, by building the capacity of district and charter staff to teach and provide services for them.
2. Open opportunities to participate in extra-curricular programs between district and charter schools within the Circle of Promise.

Overview

The working group will focus on professional development and community building in 2011-12. BPS will open its special education PD sessions to charter faculty (*and, per enrollment group, convene BPS' ELL Dept. with curricular leaders from charters to create a systemic approach for English language learners - to be developed*). Codman Academy will convene staff serving as social workers in both systems. The group will outline aims for out-of-school-time programming and begin planning for 2012-13 leveraging of resources.

Timeline

Date	Action Step
Jun 2011	After Working Group meeting, Conservatory Lab invites neighboring BPS school, Edison, to send 20 students to arts summer camp. Principals agree to continue working together
Sep 2011	BPS Assistant Superintendent, Office of Special Education and Support Services distributes rate sheet for translation, OT/PT and other services discussed in the working group
Sep 12, 2011	Meet: Codman Academy Charter School Executive Director and BPS Assistant Superintendent of Family and Student Engagement and Director of Circle of Promise and Community Engagement plan first convening of charter school social workers and BPS Family and Community Outreach Coordinators
Oct 2011	Meet: Set goals and develop timeline for sharing of athletic and after school programs for fall 2012, explore strategies for opening charter PD to BPS faculty
Oct/Nov 2011	Social workers and FCOCs convened to begin building relationships and discuss developing on-line listserv for questions about particular cases or resources
Fall 2011	BPS opens special education professional development to charter faculty and staff
Dec/Jan 2011	On-line resource established to support FCOC/Social Worker collaboration
Fall 2012	Out of school time programming collaboration begins

SYSTEMS AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACTION PLAN

Objective

Enable families to make sound comparisons between all public schools. As stated in the compact, a key strategy to achieve this objective is to:

1. Identify a tool and establish a process for evaluating the efficacy of individual schools, acknowledging the level of a school's performance and making recommendations for expansion of successful programs or school turnaround plans and closures as needed.

Overview

In 2011-12, the Systems and Accountability Working Group will coordinate the interactions of four pairs of district and charter schools sharing qualitative and quantitative data on school performance and suggestions for improvement. The fall will focus on developing relationships, familiarity with schools and protocols. Data and formal observations will be shared in spring.

Tools

Participating schools will use four of the six quantitative measures (academic growth, on-track towards proficiency and graduation, closing the achievement gaps, student attendance) of the BPS School Performance Index.

To collect qualitative data, district staff will conduct interviews and observations at charter schools and vice versa using selections from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Guiding Questions for Charter School Site Visits. (Please note the principals will narrow the questions and refine timeline.)

Timeline

Date	Action Step
Jun 2011	Meet: Shared BPS School Performance Index and annual school site visit protocol, which DESE uses with charters. Outlined timeline for this initiative.
Jul 2011	Drafted proposal for joint metric, began recruiting pilot participants
Aug 2011	Finalize identification of pilot participants (Conservatory Lab + Edison, MATCH + TechBoston, Boston Collegiate + Quincy Upper, Boston Renaissance + TBD)
Sep 2011	Meet: Convene participating school leaders to orient to compact and this particular pilot, sketch out detailed timeline
Oct/Nov 2011	Initial visits to one another's schools
Dec11/Jan12	Collect quantitative data for School Performance Index
Jan/Feb 2012	Meet: review SPI together
Mar/Apr 2012	Visit one another's schools to collect qualitative data, provide feedback and recommendations
May/Jun	Meet: Working group decides whether to incrementally or broadly expand participation for 2012-13, revises tools and process based on experiences
2013-14	Aim: Metric used in all public schools in Boston
TBD	Working Group drafts teacher quality metric and process for implementation (potential to collaborate with Teaching and Learning Working Group here)

We, the undersigned, hereby commit to this compact.

Thomas M. Menino, Mayor
City of Boston

Date

Dr. Carol R. Johnson, Superintendent
Boston Public Schools

Date

Kevin Andrews, Headmaster
Neighborhood House Charter School

Date

Susan Thompson, Executive Director
Academy of the Pacific Rim

Date

Shannah Varon, Executive Director
Boston Collegiate Charter School

Date

Scott McCue, Head of School
Boston Preparatory Charter School

Date

Roger Harris, Superintendent
Boston Renaissance Charter School

Date

Jug Chokshi, Executive Director
Bridge Boston Charter School

Date

Erica Brown, Executive Director
City on a Hill Charter Public School

Date

Meg Campbell, Executive Director
Codman Academy Charter Public School

Date

Diana Lam, Head of School
Conservatory Lab Charter School

Date

Bob Flynn, Headmaster
Dorchester Collegiate Academy Charter School

Date

Kimberly Steadman, Co-Director
Edward Brooke Charter School

Date

Dai Ellis, Chief Executive Officer
Excel Academy Charter School

Date

Michael Larsson, Executive Director
MATCH Charter Public School

Date

Will Austin, Chief Operating Officer
Uncommon Schools

Date

Karmala Sherwood, Head of School
Smith Leadership Academy Charter Public School

Date