

# Boston Public Schools: Improving School Choice

Working with you to improve school choice and student assignment

## Improving School Choice: New Home-based Choice System

Presentation to Quality Working Group  
May 1, 2013

Building better options together



# The Mayor and Superintendent appointed an External Advisory Committee (EAC) to recommend an improved school choice process

- The 27-member External Advisory Committee on School Choice is composed of parents, students, community members, and educational, business, and nonprofit leaders
- The EAC focused its work around three key factors: Community Engagement; Data-driven Analysis; and Defining Quality and Equitable Access
- The EAC has met 55 times for over 117 hours between March 2012 and February 2013

**Dean Hardin Coleman**, Co-Chair, Boston University School of Education

**Helen Dájer**, Co-Chair, Former Boston School Committee member, and BPS parent

**Angie Auguste**, BPS Student

**Kelly Bates**, Lawyer, Foundation Representative, and BPS parent

**Kathleen Colby**, BPS Ambassador and former BPS parent

**Ian Deason**, Business leader and parent

**Rahn Dorsey**, Evaluation Director, the Barr Foundation

**Paul Francisco**, Business leader and BPS parent

**Robert Gittens**, Vice President of Public Affairs, Northeastern University, and former BPS parent

**Carolyn Kain**, Chair, Boston SpedPac, and BPS parent

**Craig Lankhorst**, Former BPS principal

**Ruthzee Louijeune**, JD and MPP candidate, Harvard University, and 2004 BPS graduate

**Brendan McDonough**, Business and community leader, and BPS parent

**John Nucci**, VP for Government and Community Affairs, Suffolk University, and former BPS parent

**Imari Paris Jeffries**, Partner, Boston Rising

**Laura Perille**, Exec. Director, EdVestors, and BPS parent

**Heaven Reda**, BPS Student

**Israel Ruiz**, BPS parent

**Andrea Swain**, Exec. Director, Yawkey Club of Roxbury, Boys and Girls Club of Boston

**Tammy Tai**, Nonprofit Executive Director, and BPS parent

**Mary Tamer**, Member, Boston School Committee, and BPS parent

**Josephine Tavares**, BPS Teacher and parent

**Miren Uriarte**, Prof., College of Public and Community Service, Sr. Research Associate, Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy UMass/ Boston, and former BPS parent

**William Walczak**, former BPS parent

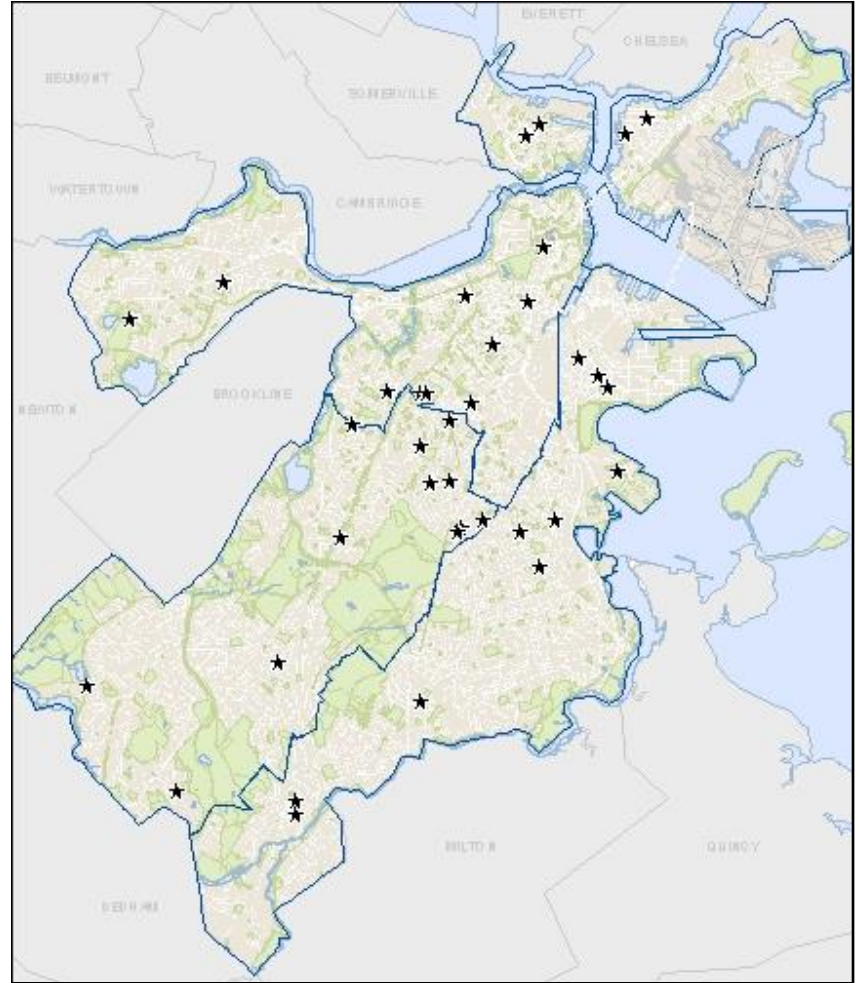
**Rev. Liz Walker**, Interim Pastor of Roxbury Presbyterian Church

**Vernee Wilkerson**, Roslindale parent

**Bak Fun Wong**, Former Headmaster, Quincy Upper School/ BPS Central

# We have engaged extensively with the community at every step of this process

- Engaged more than 5,100 community members in-person at more than 70 community meetings or online through surveys
- Held meetings at 36 unique sites across the city (see map)
- A new online tool was created to allow users to type in their address and see their school choices
  - Over 1,400 unique visitors have used this tool



# The EACs recommended and the School Committee adopted a new home-based assignment plan.

“Home-Based/A” ensures every family has high-quality school options. It adapts to changes in quality over time.

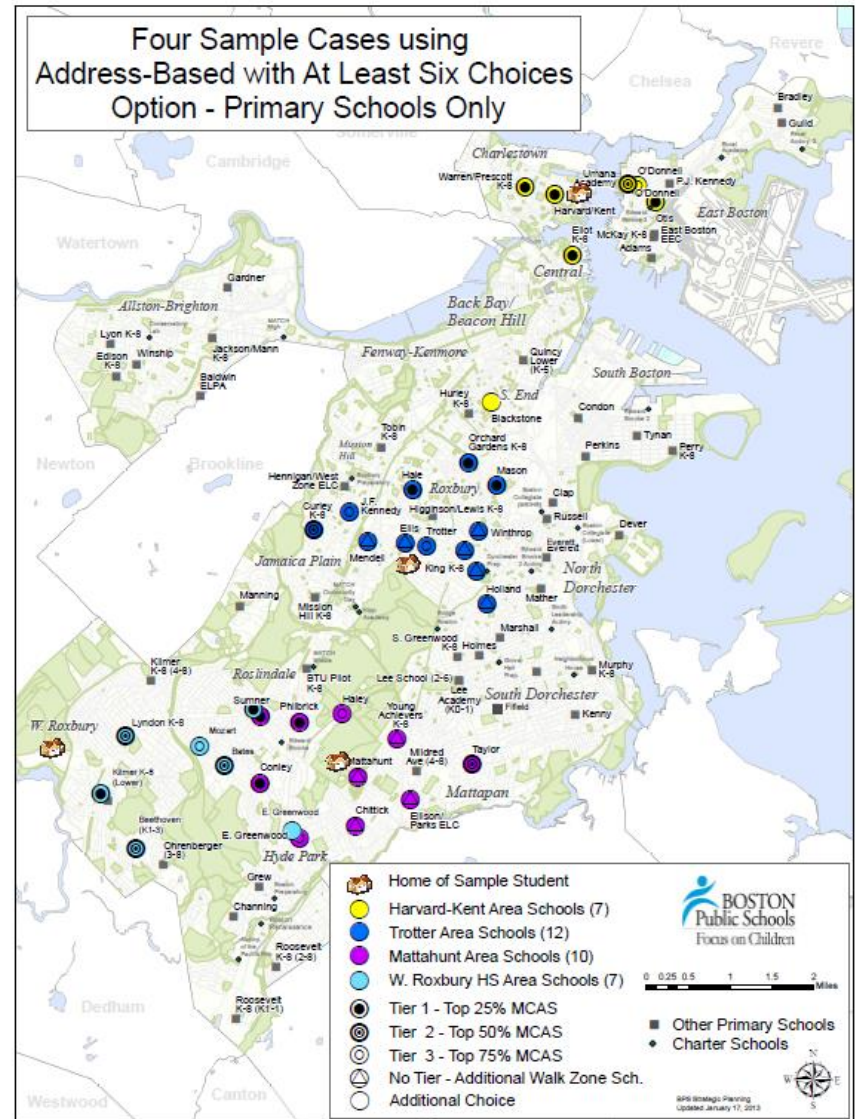
School choice lists contain a **minimum of six schools** and always contain the closest:

- 2 top-tier schools
- 2 top- or second-tier schools
- 2 schools from the first, second or third tier

Students with fewer higher-quality schools closer to home will have more choices to ensure they have access to quality.

Every list will include all schools that are within one mile from home (walk zone), citywide options and other nearby schools to ensure seat availability.

Tiers are based on a combination of a school’s MCAS proficiency and academic growth. Families will rank the schools they prefer and students will be assigned based on sibling priority, random number and seat availability.



# Current Definition of Quality: BPS schools by tier

*Note: For 2014-15, this list would change based on 2012-13 MCAS and demand data*

## **Tier 1 Schools**

*Schools in the Top 25% MCAS  
Snapshot percentile:*

Bradley Elementary  
Conley Elementary  
Eliot K-8  
Hale Elementary  
Harvard/Kent Elementary  
Henderson Elementary  
Hurley Elementary  
Kilmer Lower/Upper  
Lyndon K-8  
Lyon K-8  
Manning Elementary  
Mason Elementary  
Murphy K-8  
Otis Elementary  
Philbrick Elementary  
Quincy Lower (K-5)  
Roosevelt K-8  
Sumner Elementary  
Warren/Prescott

## **Tier 2 Schools**

*Schools in the Top 26-50% MCAS  
Snapshot percentile:*

Bates Elementary  
Beethoven/Ohrenberger  
BTU Pilot  
Clap Innovation School  
Curley Lower & Upper  
Edison K-8  
Sarah Greenwood K-8  
Guild Elementary  
Jackson/Mann K-8  
Kennedy John F Elementary  
Kennedy Patrick Elementary  
Kenny Elementary  
Mather Elementary  
Mission Hill K-8  
Mozart Elementary  
Orchard Gardens K-8  
Taylor Elementary  
Mario Umana Academy

## **Tier 3 Schools**

*Schools in the Top 75% MCAS  
Snapshot percentile:*

Adams Elementary  
Condon Elementary  
Dever Elementary  
Everett Elementary  
Gardner Elementary  
Haley Elementary  
Lee Elementary/Lee Academy  
McKay K-8  
O'Donnell Elementary  
Perry K-8  
Russell Elementary  
Tobin K-8  
Winship Elementary

## **Tier 4 Schools**

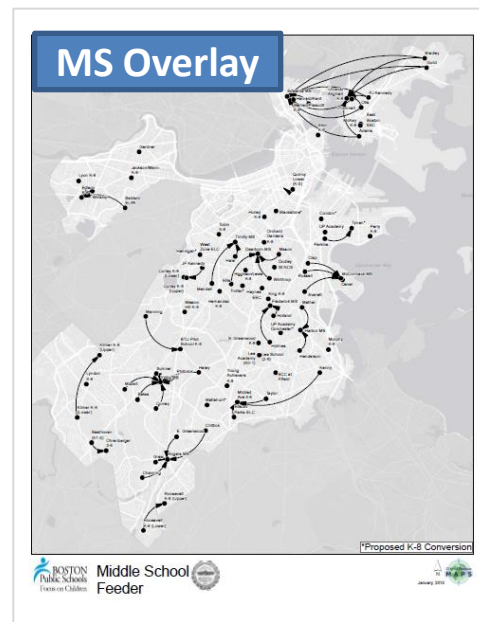
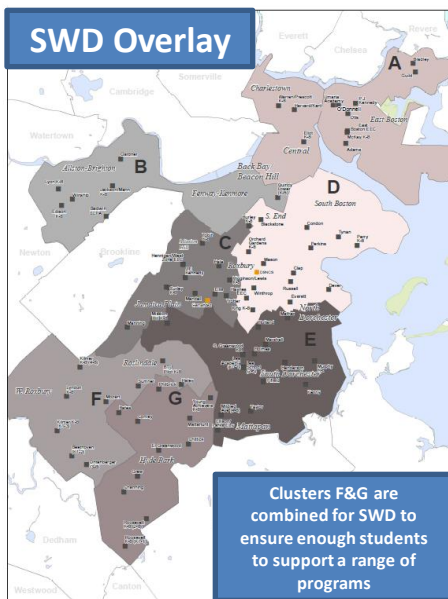
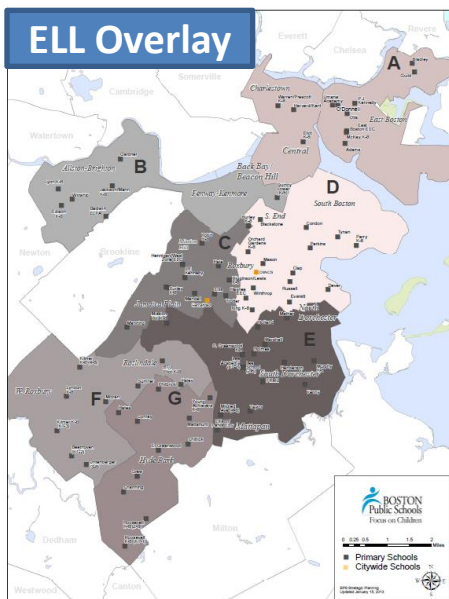
*Schools below the Top 75% MCAS  
Snapshot percentile:*

Blackstone Elementary  
Channing Elementary  
Chittick Elementary  
Ellis Elementary  
Greenwood Elihu Elem  
Grew Elementary  
Hennigan Elementary  
Higginson/Lewis K-8  
Holland Elementary  
Holmes Elementary  
King K-8  
Marshall Elementary  
Mattahunt Elementary  
Mendell Elementary  
Mildred Avenue K-8  
Perkins Elementary  
Trotter Elementary  
Tynan Elementary  
Winthrop Elementary  
Young Achievers K-8

**Based on Quadrant Analysis Methodology:**

**Using Two Years MCAS Data for ELA & MATH (67% Proficiency and 33% Growth)**

# The School Committee also approved overlays for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and middle school students



# This new assignment system provides many benefits to families compared to the status quo

- **The home-based plan** is a new and innovative student assignment model based on ground-breaking research
- As a home-based model, it offers a number of benefits, including:
  - It is **more equitable than the status quo**
  - It **protects the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity** we value in our schools
  - It does away with zones and puts a priority on **helping students attend quality schools closer to home**
  - It is **more predictable** than what we have today: it increases the chances a family will receive one of their top three choices to 80 percent
  - It **reduces the average distance** our children must travel by 40 percent
  - It ensures that **neighboring children have similar lists of schools** to from which to choose
  - It is self-correcting and **adapts as quality improves**; every time a school gets better, predictability and equity will increase and the distance students have to travel will decrease

# In addition, the School Committee approved a number of additional EAC recommendations

1. **Focus on quality improvements** by issuing an annual accountability report on improving school performance
2. **Continue a transparent and data-driven approach** to student assignment reform
3. **Create a task force** focused on monitoring and evaluating efforts to increase equitable access to a quality education for all students in Boston
4. **Analyze increases in quality seats** with a focus on enhancing equitable access
5. **Create a comprehensive school quality measure**
6. **Specify an absolute (rather than relative) threshold for school performance**
7. **Explore parent compacting** for under-chosen schools on a pilot basis
8. **Focus on family and community communication and outreach** for successful implementation
9. **Complete review of transportation policies and costs** with eye towards improving efficiency and reducing costs
10. **Determine the frequency with which school choice lists will be updated** based on changes in school quality



# Questions and Answers

# For more information:

- Please see our website at [www.bostonschoolchoice.org](http://www.bostonschoolchoice.org)
- **Interactive tool:** To explore what schools each of these models might provide as options for a new elementary school student, use our interactive mapping tool, available through the Boston School Choice website or at [maps.cityofboston.gov/models/](http://maps.cityofboston.gov/models/)

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the "Boston School Choice - Proposed Models" interactive tool. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://maps.cityofboston.gov/models/>. The page features a navigation menu on the left with options: 10 Zone Model, 11 Zone Model, Home Based - A Model (selected), Home Based - B Model, ELL Options, SWD Options, and New at BPS. A "Locate" button is positioned next to an address input field. The main content area displays the "Model: Home Based - A" description, which explains that this model uses MCAS test scores to designate schools as Tier 1 (highest quality), Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 (lowest quality). It states that based on a home address, families receive a list of at least six prospective schools, and everyone's list includes a range of options in Tiers 1, 2 & 3. A list of school options is provided, including six schools close to home in the top three tiers, any other school within 1 mile not already on the list, all three citywide elementary schools, and any additional schools close to home with available capacity. A map on the right shows the city of Boston with numerous blue dots representing school locations. The map includes a legend, a scale bar (0 to 2 miles), and a copyright notice: "Copyright: ©2012 Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ esri".