The Essential Guide to Pilot Schools

Overview
September 2006
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As districts and schools across the country look for ways to improve educational opportunities for all students, beginning the Pilot School path is a journey worth taking.

The Guides Project

The Essential Guide to Pilot Schools is an introduction to the Pilot/Horace Mann Schools, a group of 20 innovative schools within the Boston Public Schools* that are achieving strong results. The Essential Guide project grew out of an increasing interest in Pilot Schools, and through text and Web-based guides aims to make the Pilot model accessible to a wide audience in districts and schools.†

In this first guide, The Essential Guide to Pilot Schools: Overview, readers will learn the essentials of Pilot Schools, including autonomy, accountability, small size, and a commitment to equity. Readers will discover data on Pilot Schools, how Pilot Schools fit into the school reform context, and the power of the Pilot Schools Network. Finally, readers will learn steps for starting Pilot Schools in other districts and schools.

Narrative in the guide is accompanied by 1) tools: resources and stand-alone documents, 2) vignettes: illustrations of aspects of the narrative, and 3) case studies: in-depth descriptions of a particular subject, supported by research.

The Essential Guide to Pilot Schools: Overview is the first in The Essential Guide to Pilot Schools series that provides information on Pilot Schools, including assessment; curriculum and instruction; governance and policies; budget, staffing, and schedule; and support structures. If you have any questions or comments about this guide or the project in general, please do not hesitate to contact us.

* Horace Mann charter schools are granted autonomy by the state department of education while also remaining part of the district and teachers union. There are two Horace Mann charters in Boston that have dual Pilot status. “Pilot Schools” will be used hereafter for simplicity, but continues to refer to the Pilot/Horace Mann Schools.

† Web guide: http://www.cce.org/pilotguides
Essentials

The Boston Pilot Schools

A group of 20 innovative public schools within the Boston Public Schools (BPS) system, Pilot Schools are outperforming the district averages across every indicator of student performance and engagement. Pilot Schools have higher performance by students at all grade levels on the statewide standardized assessment (MCAS), higher college-going rates, and higher attendance rates. As one student said in describing her Pilot School, “[This] is the kind of school I’ve been waiting for.”

Pilot Schools serve a student population that is generally representative of BPS, do not select students based on prior academic achievement, and receive the same per pupil allocation as all BPS schools. On the MCAS, Pilot Schools outpace the district at every grade level tested in English Language Arts, reading, and math, in percent passing and percent proficient. Seventy-nine percent of Pilot high school graduates are enrolled in post-secondary education one year after graduation, as compared with 67% of district high school graduates. At the high school level, Pilot Schools have a 95% attendance rate compared to BPS at 89%, which translates into Pilot School students attending school a full two weeks longer per year on average than do students in regular district high schools. Suspension rates in Pilot Schools are about half the district rate. Pilot Schools have far lower grade-level retention rates, known to correlate with a lower risk of a student’s dropping out of school.1

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1 In February 2006, the Boston Public Schools and Boston Teachers Union agreed on new Pilot contract language that allows for 105 uncompensated hours above the contract, and the district will pay the contract rate for up to 50 required hours worked over that amount. Some Pilot Schools do require teachers to work over 105 hours above the contract hours, and thus teachers in these schools get extra compensation from the district. See the Appendix for “Boston Teachers Union Contract Language on Pilot Schools.”
The Essential Features of Pilot Schools

All Pilot Schools share the following essential features:

- **Autonomy.** While part of the larger district, Pilot Schools exercise increased control over their own resources. Pilot Schools are granted five key areas of autonomy: 1) staffing; 2) budget; 3) curriculum and assessment; 4) governance; and 5) schedule. These areas of autonomy allow the schools flexibility in making decisions that best meet the needs of students and their families.

- **Accountability.** Pilot Schools are held to higher levels of accountability in exchange for increased autonomy. In addition to ongoing assessments, every five years each Pilot School undertakes a School Quality Review process based on a set of common benchmarks for a high-performing school.

- **Small Size.** Pilot Schools are small in size in order to facilitate students and adults knowing each other well. Only 2 of the 20 Pilot Schools enroll more than 450 students, and both of these schools are divided into multiple small academies. Pilot Schools work to create nurturing environments in which staff attend to the learning needs of all students.

- **Commitment to Equity.** Pilot Schools are not selective and strive to enroll students representative of the larger district. Each Pilot School has developed a vision and mission around how to educate students, which includes the belief that every student is able to achieve academic success, regardless of his or her background. Pilot Schools are committed to continually examining student data to ensure that all students are served well.

The result of a unique partnership of the mayor, school committee, superintendent, and teachers union, Pilot Schools were first opened in 1995 to serve as laboratories of innovation and research, and as development sites for effective urban public schools. Now, a reform strategy over ten years old, Pilot Schools represent a collaborative approach to relationships between teachers unions and school districts. Both parties give up part of their historical authority in order to allow school administrators and staff more school-based decision-making power. The Boston Teachers Union (BTU) contract states:

The Boston Public Schools and the Boston Teachers Union are sponsoring the establishment of innovative Pilot Schools within the Boston Public School system. The purpose of establishing Pilot Schools is to provide models of educational excellence that will help to foster widespread educational reform throughout all Boston Public Schools. The parties hope to improve dramatically the educational learning environment and thereby improve student performance.... Pilot Schools will be open to students in accordance with the Boston Public Schools controlled choice plan. Pilot Schools will operate with an average school-based per pupil budget, plus a start-up...
Each Pilot School has autonomy from Boston Public Schools policies and Boston Teachers Union contract provisions in exchange for increased accountability. Pilot Schools have control over budget, staffing, curriculum and assessment, governance, and schedule. These areas of autonomy allow schools to maximize their resources in order to best meet student needs. In return, Pilot Schools are held to a higher standard of accountability through a School Quality Review (SQR) process, which measures schools based on a set of benchmarks for high-performing schools.

Each Pilot School uses its autonomy to create a school culture that supports high expectations and achievement. Pilot Schools are by design small schools, enrolling ideally no more than 450 students in each school. Pilot Schools, as compared to the district averages, have low class sizes (18–20), secondary student-teacher loads that average 55 students per teacher in core academic classes, substantial common planning time for faculty to improve instruction, and a nurturing culture that provides substantial support to students through such structures as advisories and learning centers. In most Pilot Schools, students must demonstrate mastery of a defined set of skills and content knowledge through a series of assessments, in contrast to the traditional standard of course completion and performance on standardized tests alone.

As a result of their emphasis on high expectations and a caring school culture, Pilot Schools are highly sought after by students, families, and staff. All Pilot Schools partner with families and involve them in a range of school decisions and activities. Pilots have long waiting lists for enrollment, and, unlike BPS Exam Schools, they do not select students based on prior academic achievement.

Pilot Schools have learned that a powerful network of schools within the Boston Public Schools, aided by a third-party organization, is better able to promote collaboration among schools and leverage change within the district. The Center for Collaborative Education (CCE), a nonprofit education organization, convenes the Pilot Schools Network and works with Pilot Schools to improve practice and results.
There are three ways in which Pilot Schools may be established in the Boston Public Schools. For all types of schools, Pilot School proposals must be submitted to the BPS/BTU Joint Steering Committee for consideration. The steering committee consists of six BPS members and six BTU members, and is co-chaired by the BPS superintendent and BTU president. The committee may then recommend approval to the school committee, and the school committee votes on all Pilot School proposals.

1) **New, Start-Up Pilot School.** Through a Request for Proposals issued by the BPS, design teams may apply to create a Pilot School in a designated facility.

2) **Pilot Conversion.** An existing BPS school, by virtue of a two-thirds majority vote of BTU members who work more than 50% of their week at the school, and with support of the school’s site council, may convert to Pilot status. In addition, a charter school may convert to Pilot status.

3) **Pilot Conversion of a Separate School within the Same Facility.** An existing BPS school, by virtue of a two-thirds majority vote of BTU members who work more than 50% of their week at the school, and with support of the school’s site council, may agree to create a separate Pilot School within the existing facility, in addition to the regular BPS school that the facility currently houses. In this case, it is assumed that the Pilot proposal would include a plan for the existing school to decrease in enrollment as the Pilot School increases in enrollment, in order to address the overall enrollment limitations of the facility. All BPS teachers who elect to become a staff member in the new Pilot School would do so voluntarily.
Choosing Pilot

“The whole atmosphere says this is yours,” declared a Pilot School parent and teacher, and there is “a feeling of ownership” in Pilot Schools. In his child’s elementary school, parents are asked and encouraged to be involved in hiring and curriculum decisions. “You feel a sense of power,” the father explained. Pilot Schools invite parents to be part of design teams, governing boards, and leadership teams, and to make decisions on everything from setting the school’s mission and vision to hiring staff.

Both families and teachers make a choice to join a Pilot School, and a great part of the attraction is the engagement in the life and decisions of the school. According to a Pilot high school principal, “Teachers choose to come to a Pilot School…. It is their choice to be there,” and there is an “ownership that continues.” Teachers in Pilot Schools, like families, are involved in multiple decisions, including selecting professional development.

A parent of a Pilot early learning center school student said she wanted to enroll her child “first of all because it’s a great school.” Moreover, “the principal has a vision of equity.” Students gain skills while learning in a diverse environment of students from different races/ethnicities and income backgrounds. The school is an inclusion school; students with disabilities are part of her daughter’s classes. “I wanted her to become friends with and value others who are different from her,” said the mother. Staff are highly experienced and talented, and work together to best meet her daughter’s needs, using a “team approach” in discussions about her progress. The school offers many resources, including workshops for parents and counseling for students. Pilot Schools partner not only with families, but also with a variety of community organizations in order to provide students increased resources, such as internships and extracurricular opportunities.

Once a family chooses a Pilot School, the school works hard to engage and partner with them throughout their child’s education. Pilot Schools understand that by engaging and building strong relationships with families, each school will be better able to serve all of its students.
Autonomy

Pilot Schools’ defining philosophy is that if schools are provided maximum control over their resources to create innovative education programs in exchange for increased accountability, student engagement and performance will improve.³

Five areas of autonomy exist in Pilot Schools: staffing, budget, curriculum and assessment, governance, and schedule. Through autonomy, Pilot Schools possess increased decision-making power to best meet the needs of their students and create the conditions that realize each school’s respective mission and vision. The areas of autonomy are closely linked; as one Pilot School teacher noted, “The autonomies are very interrelated. There is no more than a step away between any two.” The ability to exercise the full range of autonomy is critical to the success of Pilot Schools.

Staffing: Pilot Schools have the freedom to hire and excess their staff in order to create a unified school community. Teachers should play a significant role in staff hiring. Pilot Schools:

- Decide on the staffing patterns and work assignments that create the optimal learning environment for students.
- Hire staff who best fit the needs of the school, regardless of his/her current union status (member of the district or not, although every teacher hired becomes a member of the Boston Teachers Union bargaining unit).

Budget: Pilot Schools have a lump sum per pupil budget that allows the school to decide on spending that best provides programs and services to students and their families. Pilot Schools:

- Have a lump sum per pupil budget, the sum of which is equivalent to other district schools within that grade span and includes salaries, instructional materials, consultants, and more.
- Choose either to purchase identified discretionary district services or to not purchase them and include the per pupil cost in the school’s lump sum per pupil budget.

Curriculum and Assessment: Pilot Schools have freedom to structure their curriculum and assessment practices to meet students’ learning needs. While all Pilot Schools are held accountable to federal- and state-required tests, including the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), these schools are given the flexibility to determine the school-based curriculum and assessment practices that best prepare students for federal and state assessments.

(continued)
Pilot Schools:

- Are freed from local district curriculum requirements—they can choose what content to cover and how to cover it.
- Set their own promotion and graduation requirements, although they must be comparable in rigor to the district requirements. Pilot Schools have an emphasis on competency-based, performance-based assessments.
- Decide on professional development in which faculty engage.

Governance: Pilot Schools have the freedom to create their own governance structure that has increased decision-making powers over budget approval, principal selection and evaluation, and programs and policies, while being mindful of state requirements, including MCAS and school councils. Pilot Schools have governing boards that assume increased governing responsibilities, while being mindful of state mandates, including the following:

- Set and maintain the school vision.
- Select, supervise, and annually evaluate the principal, with final approval by the superintendent in all cases.
- Approve the annual budget.
- Set their own policies that the school community feels will help students to be successful.

Schedule: Pilot Schools have the freedom to set longer school days and calendar years for both students and faculty in accordance with their principles or school reform models. In particular, research supports a correlation between increased faculty planning time spent on teaching and learning and increased student achievement. Scheduling that allows for summer and school-year faculty planning time contributes to a more unified school community and education program. Pilot Schools:

- Increase planning and professional development time for faculty.
- Organize the school schedule in ways that maximize learning time for students.

Staffing Autonomy

We try to build a program that has in place a lot of the supports that students need. So that’s where the budget allocation really begins. It starts with who the students are, what their needs are, and then we build a program, a staffing plan that attempts to meet most of their needs. —Pilot School principal

As a Pilot School teacher explained, it is critical to ensure that all newly hired staff support the school’s mission. “We have to make sure we have team players,” he said, while a principal stated simply, “We want the best staff that we can possibly have.” Teachers who work in Pilot Schools are
exempt from teachers union contract work rules, while still receiving union salary, benefits, and accrual of seniority within the district. Teachers voluntarily choose to work at Pilot Schools; when hired, they sign what is called an “election-to-work agreement,” which stipulates the work conditions for each school for the coming school year. The agreement is revisited and revised annually with staff input.

Through staffing autonomy, Pilot Schools create more personalized environments, including small class sizes, small teaching loads, and small learning communities. Staff in Pilot Schools often have multiple roles; for example, they may teach several subjects and lead student advisories. Nearly all Pilot middle and high schools, and some elementary schools, have advisories. Students are assigned a teacher advisor who follows their progress throughout the academic year or their entire time at the Pilot School. In small groups, staff work with students at least once per week and as often as every day to address students’ personal and academic needs, for example through college preparation activities.

The result of such support is evident among students, “Teachers are different [here]. To me, the teachers are more understanding. You can come to a teacher and really tell them something personal...they’re not just going to sit you by yourself and leave you stranded,” explained a Pilot high school student. Pilot Schools are also able to increase the number of staff in both academic and student support programs, and additional part-time, intern, and paraprofessional staff are utilized in flexible ways. “I have a lot of support here,” said a Pilot middle school student, “and that’s really important to me.”
The following chart provides an example of how one Pilot high school implemented budget and staffing autonomy. The chart compares a regular BPS high school with a Pilot high school of similar size and proportion of students with disabilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regular BPS High School</th>
<th>Pilot High School</th>
<th>Lump sum budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>292 students, including 7.9% with a 502.1-.3 prototype and 6.8% with a 502.4 prototype.</td>
<td>292 students, including 7.9% with a 502.1-.3 prototype and 6.8% with a 502.4 prototype.</td>
<td>$10,550 per student = $3,080,600 lump sum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Using BPS staff allocation rules</strong></td>
<td><strong>Using budget and staffing autonomy</strong></td>
<td>Subtract central, nondiscretionary costs (including library, benefits, facilities, safety) of $891,724 and 10% FY06 adjustment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 director</td>
<td>1 head of school</td>
<td>From the remainder, allocate teacher salaries and discretionary costs (which non-Pilot schools receive as services) totaling roughly $481/student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 assistant director</td>
<td>1 development staff</td>
<td>2005–06 discretionary line items: textbooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 academic support administrator</td>
<td>1 registrar/business manager</td>
<td>contracted services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 resource room teacher 2 substantially separate special education teachers 2 aides 1 special education department head 1 student support coordinator 1 guidance counselor 1 guidance clerical staff 1 resource room staff</td>
<td>3 student support staff 4 special education staff</td>
<td>multicultural parent center stipends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5 librarian 1 library aide 0.5 nurse</td>
<td>0.5 librarian 0.8 library aide 0.5 nurse 1 technology support</td>
<td>aides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 secretary</td>
<td>1 secretary</td>
<td>testing materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.3 regular education teachers (includes academic subject, physical education, foreign language, and electives teachers)</td>
<td>5 humanities teachers 4 math teachers 4.5 science teachers 0.25 psychology teacher 1.5 Spanish teacher 1 ventures teacher 1 literacy teacher 1 athletics teacher 18.25 teachers</td>
<td>miscellaneous athletics math coaches school-to-career teachers Exam School program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school-based management decision positions (using discretionary funds): specialists instructional aides community field coordinators</td>
<td>31.3 staff total</td>
<td>33 full-time equivalent staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.3 staff total</td>
<td>33 full-time equivalent staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Budget Autonomy**

“We decide on how the funds are spent,” and, “We decide on how to use funds on staffing,” stated a Pilot School principal. Budget autonomy allows Pilot Schools to realize their missions and visions of improved student learning through allocating funds for staffing and making scheduling decisions. Rather than receiving most of their budget through staffing allocation formulas set by the district, Pilot Schools receive a lump sum per pupil amount equal to other BPS schools that each Pilot School is able to allocate as needed.

In addition, Pilot Schools are able to decide whether or not to purchase discretionary central office services from the district. If a service is not purchased, the per pupil amount for that service is added to the school’s lump sum per pupil budget. The total amount of central office discretionary services is approximately $500 per pupil. For example, a school with an enrollment of 400 students would potentially gain an additional $200,000 in funds to strengthen its instructional program if it chose not to purchase any of the discretionary services. With the additional discretionary funds added to their budgets, Pilot Schools are able to increase staffing and services.

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**Pilot Schools Network:**

**List of Central Office Discretionary Line Items—FY 2007**

The following is a list of Pilot School central office discretionary line items for fiscal year 2007 from the BPS Budget Office. Pilot Schools may choose to purchase or not purchase these items from the district.

- Substitutes
- Textbooks
- Athletics
- Math Coaches
- Alternative Education Bilingual/Sheltered English Instruction
- Career Education/School-to-Career/High School Renewal
- Center for Leadership Development
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Student Support
- Summer School
- Office of Instructional and Information Technology Support
- Instructional Technology/Tech Boston Program/Technology Support Teachers
- Miscellaneous
Curriculum and Assessment Autonomy

“The ability to look at our curriculum and assessment needs and to make the decisions is key,” stressed one Pilot School teacher. Through autonomy, Pilot Schools are able to make school-based decisions in these areas in order to improve student engagement and performance. Pilots are not required to follow district-mandated curriculum or assessments, but are subject to federal and state laws and regulations, and therefore administer the statewide standardized assessment, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).

Pilot Schools often create or modify curriculum to fulfill each individual school’s mission. For example, one Pilot School is focused on expeditionary learning, and staff planned a whole curriculum based on the idea of survival. “You see teachers working creatively on curriculum design...they’re excited about the work they’re doing,” said the principal. Staff engagement increased with their increased decision-making capabilities. In another Pilot School, students spend two hours a day in arts and the remainder in academics. To accommodate this scheduling decision, English and history classes are combined into a humanities class, “a richer environment for both subjects,” according to a teacher at the school.

In most Pilot Schools, students must demonstrate competency in a defined set of skills and content knowledge through a series of assessments. Students complete portfolios and present their work through exhibitions, at which adults and peers from inside and outside the school evaluate students. “Kids have to do an extensive portfolio process beyond district requirements,” explained a Pilot School principal.

“One of the things with autonomy is that teachers feel very empowered. They feel like they have a say,” said a Pilot high school teacher. “Professional development is a huge piece,” she continued. “We’re able to decide what we need as a staff.” Each Pilot School decides on the professional development that its school needs, rather than being required to follow district professional development requirements. This autonomy has led to a range of learning opportunities for staff, including work on diversity, differentiated instruction, and inclusion.

While portfolios and exhibitions have not been used extensively in the Boston Public Schools, they are commonly used in the adult world. As we prepare young people for adulthood, school exhibitions are a reflection of adult practice. Consider how gymnasts train and prepare for a demonstration of their skills and abilities or how a researcher presents her work in science as the oral defense of a doctoral dissertation. Even obtaining a driver’s license requires demonstrating competence in operating a car and knowing the rules of the road.

Our graduation requirements represent a broad range of evidence for a student’s readiness and competence for high school level work. Conversely, standardized testing offers only one way to measure knowledge. Imagine asking drivers only to complete a timed multiple-choice test in order to get a license. Portfolios put the students at the center of the process: they are given the opportunity to thoughtfully prepare and defend what they have learned through demonstration, conversation, and written material. This process of presenting and defending one’s work before a group of parents and teachers—experts in the adult world—is tangible, interactive, and concrete, and has immediate and very real consequences.

The Mission Hill School faculty has delineated six domains for the school’s graduation requirements: Science, History, Literature and Writing, the Arts, Beyond the Classroom, and Mathematics. Each requires that students demonstrate mastery of the Habits of Mind. These Habits of Mind, put succinctly, are the habits of asking oneself questions (in whatever situations, conversations or processes in which one finds oneself) about evidence, relevance, supposition, connections and alternative points of view. The Habits of Mind are an approach to both the traditional academic disciplines (math, science, literature, and history) and the interdisciplinary topics of everyday life. They lead us to ask good questions and seek solid answers. In short, they define a well-educated person and one who is ready to do high school level work.

Preparation for graduation begins in the sixth grade as students begin to build their portfolios. Portfolios are a collection of a student’s work from 6th, 7th and 8th grades in each domain, with accompanying reflections from the student. Each student has his or her own portfolio box in which evidence is collected. Boxes contain a “living history” of a student’s middle school experience—and a variety of works in progress as the student prepares for his/her exhibition.

Exhibitions take place throughout the students’ 7th and 8th grade years. While the graduation standards apply to all students, the way they present their work varies according to individual interests and strengths. In this same spirit, students with special learning needs and disabilities may require modifications of this process to take into account the ways in which they can best show their work. When a student needs such modifications, the committee is informed before the presentation. All work collected for graduation purposes as well as videotapes of some of the presentations and the committee judging discussions are kept for public record.
Fenway High School Graduation Requirements

The following list from the Fenway High School Handbook, 2005–06, shows how curriculum and assessment autonomy is used in one Pilot School.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Graduating from Fenway takes far more than showing up! Students are expected to work independently, demonstrate mastery of competencies, learn in the work place and exhibit good citizenship through community service. Below is a concise list of graduation requirements for students who attend Fenway.

• Academic Courses
  In order to graduate from Fenway, a student who begins in ninth grade* must take and pass the following courses:
  4 years of Math
  4 years of Humanities
  4 years of Science
  Spanish I and II

• Portfolios
  Seniors must complete a portfolio in Math, Humanities, and Science that demonstrates their mastery of competencies defined by each academic department. In addition, seniors must complete an internship portfolio.

• Internship
  Before graduation, seniors must complete a six-week internship, providing a total of 60 hours.

• Position Paper
  Each student must complete a position paper that is approved by the head of school.

• Science Fair
  Each student must pass science fair for each year he/she attends Fenway. (The science fair is recorded as Science Project on the student’s transcript.)

• Community Service
  Each student must complete a total of 40 hours of community service. (This is usually completed in the sophomore year.)

• Standardized Tests
  In order to receive a diploma from Boston Public Schools, all students must take and pass the ELA and Math MCAS.

* For students transferring in from another school, the Student Support Team, administration and registrar will interpret and match varying courses and credentials.
Governance Autonomy

Governance autonomy results in an “extensive shared decision-making process,” explained a Pilot School principal. “The way that we’re moving forward as a school is owned by all.” Several different decision-making bodies exist in Pilot Schools, drawing on the voices of staff, students, and families. Staff decision-making groups may include leadership teams, curriculum teams, and committees. Students and families may be part of such groups as student councils or governing boards, and participate in school decisions. For example, “Children are part of the hiring process,” one Pilot middle school student stated, “Kids were part of hiring the new principal and new teachers.”

Governing boards in Pilot Schools have more authority than traditional school site councils. Pilot School governing boards consist of the principal, staff (at least four), family representatives, community members (including from higher education, business, and community organizations), and for middle and high schools, students. Their respective peers elect staff, family, and student representatives, while the overall governing board selects community members. A Pilot elementary school family coordinator emphasized that in Pilot Schools, “Parents have a big part in decision making.” For example, four parents sit on her school’s governing board.

Each governing board has several important responsibilities: 1) setting and maintaining the school’s vision; 2) principal selection, supervision, and evaluation, with final approval by the superintendent in all cases; and 3) budget approval.

Schedule Autonomy

Schools vary the length and schedule of instructional periods, which allows staff more flexibility in their teaching. A Pilot high school teacher described how his school revisits the schedule every year because, “Our schedule says everything about what we believe.”

Many Pilot Schools choose to increase the length of instructional blocks to improve teaching and learning. Extra time allows staff and students to pursue a subject more deeply. Teachers also have the possibility of teaching an interdisciplinary curriculum and team teaching. Classes do not have to meet every day of the week when instructional blocks are longer, and some courses are designed for the semester rather than for the whole school year. For example, in one school, humanities and science courses are taught in opposing semesters.

Pilot Schools are able to modify the school schedule and calendar. High schools may determine start and end times for their schools (elementary and middle schools are constrained by the district bus schedule); as a result, most Pilot high schools start later in the day than regular BPS schools, in response to research findings that high school-aged students have a later internal clock.4

“One of the things with autonomy is that teachers feel very empowered. They feel like they have a say.”

—Pilot high school teacher
The following chart shows a sample of groups contributing to shared leadership and decision making in Pilot Schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design Team</td>
<td>Assists in initial planning and school design.</td>
<td>Six to 15 members, including educators from local school district, students, families, and community members.</td>
<td>As needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance Board</td>
<td>Oversees: 1) Hiring and supervision of the principal (with the superintendent having final sign-off); 2) Approval of the annual budget; and 3) Setting of school policies (e.g., promotion and retention policies).</td>
<td>Number of members is up to each school. Governance boards are similar to school site councils, with expanded authority. Board members consist of the principal and may also include community members (e.g., higher education and business leaders), families, and students. At least four teachers are members of each governing board. The principal and one other member are co-chairs.</td>
<td>Once every four to eight weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Team</td>
<td>Coordinates the school’s reform efforts. Facilitates and manages data-based inquiry and decision making. Models shared leadership for the school. Develops collaborative accountability.</td>
<td>Six to 12 members, including teachers representing all student age levels and subject areas, the principal, instructional specialists; may include parents, students, and community members.</td>
<td>Once every two weeks for two hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary Academic Teams</td>
<td>Develops instructional practice to improve teaching and learning for students. Coordinates and develops curriculum for students. Uses protocols for discussion and peer observation. Makes proposals to the leadership team for school-wide changes in curriculum and instruction based on their work.</td>
<td>Two to six teachers who share the same students.</td>
<td>At least twice a week for at least 45 minutes each time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compared to regular BPS schools, Pilot Schools have a significantly greater amount of professional development time—collaborative planning time during the school day, summer professional development time, and in-service professional development days—to focus on improving teaching and learning. Autonomy enables Pilot Schools to involve all staff more fully in school-wide decision making through lengthening and shortening school days for staff meeting times. “Every Friday afternoon we [set aside] just for professional development,” one Pilot high school teacher noted. Such weekly whole staff and professional development meetings are common; many schools schedule the meetings by shortening the student school day once a week and extending the school day other days.

“...The way that we’re moving forward as a school is owned by all.”

—Pilot School principal
The Harbor School: Scheduling for Collaboration, Academic Time, Electives, and Advisories

The following case study is adapted from a version in How Boston Pilot Schools Use Freedom over Budget, Staffing, and Scheduling to Meet Student Needs, Center for Collaborative Education, October 2001.

The Harbor School is an Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound middle school in Dorchester, MA. There are 265 students in grades 6 through 8. The faculty consists of 16 core academic teachers and 19 other staff (student support, technical support, specialists, and administrators). Students and teachers are divided into grade level teams and crews, or advisories. This case study focuses on the decisions that led to the school’s schedule, which successfully creates: 1) large blocks of time for teachers to collaborate, 2) more core academic instruction time and intensive electives for students, and 3) large amounts of time in advisories, which increases the personalization in the school.

Strengths of the Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<td>7:40 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Computers</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>End of School Day</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This simple schedule includes class periods of either one hour or two hours. These blocks of time are the same for every team and every day of the week; classes are “in frame” with other grade levels. With regularly blocked times, double periods can be accommodated at any time of day. Classes meet (continued)
from 8:00 to 3:30 every day except Wednesdays, when students are released at 12:30 so that faculty can meet. Core academic classes meet five days a week. Physical education, advisory, and language skills classes meet four days a week. Double blocks are used for humanities classes.

The principal of the school described the scheduling principles:

We didn’t want the schedule structure to be the decision maker in those instructional choices. We wanted to create a large, flexible block of time for teachers to make choices.

**Common Time for Teachers to Collaborate**

Four days a week, grade level teams have a double block (two hours) during the school day to plan, collaborate, or prepare individually. Of those eight hours, three hours are for team collaboration and five hours are for individual preparation. Throughout the week, collaborative time includes facilitated grade level team meetings once and student study team meetings for behavior and special education issues (including a pre-referral process for academic learning needs) once. Teams meet while students are with specialists (physical education, computers, and creative writing). In addition, on the early-release Wednesday afternoons, there is a three-hour block of time for teachers to meet. Three Wednesdays a month, the whole staff meets for one hour of that time. Typically, the remaining time is spent on a rotating basis for the following groups and activities—grade level teams, subject teams, looking at student work using protocols, and externally facilitated workshops focused on school-wide priorities.

In addition to the in-school time, the school has committed to two department release days, with classes covered by paraprofessionals, in which teachers of a certain discipline can work together on curriculum planning across grades.

**More Core Academic Instruction Time and Intensive Electives for Students**

The Harbor School has a seven-hour student day length (average over five days). The time spent daily on core academic instruction is four hours. The amount of time on core academic instruction, which includes humanities, science, and math, is high partly because, during most of the school year, there are no courses of choice. However, electives are still offered. For two seven-week periods a year, Wednesdays are devoted to electives. These are teacher-developed, intensive courses of choice for mixed grades.
Teachers volunteer their expertise and passions for this endeavor. Examples of elective titles include “Lift Ev’ry Voice,” detailing the relationship between African-American music and African-American history; “Motor-vation,” introducing students to engine building; and “Students in service for a caring community,” designing a community service project.

**Plenty of Time in Advisories**

The Harbor School uses advisories, or crews, to create smaller groups of students for students to identify with. Crews create a feeling of community within the larger context of the school and ensure that at least one adult in the building knows each student well, both academically and socially. Crews meet for two 30-minute blocks of time four days a week. Currently, crews stay together for three years. Half of the advisory time is spent in sustained silent reading. The other half of that time is spent in community and leadership-building activities. The school is working toward involving all adults in the school in advisories, to bring the student-to-adult ratio down, improve outreach to families, and spend longer periods of time building community.

**Challenges of the Schedule**

The school day in traditional Boston Public Schools is six hours and forty minutes. One challenge that the Harbor School’s 8:00 to 3:30 school day poses is that it may be too long for the students. They have trouble focusing and staying on task the last two hours of the day. Staff decided by consensus to explore with BPS reducing the day length by half an hour. This change would have direct effects on the amount of common planning time, the amount of core academic time, and the amount of time in advisories. The after-school program would correspondingly increase enrichment work with students in greatest need of extra academic attention.

Another challenge of the schedule is that because specialist teachers provide coverage during the grade level team common planning time, specialist teachers cannot meet with core academic subject teachers. In addition, specialist teachers do not teach all students in a grade level team. Without the time to plan together and without specialists working with all the kids, it is impossible to create cross-disciplinary curriculum between specialists and core academic teachers. For example, if students do not take computer class, they should not be expected to complete a project involving computer knowledge.
Accountability

In addition to autonomy over their resources, Pilot Schools are subject to increased school-level accountability. Pilot Schools are held to high standards of performance by a School Quality Review (SQR) process in which each school is assessed every five years on common benchmarks for a high-performing school. The goal of the Pilot Schools’ accountability system is to: 1) measure Pilot School performance, 2) inform the continued approval of a school’s Pilot status within the BPS, and 3) provide feedback to the school on its strengths as well as areas needing improvement.

The SQR was designed in partnership among the Pilot Schools Network, BPS, CCE, and the Annenberg Institute for School Renewal. It was first implemented in the 1997–98 school year, and has been revised at several points to update and strengthen its use.

The SQR accountability system involves both internal and external review. First, the Pilot School must engage in a Self-Study process and produce a Pilot School portfolio. The portfolio assists both the Pilot School and the external SQR team in understanding and evaluating the school’s progress. Each portfolio includes evidence and reflections on a set of focus areas as part of the Accountability Rubrics. The focus areas include:

1) Vision, Mission, and History
2) Leadership, Governance, and Budget
3) Teaching and Learning—Goals and Results
4) Professional Development and Improvement
5) Family and Community Engagement

Following the Pilot School’s initial internal review, an external review, or the actual School Quality Review, takes place. A four- to six-member SQR Team is assembled to conduct a three-day site visit and assess the school’s performance. A cross-section of community representatives makes up the SQR team, and may include staff and officials from BPS, BTU, other districts, other Pilot Schools, higher education institutions, and nonprofit organizations. While visiting the Pilot School, the team reviews the portfolio, observes classes, and conducts interviews with staff, students, families, and governing board members in focus groups or individually. The team also meets with key school groups, such as the governing board, leadership team, and student government.

The SQR team is guided by the Accountability Rubrics that include the five focus areas. Within each focus area, subcategories are scaled on a 1–4 range; a 4 is “approve with steps for sustainability” and a 1 is “not approved/area of concern.” During the site visit, time for debriefing allows the team to discuss and come to consensus on scoring the Accountability Rubrics. The team outlines their observations, and the team chair writes...
an extensive SQR report following the visit that includes recommendations concerning the approval of the school for continued Pilot status. The school provides a written response to this report, outlining how it will implement the SQR team’s recommendations.

Both the SQR report and the Pilot School’s response are submitted to the superintendent and BPS/BTU Steering Committee for review. The steering committee then approves the report and school response, while providing any further recommendations to the school. The school develops and implements an action plan designed to address the recommendations for improvement that emerged from the report and the steering committee.

In summary, there are five main steps in the Pilot Schools’ accountability system:

1) The School Self-Study, based on a set of common benchmarks, that leads to the development of a school portfolio.

2) A three-day School Quality Review (SQR) conducted by an external team of practitioners, resulting in a report of commendations, concerns, and recommendations.

3) A written response from the school that outlines the steps that the school will take to address the SQR report recommendations.

4) Submission of the SQR report and school response to the joint BPS/BTU Steering Committee for review and feedback.

5) Implementation by the school of an action plan of improvement, based on the SQR report, the school’s response, and further feedback from the steering committee.

Small Size

It’s just different, because in a [big] high school there’s the popular [people]...and they got the basketball team and they got the football team. That’s how it is in a big high school. Everyone has their own certain crowds, so everyone doesn’t mingle all together. Here, everyone mingles together. We consider ourselves a community. That’s why we call ourselves Egleston Community High School.... That’s basically why there’s not a lot of fights, because we’re trying to stay in the community, not breaking off in different pairs.

—Pilot high school student

Pilot Schools are small schools by design, optimally no more than 450 students, in order to build community. Relationships among students and between students and staff are facilitated by smallness. Small schools are a
Research supports the following important conclusions about small schools:6

- Academic achievement in small schools is at least equal—and often superior—to that of large schools.
- Grouping and instructional strategies associated with higher student performance are more often implemented in small schools.
- Student attitudes toward school are more positive in small schools.
- Small schools experience significantly fewer discipline problems and less truancy, violence, substance abuse, and gang participation.
- Levels of extracurricular participation are higher and more varied in small schools, and students in small schools gain greater satisfaction from participation.
- Student attendance is higher in small schools, while the dropout rate is lower.
- Students’ academic...self-concepts are higher in small schools.
- Small schools have a higher rate of parental involvement.
- Teacher attitudes towards their work and their administrators are more positive in small schools.
- Small schools are effective in combating the effects of poverty on student achievement and in narrowing the achievement gap that separates poor students from their affluent peers, as well as black and Latino students from white students.

A study on Pilot high school students showed that they choose to attend and stay enrolled in Pilot Schools because of strong academics, support, and school culture.7 Students frequently referred to the smallness of their schools as a positive feature. A Pilot high school student linked small size with an improved learning environment:

It’s smaller. When I really thought about it, as the years went on, I realized that I didn’t want to be in a big school. That’s too many students...when you have a small environment it’s better. It’s an easier learning environment. You know who’s around you, you know powerful way to increase student engagement and, in turn, student achievement. In fact, “A large and consistent body of research suggests that we should be moving, not toward larger high schools, but expeditiously toward smaller ones.”5
who’s in your school. Everything’s peaceful. At their school [a large school], everything’s rowdy.

In addition to supporting the educational benefits of small schools, research challenges the notion that large schools are more cost-effective. A study on school size in New York City found, in examining cost per graduate, that:

Small academies and large high schools are similar in terms of budget per graduate.... Because the literature on school size indicates that small high schools are more effective for minority and poor students, the similarity in [financial costs] suggests that policy makers might do well to support the creation of more small high schools.⁸

As small schools tend to have higher graduation rates than large high schools, small schools may in fact have greater cost-effectiveness as compared to large schools.⁹

Equity

Pilot Schools are committed to ensuring that all of their students, regardless of background, achieve academic success. The Pilot Schools Network mission and vision statements focus on equity. Similarly, individual Pilot School mission and vision statements reflect a commitment to equity. According to one Pilot School principal:

As a Pilot School [we] get to define ourselves around a particular vision of education. [This] means that people [who] come here share certain values. So we tend to be a community of people that places a great deal of importance on things like equity, issues of equity as they play themselves out in race and diversity, people who have a strong ethos about voice and democracy.

For example, the mission statement of the Young Achievers Science and Mathematics Pilot School notes the school’s diverse student body and commitment to social justice:

The Young Achievers Science and Mathematics Pilot School is dedicated to creating an exceptional teaching and learning environment in which science and math concepts, explored by new technologies, are central to teacher and student inquiry. Our school is governed by a democratic process that relies on active partnerships with families, students, community members and community institutions. We make a collective commitment to social justice through academic excellence for the diverse student body enrolled at our school from throughout the city of Boston. Our rigorous academic and social curriculum is designed to maximize each student’s potential for critical
ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF PILOT SCHOOLS

AUTONOMY    SMALL SIZE    COMMITMENT TO EQUITY    ACCOUNTABILITY

DISTRICT

SCHOOL

Students

Equity for all

Structure

Culture

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Networks of Schools

Family and Community Engagement

Central Office Redesign

District-Union Partnership

The Essential Guide to Pilot Schools: Overview  25
thinking, intellectual curiosity, community involvement, and responsible leadership.

Curriculum in Pilot Schools is both academically challenging and culturally relevant to students, and instruction is differentiated to address many learning styles. Multiple assessments, including portfolios and exhibitions, allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in different ways, rather than through standardized assessments alone. Support structures are in place at Pilot Schools, for example through advisories, so that all students are able to meet high expectations.

Pilot Schools hire staff committed to equity, and are able to do so through their staffing autonomy. Moreover, Pilot Schools are committed to hiring a diverse staff:

We want to make sure that our population of educators is diverse, and we can see that our teachers reflect our student body. We think that’s really important, because if you want a diverse population of kids, you should also have a diverse population of educators [who] will motivate and be role models, and have at least some understanding of the child’s frame of reference and perspective as a learner. —Pilot School principal

Once in the school, many Pilot School staff participate in professional development that addresses diversity and inclusion. The purpose of such training is both content and process oriented, and addresses how staff think about their students and interactions with students and their families. Pilot Schools are also committed to the use of disaggregated student data in school decision making, with the central goal of improving achievement for all students.
Having goals is pretty meaningless if we are not going to look at information that speaks to our progress toward them. Not that data is the only lens that we use to discuss such things, but it is a critical piece that forces us to move our discussions beyond our everyday interactions with individual students and look at the big picture of how we are doing as a school. Overall, I think that our use of data helps us avoid stagnation. —Boston Arts Academy teacher

Boston Arts Academy (BAA) is continually assessing its progress as a school—looking backward while moving forward. The Boston Arts Academy Year End Report, 2003–2004 is one such example.* The report contains a wealth of information about the school, including BAA’s school-wide goals for the year:

1) To practice differentiated instruction to promote equity.

2) To practice seriousness of purpose to promote equity.

3) To evaluate and document our practice using multiple sources of data.

Equity is clearly an important goal at BAA, and every year it is in some way part of the school-wide goals. One way the school works to achieve equity is through the use of disaggregated data to inform and improve school practice. BAA reports an abundance of data in its Year End Report. “We gather this data and disaggregate it as we do because it speaks to our progress toward our goal of providing equitable access opportunities for all of our students,” said one BAA teacher.

How is this data then used by BAA? School faculty and staff are organized into teams, “each working in their specialized areas to support our

(continued)

* See the Boston Arts Academy website to download the full report: http://www.boston-arts-academy.org/documents/documents.html
essential goals for the school year,” according to the report. Teams examine and make decisions based on the data. The teams include: Arts Team, Curriculum Team, Leadership Team, Academic Teams, Teacher Interns, Student Support Team, and Development and Outreach Team. Each team meets at least once weekly, and the entire staff meets weekly for two and a half hours. “I think any time we look at the hard data, it is bound to help us get better by identifying where we should focus our efforts, and it also presents us new challenges,” explained a BAA teacher, “Simply talking about what questions we want to be able to answer with data helps us keep on track with our mission and goals.”

**Student Data**
The *Year End Report* includes student data, disaggregated by grade, on racial distribution, gender, arts major, and Boston neighborhood. A second section of student data reports honor roll students by grade and gender. The data shows male and female honor roll students by term for each grade. Additional honor roll student data is broken down by arts major and by race for each term. In 2003–04, students were 51% Black, 23% White, 23% Hispanic, and 3% Asian. For honor roll in term 1, students were 30% Black, 27% White, 41% Hispanic, and 7% Asian. Staff have used this data to explore the disproportionately low rate of Black students on the honor roll.

**Benchmark Data**
Another section of the report examines BAA benchmarks. The school sets both qualitative and quantitative goals for its students. MCAS mathematics and language arts results over six and five years, respectively, are reported. BAA also developed an internal writing assessment, and graphs are shown for pre- and post-writing assessments in the 9th and 10th grades collectively and the 11th and 12th grades collectively.

**Additional Indicators**
More detailed information about students is provided in the additional indicators section, including how often students attend after-school help for academics, when students experience the most stress, and how much time students spend on average doing homework each night. Part of this section includes an “Equity Gaps Analysis,” which examines racial (continued)
Progress towards Equity: Boston Arts Academy Year End Report, 2003–2004 (continued)

inequities in course selection. According to the report, “Enrollment data for students choosing the open honors option was disaggregated by gender and race in order to uncover any existing achievement gaps.”

Admissions Data
Not only does BAA track progress of current students, but the report also provides data on BAA applicants and accepted students. “To get a full picture, it is important to not only portray data that speaks to our outcomes…but also to the demographics of our existing and new population,” explained a BAA teacher. Graphs show the race of both applicants and accepted students.

Looking Ahead
“We are constantly aiming to improve our data collection...so that the data provides a clearer picture of our successes and challenges as a school,” said a BAA teacher. “While we always strive for perfection, the reality is that we will always have more to work on and the data will always reveal that.” As BAA continues to make equity a school-wide goal, the use of data remains a critical indicator of progress. Stagnation is unthinkable.
“Race, Class, and Achievement”:
Professional Development at the Mason Elementary School

The whole staff of approximately 30 was seated together in a large circle at the Mason Elementary School. It was a September afternoon after school and the staff was gathered to participate in a “Race, Class, and Achievement Gap” professional development meeting. The desired outcomes of the professional development were to help staff improve their practice, as well as student and family relationships, and ultimately to improve the achievement of their students.

A teacher leader opened the meeting with a faculty share—an opportunity for staff to share professional or personal updates—and a summary of points from a previous professional development meeting in which a speaker related the importance of parent and family connections. One point was to “be mindful that we are culturally different,” and another was to “examine yourself, be reflective.” Today the staff would be involved in making both of these discussion points a reality. Staff began brainstorming with a focus on what cultural differences exist at Mason and how they identify and support these differences.

Many staff brought up the idea of having more family days and casual gatherings with families, either as classroom or school events. A suggestion that was agreed on was having a protocol for families who speak languages other than English. The protocol would involve knowing what staff members could speak another language and turning to them for assistance when contacting families. Engaging in more learning about cultural differences as a whole staff was another suggestion. One teacher stated, “It is so important that we get out into the community and see where our babies live, where they play. How about a field trip? We need to know the whole child sitting in front of us....”

Later in the meeting, staff discussed in small groups a set of core values/non-negotiables that would guide race, class, and achievement work. (continued)
“Race, Class, and Achievement”: Professional Development at the Mason Elementary School (continued)

As small groups shared their thinking, they listed responses on chart paper and then shared them with the whole staff. Collective commitments to in-depth work, investment in professional development, and high expectations were just a few of the core values that the staff found essential.

The meeting came to a close with a viewing of a segment of *The Way Home*, a film in which eight groups of women of different races and ethnicities talk openly about their experiences of race, class, and gender in the United States. Following the film, staff wrote individual responses, and some shared these with the larger group. One staff member said that she felt “more aware” after the film, more interested in learning about other cultures, and very moved by all of the stories. Another felt that the movie was difficult. It brought up intense emotions, yet she said it was important to take a risk to feel uncomfortable and have a conversation that could impact the staff’s personal growth and in turn student growth.

In closing, staff shared one word of reflection with their colleagues, which included both the excitement and the challenges inherent in this difficult topic. The conversation will continue in the next “Race, Class, and Achievement” meeting at the Mason Elementary School.
The data shows the progress of Pilot Schools in educating students and the promise of Pilot Schools for the future.

Progress and Promise: Results of the Pilot Model

Research conducted by the Center for Collaborative Education documents significant achievement by students who attend Pilot Schools: on the whole, students are performing better than the district averages across every indicator of engagement and performance.* Compared to other BPS schools, Pilot School students have higher performance on the statewide standardized assessment (MCAS), higher college-going rates, and higher attendance rates.

This chapter compares data from Pilot Schools (Pilot), other BPS schools (BPS), and Exam Schools (Exam). All schools are BPS schools; Exam Schools select students based on an entrance exam and prior academic achievement. The data shows the progress of Pilot Schools in educating students and the promise of Pilot Schools for the future.

Expansion

The number of Pilot Schools has grown considerably since their beginning. In 1995, 5 Pilot Schools enrolled fewer than 900 students. In 2006, the network included 20 Pilot Schools, 2 of which are Horace Mann schools, spanning grades preK–12. In September 2006, Pilot Schools served approximately 6,500 students, or about 11% of the total BPS enrollment.

Demographics

Enrollment in Pilot Schools generally matches that of the district by race, gender, income status, and special education status, with some variation.

* For a full report see Progress and Promise: Results from the Boston Pilot Schools, January 2006, Center for Collaborative Education, http://www.ccebos.org/pubslinks.html
by school level. Pilot Schools do not select students based on screening tests or prior academic achievement. As the network has expanded, Pilot Schools have become more representative of district demographics.

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<th>% Black</th>
<th>% White</th>
<th>% Latino</th>
<th>% Asian</th>
<th>% American Indian</th>
<th>% Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch</th>
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<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>67</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
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Data from school year 2003–04

**Characteristics**

Pilot Schools use their autonomy to design and implement organizational structures that support effective instruction and nurturing school cultures. Pilot Schools incorporate many school practices that have been linked with a positive school climate and/or student outcomes, including smaller class sizes, longer instructional periods, longer school days, more time for teacher collaboration, and more time for teacher professional development.1

On average, Pilot high schools have smaller class sizes than BPS high schools and an average teacher:student ratio of 1:14. In addition, Pilot student-teacher loads are low, enabling greater teacher support of individual students. Teachers see an average of 64 students per day in core academic classes, advisory, and electives. The following table shows characteristics at the high school level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School Characteristics</th>
<th>Pilot Schools</th>
<th>Boston Public Schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average 9th-grade English class size</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28 (all classes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of student school day (minutes)</td>
<td>392*</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of teacher school day (minutes)</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes per week of professional collaboration time</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>no minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of full professional development days</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
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Data from school year 2004–05

* This calculation excludes one outlier school. Boston Day and Evening Academy students attend school four days a week, for an average of 300 minutes per day because they are older students who have other responsibilities such as work and parenting.
Engagement

Student engagement is measured by four outcomes in this section: attendance, discipline, district leavers, and in-district transfers. High attendance rates, low discipline rates, and low mobility rates are indicators of a positive school culture. Pilot School outcomes in these areas are better than BPS averages.

Pilot School students at each level have a median attendance rate that is higher than the BPS student rate, with the distance between the rates increasing with each school level. Pilot high school students attend school on average two weeks more than their BPS counterparts.

The out-of-school suspension rate is an indicator of individual student engagement as well as of the culture of a school. Pilot elementary schools have a suspension rate that is one third that of BPS schools; Pilot middle schools have suspension rates that are slightly lower than BPS schools; and Pilot high schools have a rate that is about one half that of BPS schools.

While student background characteristics are important determinants of a school’s mobility rate, up to half the variability of high school turnover rates can be attributed to school characteristics, including teacher:student ratio, quality of teachers, class size, and average daily attendance. High student mobility has been “highly associated with a low level of student performance” at all levels. Therefore, school characteristics influence mobility rate, and a high mobility rate leads to lower student engagement and performance.

The district leaver indicator includes students who transferred out of the district or dropped out of school. The in-district transfer rate includes all students who transferred from one school in the district to another for any reason other than completing the highest grade available at a given school. The district leaver and in-district transfer rates speak to the holding power of a school and the stability of the school population; taken together, they serve as proxies for a school’s mobility rate. On average, Pilot Schools have a lower district leaver rate than BPS, and the Pilot School in-district transfer rate is one third that of BPS.
Progress and Promise

Median Attendance Rate

Data from school year 2003–04

Out-of-School Suspension Rate

Data from school year 2003–04

District Leaver Rate

Data from school year 2003–04

In-District Transfer Rate

Data from school year 2003–04
Performance

Student performance is measured by four indicators: grade-level retention, post-secondary education plans, post-secondary education participation, and MCAS scores. As a whole, Pilot School students are performing better than the BPS average on all four performance indicators. As with the engagement indicators, the largest differences between the two types of schools are at the high school level. Two of these indicators, college-going rates and MCAS scores, are described here.

A measure of success for any high school is the number of its graduates who are in post-secondary education. The numbers reported below represent the percentages of graduates who were in post-secondary education—including four-year colleges, two-year colleges, and technical or vocational programs—one year after graduation. The proportion of Pilot School graduates enrolled in post-secondary education one year after graduation is 18% higher than that for BPS graduates. Five out of six Pilot high schools are at or above the BPS average; the sixth school serves students who have previously dropped out or been unsuccessful in BPS high schools. The school with the same average as BPS is Boston Community Leadership Academy (BCLA), a new conversion Pilot School whose 2003 graduates experienced only the transition year to Pilot status.

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exams are criterion-referenced tests administered by subject to students across the state. The MCAS is used as one measure of student performance. It is

* MCAS Position Statement, Board of Directors of the Center for Collaborative Education: “The Center for Collaborative Education affirms that the current MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) is a test and not a comprehensive assessment system, that a single score on a test should never stand as the sole measure of a student’s knowledge, understandings, performance, and intellectual habits, that the use of a test for high stakes decisions is not educationally defensible, and that more appropriate accountability systems are possible. With this in mind, the Center should begin working with a cross section of schools and districts to develop a more comprehensive system of assessment to demonstrate the richer possibilities for supporting good education and accountability.” http://www.ccebos.org/mcasposition.html
a high-stakes test in the 10th grade: students must pass the 10th-grade exams in order to graduate from high school.

All tests administered for reading, English/Language Arts (ELA), and mathematics in 2004 were analyzed using two criteria: percent achieving advanced/proficient status and percent passing. Advanced/proficient equals the proportion of students at either of those achievement levels, and passing equals the proportion of students in the advanced, proficient, and needs improvement categories.

Pilot School students outperformed BPS school students at all grade levels on all tests, and at both the passing and advanced/proficient levels. As a whole, the proportion of Pilot School students in the advanced/proficient categories ranged from 10 to 34 percentage points higher than BPS students. The proportion of Pilot School students passing each exam ranged from 3 to 27 percentage points higher than BPS students. The following graphs show MCAS results for grade 8 math and grade 10 ELA.

**Summary**

The research findings show that Pilot School students are faring well on a wide range of indicators of engagement and performance. The data confirms previous reports and demonstrates consistently positive findings for Pilot School students for the years 1997–2004.4
The Pilot School model has proven to be both a successful and sustainable strategy in transforming urban public schools.

Pilot Schools in Context

In-district Innovation

“Pilot Schools represent the best that public education has to offer in Boston,” stated a Boston Globe lead editorial. Pilot Schools are at the forefront of school reform and represent a unique model of innovation within a school district. According to one Pilot School principal, “What every principal or headmaster should have are the kind of conditions Pilots have. That’s everything from size and scale to hiring their own staff to instructional flexibility to governance, the works.”

First established in 1995, Pilot Schools have been in existence for over a decade. The demand for school choice in Boston was—and continues to be—high, and Pilot Schools are an alternative within the district to school options outside of BPS. Of the estimated 79,000 school-age children in the city of Boston, about 27%—or 21,010—do not attend district schools, but instead attend private, parochial, or charter schools, or suburban schools through a voluntary desegregation program.

Pilot Schools were created in part as a response to the first-time opening of charter schools in the city of Boston and statewide in 1995. Pilot Schools aimed to keep human and financial resources within the Boston Public Schools. Massachusetts currently grants two types of charters: Commonwealth and Horace Mann. Commonwealth charter schools operate independently of a school district, while Horace Mann charter schools are in-district charter schools which must gain approval from the local school committee and teachers union, as well as from the state. The Horace Mann model is patterned after Boston’s Pilot School model, except approval is conferred by the state. Commonwealth charter schools provide...
some students and families with choice options. Pilot Schools represent a more systemic strategy for improving urban public schools, while serving a larger percentage of students.

Nationally, Pilot Schools represent a unique model of school reform. In the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era of greater school centralization and mandated practices, Pilot Schools represent a powerful alternative. Pilot Schools are granted maximum autonomy in exchange for increased accountability within a school district. The Pilot School model has proven to be both a successful and sustainable strategy in transforming urban public schools.

### A Comparison of Boston Pilot Schools and Charter Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
<th>Pilot Schools</th>
<th>Horace Mann Charter Schools</th>
<th>Commonwealth Charter Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oversight</td>
<td>Oversight entity</td>
<td>Boston Public Schools (BPS).</td>
<td>BPS and the state, through MA Department of Education.</td>
<td>MA Department of Education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>BPS superintendent and BPS/BTU Steering Committee.</td>
<td>MA Board of Education.</td>
<td>MA Board of Education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of school evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Governing board, with BPS superintendent having final authority.</td>
<td>Board of Trustees has complete authority.</td>
<td>Board of Trustees has complete authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td></td>
<td>School Quality Review every five years; BPS/BTU intervention process for schools of concern.</td>
<td>Charter Renewal every five years.</td>
<td>Charter Renewal every five years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit</td>
<td></td>
<td>No requirement for annual audit, as general school funds are managed by BPS.</td>
<td>Must do an annual audit and produce annual report, as general school funds are managed by the school.</td>
<td>Must do an annual audit and produce annual report, as general school funds are managed by the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### A Comparison of Boston Pilot Schools and Charter Schools (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Union and District</strong></td>
<td>Contractual work conditions</td>
<td>Exempt from most work conditions defined by BTU contract. Work conditions are defined at the school level in an election-to-work agreement.</td>
<td>Exempt from most work conditions defined by BTU contract, as defined in the charter proposal.</td>
<td>Exempt from work conditions defined by BTU contract. Charter proposal defines work conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School committee and district</td>
<td>Exempt from school committee policies and district regulations.</td>
<td>Exempt from school committee policies and district regulations.</td>
<td>Exempt from school committee policies and district regulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grievances</td>
<td>Each Pilot School must have in place an appeals and dispute resolution process that a teacher may use if there is a dispute with an administrator.</td>
<td>May develop own grievance procedure.</td>
<td>May develop own grievance procedure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding</strong></td>
<td>Funding formula</td>
<td>Lump sum per pupil funding formula based on BPS average cost per pupil for regular education, ELL, special education, and vocational education students.</td>
<td>Lump sum per pupil funding formula based on BPS average cost per pupil for regular education, ELL, special education, and vocational education students.</td>
<td>Receive tuition directly from the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central office discretionary services</td>
<td>Have the choice of purchasing select discretionary central office services or adding the per pupil funds to their lump sum budgets.</td>
<td>Have the choice to purchase a greater range of discretionary central office services or to add the per pupil funds to their lump sum budgets.</td>
<td>Not applicable. Operate separately from school district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State and federal grants</td>
<td>Receive state and federal grants through BPS.</td>
<td>Receive state and federal grants directly.</td>
<td>Receive state and federal grants directly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>Do not have to pay for facility if housed in city-owned building. Must pay for own facility if housed in non-city-owned building.</td>
<td>Do not have to pay for facility if housed in city-owned building. Must pay for own facility if housed in non-city-owned building.</td>
<td>Must pay for own facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher hiring and salary level</td>
<td>Employ certified teachers at district salary level.</td>
<td>Employ certified teachers at district salary level.</td>
<td>Employ certified or uncertified teachers with salary level determined by the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
### A Comparison of Boston Pilot Schools and Charter Schools (continued)

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Commonwealth Charter Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>Layoffs</td>
<td>Affected by personnel “bumping” during time of layoff.</td>
<td>Exempt from personnel “bumping” during time of layoff.</td>
<td>Not applicable. Operate separately from school district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher evaluation</td>
<td>Pilot Schools voluntarily agreed to use BPS evaluation procedure for teachers but may also establish their own additional teacher evaluation processes.</td>
<td>Develop own teacher evaluation system.</td>
<td>Develop own teacher evaluation system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary and middle schools must use the district lottery process. High schools may use a common Pilot application and their own admissions process, but may not screen for academic achievement.</td>
<td>Must have admissions process, and a lottery must be held if number of applicants exceeds spaces.</td>
<td>Must have admissions process, and a lottery must be held if number of applicants exceeds spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>Projected enrollment</td>
<td>If a Pilot School falls 5% below its projected enrollment, it must repay the district the per pupil differential. Likewise, if a Pilot School goes 5% over its projected enrollment, BPS adds to its budget the per pupil differential above 5%.</td>
<td>If enrollment falls below projection, school must repay BPS.</td>
<td>State tuition payments based on actual enrollment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students served in substantially separate classroom placements</td>
<td>Required by BPS to accept students served in substantially separate classroom placements outside of admissions process.</td>
<td>Required to enroll students served in substantially separate classroom placements.</td>
<td>Required to enroll students served in substantially separate classroom placements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Collaboration with the District

The Pilot Schools Network, BPS, and CCE collaborate in order to strengthen Pilot Schools. Two examples of collaboration have been fiscal autonomy and special education in Pilot Schools, and are explained here in more detail.

**Fiscal Autonomy Committee**

The purpose of the Fiscal Autonomy Committee is to negotiate fiscal autonomy conditions for Pilot Schools one fiscal year in advance. The group meets three to four times throughout the spring and fall of each year, and pursues committee work in the interim. Representatives include Pilot School principals and assistant principals; BPS staff from the Budget and Unified Student Services Offices; and CCE’s Pilot Schools Network co-directors and executive director.

In the early years of Pilot Schools, each school negotiated its own budget with the district. These separate negotiations resulted in disparate budgets across Pilot Schools. With assistance from CCE, collaboration with the BPS Budget Office, and support from the superintendent, the Fiscal Autonomy Committee was formed in 1997 to improve the budget process and seek additional fiscal autonomy for Pilot Schools. The committee aimed to create a unified, consistent Pilot School model of budget autonomy that could eventually be applied to all other schools in the district.

With the support and assistance of the Fiscal Autonomy Committee, the budget office divided the BPS budget into two categories—direct

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### A Comparison of Boston Pilot Schools and Charter Schools (continued)

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<th>Commonwealth Charter Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Data</td>
<td>MCAS</td>
<td>MCAS results published as school within BPS.</td>
<td>MCAS results published as individual school district.</td>
<td>MCAS results published as individual school district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report cards and diplomas</td>
<td>Report cards and diplomas administered by school district.</td>
<td>Charter school administers own report cards and diploma unless the school chooses to have district administer them.</td>
<td>Charter school administers own report cards and diploma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disaggregated data</td>
<td>Various types of disaggregated data are provided automatically by BPS.</td>
<td>Must send data to district and state.</td>
<td>Must send data to state.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
school costs and central office costs. Each of these categories was then itemized and per pupil amounts for each item were calculated. The committee decided that Pilot Schools would receive a consistent lump sum per pupil amount of all direct school costs by grade level rather than a K–12 average, as it was the regular schools within respective grade levels to which Pilot Schools were to be compared. In addition, the committee developed a consistent per pupil amount for roll-out costs—for example, as new schools added grades and/or had significant planned enrollment jumps—to allow for furniture, equipment, textbook, and materials acquisitions as students were added.

The committee then sought ways to create greater fiscal autonomy for Pilot Schools by looking at central district costs. After reviewing fiscal autonomy practices in other urban districts across the United States and Canada, the committee examined whether any central costs could become discretionary for Pilot Schools. Committee members adopted the principle that if a central office service was non-essential, the Pilot School should have discretion over whether it purchased the service from the district. If the service was not purchased, the per pupil amount for that service would be added to the school’s lump sum per pupil budget.

Every central line item was reviewed to identify discretionary services. These services total approximately $500 per pupil, providing Pilot Schools with significant additional budget flexibility and program support. For example, a school with an enrollment of 400 students would potentially gain an additional $200,000 in funds to strengthen its instructional program if it chose not to purchase any discretionary services from the BPS central office. In general, Pilot Schools do not purchase these services, and therefore the funds are added to each school’s lump sum per pupil budget.

As a result of this budget autonomy, while Pilot Schools spend a similar percentage of their total district-funded budget on staffing as regular BPS schools, they are able to spend more total dollars on staffing because they have additional discretionary funds added to their budgets. This added amount from discretionary funds is one reason why Pilot Schools have lower teacher:student ratios than regular BPS schools. Pilot Schools find creative ways to cover some of the line item services that they do not purchase, such as using the expertise of teaching staff to cover athletics, student support, and electives.

Another important committee decision involved shifting to a functional approach of determining central office costs. As the BPS budget office director outlined:

We have taken the bold step....The Pilot School allocation methodology is characterized by two primary concepts: a per pupil budget allocation, and the opportunity to purchase back services (or not!) from the district.4
A description is written for each central office discretionary service so that Pilot Schools are able to make more informed decisions about which services they do or do not want to purchase.

**Committee on Special Education Issues**

The Pilot Schools Network Committee on Special Education Issues has focused on working with the BPS Office of Unified Student Services on the assignment of students with disabilities served in substantially separate classroom placements. The Pilot committee has worked to ensure that the assignment process is thoughtful, organized, and equitable.

Through work with the district, particularly the Unified Student Services and Budget Offices, the committee developed a plan for serving these students with the Pilot Schools Network Special Education Principles at the forefront. In a January 2003 memorandum to the BPS superintendent and BPS offices, the Network’s Executive Committee expressed their support of the decision to more equitably distribute students with the 502.4 prototype into the least restrictive environment across BPS. Simultaneously, they stated that fundamental to the success of Pilot Schools is the autonomy to create learning environments that best meet students’ needs for special education services in a variety of placements.

The committee worked to ensure that the district did not infringe upon Pilot School autonomy, and that Pilot Schools had a voice in the decision-making process about their schools and students. Furthermore, the committee worked with BPS on a plan for increasing the capacity of Pilot Schools to serve students with substantially separate special education needs, including a phase-in timeline, resulting in the district adopting a three-year plan for enrolling a representative number of students in every Pilot School.

The committee also recommended funding for staff professional development in order to better serve the students. As a result, the district provides start-up costs of $1,500 for each student placed in the schools who is 502.4 prototype. Pilot Schools were able to use these funds in any way they determined that assisted in establishing a strong educational program for students with moderate to severe special education needs. Since the funds were limited, one-time start-up funds, it was recommended that they be used mainly for professional development and materials.

Pilot Schools were encouraged to pool start-up funds to provide staff professional development, particularly for dual special education certification for faculty. As a result, CCE developed a partnership with Northeastern University and other higher education institutions to offer this training to interested Pilot School staff. CCE has increased its capacity for serving students with disabilities through the hiring of a Pilot Team director of special education. As the director indicated, the Pilot Network
is moving towards inclusive school communities that serve all students so we have not just special education, but excellent educational services for all students.  

**Influence on the District**

Pilot Schools have influenced district practices within the Boston Public Schools in formal and informal ways. Following the example of Pilot Schools, BPS converted four large, comprehensive BPS high schools (South Boston, Dorchester, West Roxbury, and Hyde Park) to 13 small schools from 2001 to 2005. These schools share space and resources, and have limited budget autonomy. 

The curriculum and assessment autonomy found in Pilot Schools informed a revised BPS graduation policy in 2004. All BPS high schools may select a pathway (Pathway III) modeled after Pilot Schools. In this pathway, if a school creates a set of standards or competencies that is equal or greater in rigor to the district’s standards, it is able to create its own set of courses and graduation requirements, which include portfolios and exhibitions. The development of humanities curriculum in Pilot Schools, particularly at Fenway High School and Boston Arts Academy, assisted the district in developing Pathway II. Superintendent Thomas Payzant described the policy and two pathways (a third, traditional pathway also exists) in a March 2006 memorandum:

> The new district graduation policy creates three different curriculum pathways to high school graduation, with the intent of providing the flexibility for BPS high schools to adopt innovative curriculum sequences that keep students engaged, equip them to pass the MCAS, and prepare them for post-secondary education.

- **Pathway II:** A four-year sequence of Humanities in place of English and History courses, plus the Pathway I requirements of Math, Lab Science, World Language, Arts, Physical Education, Health, and Computers

- **Pathway III:** A school may develop its own sequence of courses, mindful of state standards and comparable in rigor to Pathway I courses

The areas of autonomy in Pilot Schools also led to the creation of “Strategic Planning Schools” within BPS. Any of these schools may seek autonomy from a district policy if the waiver supports the school’s plan to improve student achievement.
Expanding Pilot Schools in BPS

Earning Pilot status provides schools with the flexibility to try innovative approaches to education. The Pilot Schools have become an important network within the Boston Public Schools, and we look forward to creating more of them. —Mayor Thomas Menino

There is increasing interest in the Pilot model, and Pilot Schools are expanding to include even more BPS schools. In February 2006, the BPS and BTU agreed to new, modified contract language on Pilot Schools. The 2006 agreement called for the creation of a minimum of seven new Pilot Schools by September 2009, through BPS conversions, newly created schools, or charter school conversions. One start-up school will be union-sponsored and teacher-run.

The Center for Collaborative Education and the Boston Foundation, in partnership with the BPS, provided a Request for Proposals, technical assistance, and planning and implementation grant funding for schools to convert to Pilot status. According to the Request for Proposals, “Pilot status is not just an experiment for a few schools; it is a mechanism by which any district school may advance its educational mission and the interests of its students, faculty, and parents.” A similar process took place in 2002–03 when four conversion Pilot Schools were created: Another Course to College, Mason Elementary School, Baldwin Early Learning Center, and Lee Academy. Pilot School selection criteria include: 1) the possibility of a favorable two-thirds vote on the Pilot School plan by staff, and 2) a comprehensive planning process.

Planning grants from the Boston Foundation are available for BPS schools interested in converting to a Pilot School. The grants are to assist schools as they prepare a proposal for approval by staff, the BPS/BTU Steering Committee, and school committee. Implementation grants from the Boston Foundation are available for schools that receive Pilot School status approval.

Technical assistance by CCE is provided in the form of Pilot School Residencies, a week-long session to support the development of prospective Pilot Schools. The purposes of the Residencies are: 1) to provide information and a variety of experiences about Pilot Schools, Pilot Principles, and Pilot Autonomy, and 2) to share stories and examples that will help prospective schools frame their work as they develop proposals.

The sessions provide a foundation in all aspects of Pilot Schools. Full-day Pilot School visits allow for firsthand learning experiences from current Pilot staff and students. All-day workshops provide information on the Pilot Schools, including the five areas of autonomy. Finally, extensive school team planning time allows prospective schools time to apply their learning to their own Pilot School proposal.
This is an unbelievable group of leaders and educators—I am very inspired by the commitment that we have for the network.

— Pilot School principal

The Power of a Network

The Boston Pilot Schools Network

“Innovative schools have a greater chance at sustaining their success if they are members of a network of like-minded schools, and assisted by a third-party organization,” stated Dan French, executive director of the Center for Collaborative Education, in an EdWeek commentary. The Boston Pilot/Horace Mann Schools Network, convened by the Center for Collaborative Education (CCE), unites the Pilot Schools.

The first two-day leadership retreat for the Pilot Schools was held in April 1997. At the time, Pilot Schools were still operating individually and negotiating separately with the district. During this retreat, Pilot Schools agreed to the following: 1) to unite and form the Boston Pilot Schools Network in order to have one unified voice in negotiating with the district, 2) to develop and endorse a set of guiding principles which would govern the network, and 3) to have the CCE serve as the network’s coordinating organization. (See Appendix for a “List of CCE Services provided to the Boston Pilot Schools Network”.)

In subsequent years, the Pilot Schools Network has continued its function of sharing practice and addressing common concerns. The network creates opportunities for learning among schools, including staff sharing conferences, leadership retreats, and committees on fiscal autonomy and special education issues. Involvement in the network has grown, and now includes administrators, teachers and staff, family and community members, and students. According to one Pilot School principal, the Pilot Schools Network “opens up a whole new world…. You’re no longer an island; everyone is working together.”
The Center for Collaborative Education provides the Pilot Schools with coordination and support. Services include coaching, professional development, advocacy, research, and financial management. CCE and the Pilot Schools Network work collaboratively with the district on issues unique to Pilot Schools.


The Pilot Schools Network vision and mission statements and principles and practices were developed by network leaders. Revisions have occurred over time, with the core ideas remaining the same.

**Vision Statement**
The Boston Pilot/Horace Mann Schools Network envisions education as a way to achieve a more just, democratic, and equitable society. Pilot Schools engage their students in rigorous and meaningful learning experiences. We aim to prepare students to become thoughtful and reflective individuals who construct and apply knowledge. The network believes that a primary purpose of education is to empower all students to succeed in higher education and to contribute to their communities.

**Mission Statement**
The Boston Pilot/Horace Mann Schools Network engages in:

- Leadership development for governing boards, directors, staff, students, and families, with a focus on creating democratic and shared decision-making governance models;
- Shared accountability to assist schools in assessing their progress and in developing models of authentic assessment for both students and staff;
- Advocacy that includes work with the district and public to ensure support and resources for Pilot Schools;
- Community organizing to broaden the constituency of the Pilot Schools and strengthen our collective voice and support.

**Principles and Practices**

**Unifying Vision and Mission:** Each school has a unifying vision and/or mission that is reflected in all school practices and structures, including curriculum, policies, schedule, professional development, and family engagement.

**Equity:** Patterns of achievement across race/ethnicity, gender, language, disabilities, and socioeconomic status are examined in order to allow schools to become inclusive communities and identify practices that provide all students opportunities to reach high levels of achievement.

(continued)

**Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment:**
- High expectations are explicit for every member of the school community.
- Student learning is purposeful. Teachers empower students to be responsible for their learning, thereby increasing student engagement.
- Instruction is differentiated. Students use creative problem solving and active use of knowledge.
- A rigorous core academic curriculum is provided to all students.
- Assessment occurs in multiple ways, including exhibitions and portfolios, in addition to standardized tests. Students are expected to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of key competencies, and their relevance to the world.

**A Commitment to Small Size:** Optimal school size is no more than 450 students. Small schools enable teachers and students to build strong relationships and a safe environment.

**Professional Collaborative Culture:** Teachers share their practice and work in teams in order to sustain a professional collaborative culture. Schools place an emphasis on shared decision making and shared responsibility for student achievement.

**Leadership:** The people closest to the students make school and policy decisions, including teachers, administrators, support staff, families, community partners, and students themselves. Governing boards have increased decision-making power over the school’s vision, budget approval, principal selection and evaluation, and policies.

**Family and Community Engagement:** Relationships are focused on respect, trust, and collaboration. Families are encouraged to participate as partners in each school. Schools form partnerships with community organizations in order to expand learning opportunities and support services for students and their families.
Networks

For years educators have known that networks provide a valuable source of ideas, inspiration, and support. As one staff member noted, “It is always a good opportunity to network and share resources. You can always learn new things.” The Pilot Schools Network has evolved multiple committees and forums. While coordinated by CCE, these committees often take on a life of their own as Pilot School members decide on topics of discussion, facilitate meetings, and stay in frequent communication with one another. Pilot School leaders, staff, and family and community members meet monthly as a Leadership Team, Staff Network, and Family/Community Network, respectively.

Leadership Team meetings are a forum for all Pilot School leaders, generally principals, assistant principals, and teacher-leaders, to engage in professional development and discuss strategy in relation to the district and strengthening the network. An executive committee comprised of five members of the Leadership Team meets every other month to plan topics of discussion and review pressing matters.

The Staff Network is comprised of Pilot School teachers and staff. Meeting topics address both school- and classroom-level issues, for example, election-to-work agreements, decision-making processes, and planning the Staff Sharing Conference. Staff Network members decide on the agenda items for each meeting.

A range of school support staff, family members, community members, administrators, and teachers comprise the Family/Community Network. The purpose of this group is to expand family and community engagement across Pilot Schools while increasing the voice of families and community organizations in advocating for Pilot Schools within the system. This network works to plan the annual Pilot Schools Expo and a Family and Community Conference.

As the following vignettes illustrate, groups within the Pilot Schools Network are taking on substantive issues in ways that strengthen the network as well as each individual Pilot School.
By 8:00 in the morning at the Mission Hill School, Pilot School leaders had begun to congregate in the library. After mingling and grabbing coffee, they got down to business: today was one of the monthly Pilot Schools Network Leadership Team meetings. The packed meeting agenda called for a discussion of governing boards, a review of proposed Boston Teachers Union contract language additions, and a presentation of new data in a research report on Pilot Schools.

The governing boards are part of what make Pilot Schools unique; today, leaders shared how governing boards operate in each of their schools. Leaders split into two groups—K–8 schools and high schools—and handed out copies of election-to-work agreements for 2005–06, governance board bylaws, and principal evaluation processes.

Leaders talked about the role of board members and the operation of their governing boards. They shared ideas and sought advice from one another on topics that included recruiting new board members and designing more effective principal evaluation processes. At Boston Day and Evening Academy, for example, the board’s executive committee evaluates the principal. At Tech Boston Academy, the governing board addresses the school’s “big issues,” often political decisions.

Next, the whole Leadership Team reviewed the proposed BTU contract language additions affecting Pilot Schools. The executive committee had previously approved the language additions. A spirited discussion ensued as leaders considered the language and proposed further changes. After consensus, CCE’s executive director agreed to bring the changes back to the negotiating table with the union and district leadership.

The meeting ended with the CCE Research Team sharing research on the progress of Pilot Schools. Data showed the Pilot Schools outperforming the district averages while being generally representative of district demographics. Leaders welcomed the good news as the packed and productive meeting came to a close.
Expanding Voice: The Staff Network

Our mission is to educate the staff, families, and community about our uniqueness and special purpose as a model of educational reform. The Staff Network will foster cross-school relationships to create a K–12 pathway as members continue to maintain small and supportive learning environments for all students and families. The Staff Network is a forum to develop a collective voice empowering mutual relationships across Pilot Schools, BTU, BPS, and the broader community. —Staff Network mission statement

Staff Network Beginnings, 2005–06

One October afternoon, Pilot School staff from across the network gathered at the Orchard Gardens K–8 School for the second monthly meeting of the Pilot Schools Staff Network. The main items on the agenda were to develop a mission statement and develop concrete action steps as the group moved forward.

“What is the Staff Network about?” was the prompt for drafting the mission statement. Staff broke up into small groups to brainstorm and write responses on chart paper, and then reconvened as a large group to share ideas and record them all together on chart paper. Ideas were grouped by topic area. For newly created Pilot Schools, opportunities included “educating staff, families, and the community on what it means to be a Pilot School” and “creating a sense of community across schools.” For veteran Pilot Schools, ideas included staff “helping new staff learn about Pilot Schools” and having “opportunities to open classrooms/schools across the Network” so that staff and schools are able to learn from one another.

Additional ideas addressed the union and the public: “strengthening relations with the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) as well as our position within the BTU” and “strengthening our public voice [as a Network].” Another topic was curriculum development across schools and within (continued)
classrooms, and creating more forums for conversation on Pilot School issues.

Members developed a draft mission statement, which would be further revised in subsequent meetings, and moved on to future topics of discussion: 1) Pilot School areas of autonomy; 2) election-to-work agreements, also known as Work Election Agreements (WEA), the process to develop WEA, and the template language used for WEA; and 3) data on Pilot School successes and challenges.

**The Staff Network at Work**

During the next meeting at the Young Achievers Science and Mathematics Pilot School, staff reviewed the draft mission statement, and then shared Work Election Agreements (WEA) across schools, examining the “boilerplate” for agreements that includes required and optional language. The discussion generated thoughts on why WEAs are important and on challenges and questions. One teacher stressed the process component of WEA, including how various schools agreed on their respective WEA. It was decided that in following meetings staff would examine two specific WEAs as examples of both content and process, and discuss decision-making processes in their respective schools.

At a subsequent meeting at Boston Day and Evening Academy, a CCE coach asked what the group wanted to walk away with after the meeting. “I want to hear how it [decision making] works in other places,” said one teacher, while another hoped for “some cross-pollination of ideas.” Still another teacher suggested, “a protocol for recognizing and making change.”

One staff member explained how her Pilot elementary school is staff governed. “What does it mean to be staff governed?” she posed to the group. At her school, the staff of 12 makes all decisions through a “fist to five”—a show of five fingers means approval and a fist means disagreement and the ability to block the decision. Being staff governed means “power and responsibility,” she explained, for “you’re really in a situation of shared leadership.... It’s a phenomenal environment to work in.”

After discussion, staff used a decision-making matrix tool (see the “Governance Structure Chart” later in this chapter) to consider how decisions are made in their respective schools. The matrix showed constituent groups and decision-making categories, and staff filled in where different
Expanding Voice: The Staff Network (continued)

groups had decision-making authority or input. The group noted the following: culture is defined by how a group solves a problem; transparency about process is important; and not all groups can or should be involved in every decision. Staff found the matrix tool useful and thought about ways to use it in a leadership team or whole staff meeting. “I’m looking forward to being able to introduce that [decision-making tool],” a teacher stated during reflection, “I thought the meeting was really helpful.”

Members returned to their schools with increased knowledge about WEAs and decision making. “I brought back the information to my school...and it was changed,” noted one Pilot high school teacher. Another teacher said that it was “heartening” to learn about the different agreements.
The following is an informational flyer on the Pilot/Horace Mann Schools Staff Network.

**History and Purpose**
At the Network’s 2005 Spring Leadership Retreat, both principals and teacher-leaders expressed the strong desire for CCE to make it a priority to build a more vibrant network for staff across all Pilot Schools. The Staff Network will offer opportunities for staff across our schools to collaborate in creating instructional practices, curriculum units and assessments, and student support models. In addition, the Staff Network will be an important forum for staff to share Pilot Network information and resources as well as to collaborate on critical issues.

**Opportunities for Collaboration**
Members of the Staff Network will design meaningful opportunities for collaboration across our schools. Professional development points will be available for participation in Staff Network activities and events. Some of these opportunities might include:

- Learning about Pilot Schools & Areas of Autonomy
- How-To Sessions on Creating Professional Collaborative Culture
- Learning about Critical Friends Groups
- Sharing Effective Decision-Making/Governance Models
- Sharing Really Practical Instructional Strategies!
- Creating an Internet Bulletin Board
- Sharing Strategies on Engaging Family & Community

**Criteria for Participation**
- Current staff member of one of the 20 Pilot/Horace Mann Schools
- Commitment to forming the Staff Network:
  - Regularly attend meetings
  - Actively participate in Staff Network goals and activities
  - Attend the Pilot/Horace Mann Annual Network Retreat
- Able to represent respective school community

**Selection as a School Representative to the Teacher Network**
- As determined by respective school, either by election or on a voluntary basis

(continued)
Stipend for Participation

- Representatives to the Staff Network receive a $500 stipend for the year (the $500 stipend is shared in the event schools select more than one representative). The stipend can be used in a variety of ways, as agreed upon by respective school representatives.
- Budget to support events and activities: $10,000

Center for Collaborative Education’s Role

CCE will serve an advocacy and support role in developing the emerging Staff Network.
Purpose: To discuss and record who should have decision-making responsibility in different areas of school operation.

Directions: Use this chart to record who should have decision-making authority and who should have input and/or recommendations. Each school may adapt the categories to fit its particular context. The goal of this chart is to create a democratic governance structure of shared decision making.

Key: D = Decision-making authority: makes the final decision; I = Gives input: has a formal opportunity to give input and/or recommendations into a pending decision.

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<th>Students</th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Full Admin. Team</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Leadership Team</th>
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## Governance Structure Chart (continued)

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Annual Network Events

Annual events increase collaboration across the Pilot Schools Network. The school year opens in the fall with a Staff Sharing Conference that gathers approximately 250 Pilot School staff and administrators to present and share practice in workshops. According to one Pilot staff member, the workshops are “a great chance to brainstorm and share ideas.” An evening reception with speakers and a day-long conference highlight their important contributions. Workshop sessions have included topics such as “Looking Beyond Standardized Tests: Using Data to Inform Instruction” and “Creating Professional Collaborative Communities.”

In January, near the time of school selection for the Boston Public Schools, the Pilot Schools Network conducts a Pilot Schools Expo, in addition to the BPS school showcase. Administrators, staff, and students join together to present all that Pilot Schools have to offer to interested students and families.

Pilot School leaders participate in an annual two-day retreat in the spring during which they reflect on the past school year and plan for the year ahead. One principal noted, “This is an unbelievable group of leaders and educators—I am very inspired by the commitment that we have for the network.” The retreat is a time to strengthen relationships, increase understanding across schools, and develop a common voice as a network through “honest, open, and powerful” discussion, according to another Pilot School leader.

In May, a Youth Leadership Conference of students in grades 8–12 serves to increase Pilot School student voice and leadership in issues affecting their schools and communities. Each year the conference is held at a different school with a different theme. Not only are Youth Leadership Conferences opportunities for students to develop skills and relationships, but the network also builds external partnerships. Past speakers and participants have included Boston city councilors and members of Project: Think Different, Iniciativa, and The Foundation Movement.
“Exploring the Diverse Faces of Leadership”:
The 2nd Annual Youth Conference

On Thursday, April 14, 2005, Greater Egleston Community High School (GECHS) hosted the second Pilot Network Youth Conference, “Exploring the Diverse Faces of Leadership.” The goal of the conference was to encourage students to look past the typical and stereotypical representations of leadership to ones that connect with urban students today and provide bridges into their futures. Students from Pilot high and middle schools were welcomed by a slide show of GECHS students “doing their thing”: showing work during exhibitions, and learning and demonstrating skills at their Friday community internships.

The conference opened with a panel that represented the racial and ethnic diversity of leadership in Boston: City Councilor Chuck Turner; Melissa Colon of Iniciativa; Ernesto Arroyo, son of City Councilor Felix Arroyo and founder of The Foundation; Lisa Guscott of Guscott Properties; Yusi Wang of Citizen Schools; and Professor Joseph Cooper of University of Massachusetts, Boston. Panelists told their stories and shared their diverse perspectives about leadership with the audience of engaged teens. “The speakers were great,” said one student, “They helped a lot by giving out information.”

After lunch, the students went to workshops ranging in topics from “It’s Bigger than Hip-Hop” to “Leadership through Financial Empowerment and Independence.” Many students conducted workshops based on the conference theme, with an audience of fellow students, staff, and community members. “Everyone pitched in and helped us out —I liked that,” said one student. The students gathered at the end of the day to share their learning and revelations, which clearly demonstrated that Pilot School students are indeed our future leaders.
“Leading for Progress and Promise”: The 10th Annual Leadership Retreat

Connections

The 10th Annual Pilot Schools Network Spring Leadership Retreat began with a connecting activity: “What are you retreating from? What are you retreating to?” For the next two days Pilot School leaders—principals, assistant principals, and teacher-leaders—were gathered together in a serene conference center in Essex, MA, comfortably clothed in jeans and sweatshirts. After introductions, leaders took turns going around the room responding to the connecting questions:

“I’m here to learn from you and grow.”

“To gain perspective...”

“There is a lack of time to fit everything we need to fit in in the school day.... I’m retreating to learn from all of you.”

“This is important to our kids.”

“It’s great to be back...retreating to having a refreshed feeling.”

“I’m retreating to catch up with you guys, the Network.”

“Today will be a time to breathe.”

“I’m here to look up with a long lens.”

“It’s too busy...I’m here to get energized, to get back the passion to finish the year on a high note.”

“Every year I think, ‘Boy, I’m really glad I did that [the retreat]...”

Vision, Mission, Principles and Practices

The group began the work of the retreat with a discussion of the Network Vision and Mission Statements and Principles and Practices, defining net-

(continued)
“Leading for Progress and Promise”: The 10th Annual Leadership Retreat (continued)

work documents. Questions included whether the current versions resonated and how leaders could share these with their respective schools. Leaders broke up into small groups to review and discuss the documents, and lively discussions followed as they marked up the text and shared ideas.

In one small group, a new Pilot School leader sat with a Pilot School leader of four years. “I wasn’t aware of the network,” said the new leader. “It’s really a big support,” explained the more veteran leader, “Being a new school, it’s very helpful.” She discussed changes in her school’s schedule to allow for staff professional development every Friday, “It has enriched us.” The network shows “different roads” schools can take. One example the principal noted is moving to a more competency-based school, which several other schools in the network are working on, “Looking at this gives me a picture...it could help me be better at being able to do that.” For this leader, sharing and support are important aspects of the network.

The leaders reconvened for a large group discussion, and CCE staff noted their feedback in order to update the network documents. Leaders said that the documents made the network important and gave it a reason to exist. The documents could be shared with school governing boards and staff. Core ideas that emerged from the conversations included, “continuing to support each other” in the network, a “commitment to leadership development,” and thinking about “what does it mean to be a network.”

Looking at the Vision, Mission, Principles and Practices set the tone for the rest of the retreat, as leaders thought about what they represented as a network. “I look forward to it every year,” concluded one principal about the activity.

Past, Present, and Future

Next, leaders broke up into two groups to reflect on what the network accomplished in the past year and where to go next. “Advocacy” and “Teaching and Learning” were the two main topics chosen to be discussed in separate small groups. In each group, accomplishments and next steps were listed on chart paper and then shared when the large group reconvened. “Advocacy” accomplishments included the new BTU/BPS contract and the work of the Fiscal Autonomy Committee; next steps included gaining a Pilot School liaison with the district and increasing understanding of differences between start-up and conversion Pilot Schools. Under (continued)
“Leading for Progress and Promise”:
The 10th Annual Leadership Retreat (continued)

“Teaching and Learning,” accomplishments included starting lab classes in several schools and providing support for the increasing numbers of students with moderate to severe special needs in all Pilot Schools. Next steps included spreading the lab classroom model to more schools and working with schools on individual approaches to inclusion.

The next day, as the retreat came to a close, leaders were reflective on what it means to be a Pilot School, for both existing and prospective new schools, and the purpose of the Pilot Network. “Becoming a Pilot is a path...in the end the staff really get to find out that it’s so much better,” said one principal. Another principal added, “It’s a path that doesn’t happen overnight.” Having a vision is necessary to being a Pilot School, said another leader, and having all staff committed to that vision.

One elementary school principal said she tries not to miss any of the monthly leadership team meetings or network events. She concluded, “You don’t know what it’s all about until you’re part of the network.... That’s how you get it in your head and in your heart.”
The following agenda outlines the annual Pilot Schools Network Leadership Retreat that took place on April 7 and 8, 2006.

BOSTON PUBLIC PILOT &
HORACE MANN SCHOOLS NETWORK
ANNUAL SPRING LEADERSHIP RETREAT
APRIL 7 & 8, 2006
ESSEX CONFERENCE CENTER
“LEADING FOR PROGRESS & PROMISE”

“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable…every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Retreat Goals
1. To connect sustained reflection to the process of assessing SY 06 network accomplishments, goals, and challenges;
2. To develop SY 07 network goals and work plan;
3. To share and build a common understanding and knowledge about school practice and progress across the network;
4. To continue professional development and dialogue around special education, inclusion, and differentiation;
5. To come together as a professional community of educational leaders to affirm, acknowledge, and support the work of each individual and our collaborative and collective work.

(continued)
Leadership Retreat Agenda (continued)

Friday, April 7, 2006

AGENDA

8:00 Arrival & Breakfast

9:00 Introductions, Review agenda and norms
   Morning Energizer—Shifting into the Retreat Mode

9:30 Network Vision & Principles—Turn & Talk
   How do our Network Vision & Principles address progress and promise?

10:15 SY 06 Network Goals, Work Plan & Network Events
   Groups of 5–6 (facilitator, timekeeper, recorder)
   • What have we accomplished?
   • Where do we go from here? (emerging goals, events, tasks, activities)
   • Sharing in whole group

11:15 BREAK

11:30 Network-wide Initiatives—in groups of 5–6 (facilitator, timekeeper, recorder)
   What is the progress and the promise? (15 minutes for each discussion topic)
   • BTU/BPS
   • Seven New Pilots
   • The Boston Foundation Work
   • Group can choose an additional topic and reduce the amount of time
     for discussion to about 10 minutes
   • Sharing in whole group

12:30 LUNCH

1:30 Achievement—Access, Opportunity, or Gap?
   Fishbowl Activity

2:45 Special Education
   • Practice, Progress & Promise
   • Whole group discussion

4:20 Free Write: As a leader in a Pilot or Horace Mann School, what is
   something that you want to Stop, something you want to Start, and
   something that you want to Continue?

4:30 Walkabout—Find a partner, take a walk and share your responses and
   thoughts to this question.

5:00 Reconvene—Written reflections on the day and closing reading

6:30 Dinner & Community Building—also known as laughing, talking, relaxing,
   and playing together!

(continued)
The Power of a Network

Saturday, April 8, 2006

Every individual becomes educated only as he/she has the opportunity
to contribute something from his/her own experience, no matter how
meager or slender... and finally that enlightenment comes from the give
and take, from the exchange of experience and ideas. —John Dewey

AGENDA

8:00 Breakfast
8:30 Introductions, Morning Energizer, Review agenda and norms, Share
reflectations from Friday
9:00 SY 07 Goals & Network Events—First draft
10:00 Sharing Our Practice & Roundtables
  • Achievement—Access, Opportunity, or Gap? (follow-up discussion)
  • Special Education—Inclusion, Differentiation, & Practice (follow-up
discussion)
  • Lab Classes/Peer Observation
  • Pilot Guides
  • Harbor/O’Hearn—Creating a K–8 Inclusion Pathway Model
  • The Assistive Technology Classroom—Practice, Promise, Progress, and
Possibilities
11:15 BREAK
11:30 Consultancies
  • Discipline Dilemmas
  • Special Education
  • Achievement of African-American and Latino Students
  • Family Engagement (middle & high school)
  • Looking at Student and Teacher Work
12:45 Debrief, written reflections, closing reading
1:15 LUNCH
2:15 Have a safe journey home

“I truly appreciated, as always, the opportunity to see my
colleagues, exchange a hug and
enjoy the solidarity that I feel
in this group.”
—Pilot elementary school principal
## PILOT/HORACE MANN SCHOOLS NETWORK
### Calendar of Network Meetings and Events

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* There are two or three joint meetings of the Leadership Network and the Pilot Staff Network each year. In addition, both groups meet for a half or a full day at the annual Network Leadership Retreat.

“There is a lack of time to fit everything we need to fit in in the school day…. I’m retreating to learn from all of you.”

—Pilot School principal
Getting Started

Starting Pilot Schools

The success of the Pilot model has generated a great deal of interest in starting Pilot Schools. In Boston, new Pilot Schools are being formed and approved; by 2009, at least 7 more Pilot Schools may be created in the BPS, increasing the number of schools to at least 26. Outside of Boston, school districts across the state and country are considering the Pilot model, and several have begun the process. As your school or district considers Pilot Schools, the following information will help get you started.

Conversion Schools

Schools and districts often have questions about conversion Pilot Schools. The following case study outlines the change process for the first BPS district school that converted to Pilot School status in 2002, Boston Community Leadership Academy.
The following study is based on Promising Results and Lessons from the First Boston District School Converting to Pilot Status, *Center for Collaborative Education*, forthcoming.

In June 2000, the superintendent of the Boston Public Schools (BPS) appointed a new principal to take over Boston High School. The school was overcrowded and among the lowest-performing high schools in the district. The new principal immediately changed the focus of the school from a work-study school with two shifts of students per day to a single full-day-schedule, college preparatory high school, with the goal of improving student performance.

In June 2002, the staff voted overwhelmingly to convert to Pilot status and to rename the school Boston Community Leadership Academy (BCLA). Boston High enrolled 650 students when the new principal was appointed. The enrollment for BCLA was intentionally reduced to a small school size of 400 students, through graduation, attrition, and smaller incoming classes.

From 2000 to 2004,* attendance increased, suspensions were stable, and transfers out decreased (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Students Suspended</th>
<th>Transfers out of BCLA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003–04</td>
<td>BCLA</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002–03</td>
<td>BCLA</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001–02</td>
<td>Boston High</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–01</td>
<td>Boston High</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the same time, pass rates increased for both the English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics portions of the statewide MCAS exams. By 2004, more than 80% of students passed the ELA and math exams. What (continued)
brought about these positive trends in student outcomes?

**Changes in School Mission**

BCLA’s new mission statement was created collaboratively by the school design team (a group of faculty, administrators, families, community members, and students who submitted the Pilot design proposal) and the staff:

Boston Community Leadership Academy’s mission is to develop the capacity for leadership in all students, empowering them to make a positive contribution to their communities. BCLA’s rigorous curriculum prepares students to succeed in college, to lead fulfilled lives, and to participate in our diverse and complex democracy.

The impact of the change was evident throughout the school:

I like the [idea] of this school being a college prep [school].... We have a lot more discussions in the classroom, and the teachers are
involving every student. So, it’s just growing every year, I think, into something good. —Student

Our vision is to make every student, when they leave us here, not [only go] to college, [but] to get through college. —Principal

**Changes in Staff Numbers and Roles**

In its first year of operation in 2002–03, and because of the adoption of Pilot status, 24—or 37.5%—of BCLA’s 64 staff members were new, contributing to a renewal of the school’s professional culture:

With the new teachers, they have created an atmosphere of higher expectations. —Teacher

In addition, due to staffing autonomy and greater budget flexibility, there was a focus on decreasing class size: the first year of Pilot status, the average class size dropped from 28 to 22 students.

[Before Pilot status,] I had a class that had 28 and there was no way that we could deliver the instruction you wanted to when you have 28 kids in the math class. So we opened another section and asked someone else to pick it up. And you can do all this when…you’re small and you have that flexibility. —Principal

A higher proportion of BCLA’s staff is now engaged in student support work compared to Boston High. Not only is the support staff now larger, but other school staff have taken on increased support roles through advisory.

**Changes in Leadership Roles and School Governance**

Prior to Pilot conversion, Boston High administrators practiced a traditional governance structure: the principal made most decisions, and teachers were given little opportunity for input. Starting with the design team’s work toward Pilot status in 2001–02, decision making at the school began to involve teachers, students, and families.

New structures include collaborative decision-making bodies, or teams, designed to provide opportunities for staff, students, families, and community members to have a voice in decisions. The school’s governing board, leadership team, and curriculum team now make decisions
collaboratively. The governing board is responsible for budget and policy decisions, principal evaluation, and community and business partnerships. The leadership team is organized to represent each small learning community and academic area, and focuses on teaching and learning matters. The curriculum team works with the director of curriculum and instruction to ensure alignment of their goals, projects, and timelines across content areas.

**Changes in Use of Teacher and Student Time**

In the principal’s first year at Boston High, the average length of the school day was 374 minutes, and the time spent on core academic instruction per day was 222 minutes. Currently, the average length of the school day is 398 minutes, and students spend an average of 263 minutes per day on core academic instruction. BCLA students are in school and engaged in academics more than they were in Boston High. The teachers’ school year differs from the district contract by an additional 27 hours.

Class periods have lengthened from 58 minutes to 109 minutes, with some 53-minute classes. Once a week, students are released after a half-day so that teachers have more time to meet and discuss their work among colleagues.

I think what is really happening in terms of teaching is just this opening up and sharing practices. I mean, now it’s much more reflective. —Teacher

---

### Table 2. Enrollment and Staffing Changes Due to Pilot Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment and Staffing</th>
<th>2000–01</th>
<th>2004–05*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total student enrollment</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in student enrollment</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total staff in teaching, student support, and administrative roles</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in staffing</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher:student ratio</td>
<td>1:13</td>
<td>1:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of these staff who were teachers</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of these staff who were student support</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of these staff who were administrators</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Due to rounding, staff percentages add up to more than 100%.
Changes in Curriculum and Assessment

The curriculum at BCLA is now driven by its mission to prepare students to succeed in college. Academic courses are sequenced to provide students with college prerequisites, including four years of math. Remedial classes are no longer offered, and physics and five Advanced Placement (AP) classes were added to the curriculum. While time for electives has decreased significantly since 2000 in order to create more time for core academics, the number of electives and interest in them among students has increased.

Advisories now provide one means of improving relationships and school culture. Each student is assigned an advisor for two years; the curriculum includes activities for getting to know each other, study and life skills, college preparation, and community service.

I like the curriculum because we have changed it to make it more rigorous. —Teacher

Challenges of Converting to Pilot Status

Despite the gains, the school still faces challenges as it continues on its journey to becoming a high-performing high school:

- Student dissatisfaction with longer school days
- Addressing access and equity with the introduction of more advanced course offerings
- Developing a shared definition and understanding of new teams’ responsibilities
- Bringing shared decision making to the student level
### Table 3. Summary of Changes due to Autonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Pre-Pilot</th>
<th>Post-Pilot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td>Work-study</td>
<td>College-preparatory and leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrollment</strong></td>
<td>650</td>
<td>~400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staffing (and Budget) Autonomy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of staff</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher:student ratio</td>
<td>1:13</td>
<td>1:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff who have student support roles</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum and Assessment Autonomy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remedial track of courses</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Placement courses</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance assessments</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, ELA and math, all grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses of choice (electives)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory class</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governance Autonomy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance model</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Distributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teams for decision making</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Governing board, leadership team, and curriculum team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff who are administrators</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schedule Autonomy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominant instructional block (minutes)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of school day (minutes)</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on core academic instruction per day (minutes)</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative planning time per week (minutes)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Outcomes (Equity)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA MCAS pass rate</td>
<td>30% (below BPS average)</td>
<td>87% (above BPS average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math MCAS pass rate</td>
<td>21% (below BPS average)</td>
<td>83% (above BPS average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates enrolling in postsecondary education</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Steps to Becoming a Pilot School District

The adoption of the Pilot School model requires a partnership between a public school district and the local teachers union. The Pilot model requires a different relationship between these two parties, one in which each side gives up historical control they have exercised over schools. Creating such a model in a district requires a deliberate process, and a reevaluation of central office services to these schools. The following steps outline the role the Center for Collaborative Education (CCE) has played in the replication of Pilots. Depending upon the conditions within a district, these steps are not necessarily undertaken in sequential order.

Building Understanding

- **Learn about Pilot Schools.** Read the CCE reports on Pilot Schools’ progress, and how freedom over budget, staffing, and scheduling enables schools to better meet student needs. Discuss the viability of replicating the Pilot model in your district.

- **Pilot School Visits.** Assemble one or more teams, including the superintendent and teachers union president, as well as key principals, central office administrators, and teacher-leaders, to participate in one or more CCE-facilitated visits to Pilot Schools in Boston. The goal is to learn firsthand how the Pilot areas of autonomy enable schools to create the conditions by which students can be academically successful. The trip will include structured visits to Pilot Schools, meetings with Boston Public Schools’ central office administrators, and debriefing sessions with CCE staff.

- **CCE Visit(s) to Meet with Key District and Union Staff.** Invite a CCE representative to spend a day within the district, meeting with key constituencies in order to present the Pilot model and its benefits, and to discuss what a process could look like in replicating the Pilot model within the district. Key constituencies to meet with could include the superintendent and central office managers, the teachers union president and union staff, the heads of community organizations that are affiliated with the school district, school board members, and key principals and teacher-leaders.

Making the Decision to Become a Pilot Replication District

- **Gain Agreement.** Once the key constituencies have had opportunities to learn about Pilot Schools, and have engaged in dialogue about the benefits and feasibility of replicating the Pilot model, assess whether there is agreement to move forward in becoming a Pilot replication district. Minimally, the superintendent, teachers union...
president, and school board chairperson need to agree to adopting the Pilot model. In some districts, a CCE presentation on the Pilot model to the school board may be a helpful step.

- **Prepare a Letter of Commitment.** Once agreement within the district has been reached to pursue the Pilot model, a letter of commitment to adopt the Pilot model should be prepared for submission to the Center for Collaborative Education. The letter must be signed by the superintendent, teachers union president, and school board chairperson, and signal a commitment and timeline to create a defined number of Pilot replication schools over a five-year period, each with enrollment of no more than 450 students. The letter should indicate whether the Pilot Schools to be created will be start-up and/or conversion schools. (It should be noted that a district can decide upon a name other than “Pilot Schools” for its replication initiative; the first true Pilot replication district, Fitchburg (MA), calls their two schools “Partnership Schools.”)

- **Craft New Contract Language.** CCE will facilitate discussions with the district and teachers union to engage in dialogue to craft new teachers union contract language that would extend the Pilot areas of autonomy to the Pilot Schools to be created. Oftentimes, the teachers union may wish to include a representative from the state teachers union affiliate at these meetings. Once new language has been agreed upon, it needs to be ratified by the union’s executive committee and/or membership (depending upon the union’s bylaws).

- **CCE Pursuit of Funding.** Upon receiving a letter of commitment for Pilot replication, CCE will work to secure funding to support the replication work. The district and CCE will work together to put together a package of funding to support the multiyear work.

**The Design Stage**

- **Create a District-Wide Pilot Steering Committee.** The steering committee should be an oversight body to direct the Pilot School initiative. This body approves the request for proposals, reviews and approves submitted proposals, deals with overarching questions around issues such as election-to-work agreements and facilities, and addresses other pertinent issues. Steering committee members should include the superintendent and/or a key central office manager who will have direct oversight for the Pilot initiative, the teachers union president and key union staff officers who will have direct oversight for the Pilot initiative, heads of key partner organizations, and any other members that the superintendent and teachers union president agree upon.
• **Facility Selection.** The steering committee should decide upon the facilities that will house start-up Pilot Schools. If the facility will house more than one school, the committee should determine how the facility will be sub-divided into multiple small schools.

• **Request for Proposals.** Using the timeline for design and implementation of Pilot Schools, develop a request for proposals for design teams to use in submitting a proposal to become a Pilot School.

• **Technical Assistance to Design Teams.** Conduct an orientation meeting for interested design teams (groups of faculty, administrators, parents, community members, and students who wish to submit a Pilot design proposal) to review the Pilot model and proposal requirements. Provide assistance to individual design teams as they explore Pilot status and construct their individual proposals.

• **Design Approval.** CCE will work with the steering committee to review and approve Pilot proposal designs, and then provide approved design teams with technical assistance in Pilot School design, including governance, schedule, curriculum, assessment, staffing, budget, student support, family engagement, and community partnerships.

• **Budget Autonomy.** CCE will work with the district’s budget office to craft an equitable lump sum per pupil funding formula for all approved Pilot Schools. As well—most likely to be implemented in year two of the initiative—CCE will assist the budget office in identifying central office discretionary services that can be itemized into per pupil amounts and offered to Pilot Schools as services or as discretionary funds to be added to their lump sum budget.

• **Other Central Office Redesign.** CCE will work with other central office departments (e.g., Personnel/Human Resources, Curriculum, Special Education, Title I) to prepare for a different service delivery model to approved Pilot Schools, based on the autonomy that these schools will be granted.

• **Community Engagement.** CCE will work with the steering committee to gain media coverage on the Pilot initiative, as well as garner family and community support for the model.

### Setting Up Accountability and Research Components

• **Longitudinal Database.** CCE will work with the district to build its capability to collect individual student-level line data for multiple indicators of student engagement and achievement—attendance, suspensions, transfers, grade retentions, course failures, graduation,
college-going, and state standardized test rates. CCE will annually receive a data transfer from the district containing this data so that the organization can track and report on each new Pilot School’s progress as compared to the rest of the district.

- **School Quality Review (SQR).** CCE will work with the steering committee to set up a timeline and process for conducting School Quality Reviews for all established Pilot Schools. In this process, each school develops a portfolio based on a set of benchmarks that articulate the criteria of a high-performing Pilot School. The school then hosts a three-day visit of practitioners to assess the school’s practices and performance against the Pilot benchmarks, and the visiting team provides to the school a written report of findings, commendations, and recommendations for improvement. Generally, the SQR process will occur in year five of a Pilot School’s existence, and every five years thereafter.

### Launching a Network of Pilot Schools

- **Coach in Pilot Schools.** CCE will provide coaching in the launch of each new Pilot School, assisting in all aspects of Pilot School design.

- **Create a Network of Pilot Schools.** Once multiple Pilot Schools are off the ground, CCE will create district network opportunities for Pilot educators to come together in multiple forums to learn and share from one another, including leadership retreats, teacher sharing roundtables, and cross-school visits.

### Joining the Larger Pilot Schools Network

Throughout the process of becoming a Pilot School district, there will be numerous opportunities to participate in CCE professional development events that will enable district staff to learn more about the Pilot model while gaining a sense of being a member within a larger initiative.

- **Pilot Residency.** This is a three- or four-day experience in which school or design teams engage in: facilitated visits to Boston’s Pilot Schools; structured experiences to learn about the Pilot areas of autonomy and how they can enable schools to implement innovative practices designed to improve student learning; and facilitated team planning time.

- **Summer Pilot Institute.** This is a four-day institute dedicated to Pilot Schools’ sharing their innovative practices across all Pilot School areas—curriculum, instruction, assessment, governance, staffing patterns, creative budget use to maximize resources, student support, schedules, family engagement, and more.

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“**Our vision is to make every student, when they leave us here, not [only go] to college, [but] to get through college.**”

—Pilot high school principal
• **Critical Friends Groups.** This is a five-day institute in which teacher-leaders are prepared to become facilitators of Critical Friends Groups (CFG), groups of teachers who engage in reflective dialogue about improving instruction and student learning through examination of student and teacher work, action research, peer observation, and text-based discussions.

**Conclusion**

Pilot Schools are a unique model of school reform that lead to strong student results: increased academic performance and engagement in school. The essential features of Pilots—autonomy, accountability, small size, and a commitment to equity—can be replicated in other districts and schools. Forming a network of schools and having the assistance of a third-party organization are critical to the success of Pilot Schools. As districts and schools across the country look for ways to improve educational opportunities for all students, beginning the Pilot School path is a journey worth taking.
Pilot School Replication: Fitchburg, MA

The first district outside Boston to replicate the Pilot School model is the Fitchburg, MA Public Schools (FPS). Located in central Massachusetts, FPS is a small urban district enrolling approximately 6,000 students, with a rapidly increasing Southeast Asian and Latino population, in prekindergarten through grade 12.

Fitchburg is in the process of creating two schools modeled after Pilot Schools, called Partnership Schools. The schools are a partnership between the FPS and the Fitchburg Teachers’ Association (FTA). As in Boston, the contract states:

The purpose in establishing Partnership schools is to provide models of educational excellence that will help foster widespread educational reform throughout all Fitchburg Public Schools. The parties hope to improve dramatically the educational learning environment and thereby improve student performance.

The new schools share the same five areas of autonomy as Pilot Schools: staffing, budget, governance, curriculum and assessment, and schedule.

School year 2005–06 was a planning year to design the two small schools—a middle school of 200 students and a high school of 400 students. Both schools will be arts-integrated schools. In September 2006 Fitchburg Arts Academy: A School for Creative Minds (grades 5–8) opened with full enrollment. In September 2007 the Partnership high school (grades 9–12) will open with a ninth grade and will add a grade each year thereafter until it reaches full enrollment.

A design team planned the new middle school, and the founding principal will form the school’s first governing board. A design team is now being formed for the high school. The middle school team consisted of teachers, museum staff, parents, educators, and community members from Fitchburg, as well as educators from other communities interested in developing the schools. Coaches from the Center for Collaborative Education facilitated the team.

(continued)
Pilot School Replication: Fitchburg, MA (continued)

The Design Team at Work

From August 2005 through August 2006, the middle school design team met regularly and developed a vision statement for the middle school, formed a work timeline and completion list, examined equity, and learned about the features and areas of autonomy found in Pilot Schools. Subcommittees were formed to research and develop different areas of the “blueprint” for the schools. The blueprint consists of 12 sections, ranging from school vision and culture to student assessment to community involvement. Students participated in focus groups to inform the design team’s work. A school visit to Boston Arts Academy, a Pilot high school with an arts focus, was a critical learning experience for the team.

The Fitchburg Partnership Steering Committee was created to oversee the Partnership Schools, and includes the superintendent, assistant superintendent, FTA president and vice-president, chairpersons of the design teams, and CCE staff. The steering committee’s role is to oversee the planning and rollout of the two Partnership Schools. As part of their responsibility, the steering committee reviewed and approved the middle school blueprint and proposed an election-to-work agreement, which defines the work conditions for teachers who decide to work in the school. The steering committee and design team have developed student recruitment strategies, hired the middle school principal, and conducted an orientation for the community about the new middle school.
Acknowledgments

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Chuck Turner, Boston City Council
Appendix

Boston Teachers Union Contract Language on Pilot Schools

The following language is from the collective bargaining agreement between the Boston Teachers Union Local 66 MFT, AFT, AFL-CIO, and the Boston School Committee effective September 1, 2003, through August 31, 2006, pp. 27–28. Article III E was included in the contract language in March 2006.*

The Boston Public Schools and the Boston Teachers Union are sponsoring the establishment of innovative pilot schools within the Boston Public School system. The purpose of establishing pilot schools is to provide models of educational excellence that will help to foster widespread educational reform throughout all Boston Public Schools. The parties hope to improve dramatically the educational learning environment and thereby improve student performance....

Pilot Schools will be open to students in accordance with the Boston Public Schools controlled choice plan. Pilot Schools will operate with an average school-based per pupil budget, plus a start-up supplement, and will have greatly increased decision-making authority, including exemptions from all Union and School Committee work rules. The actual establishment of such schools will be pursuant to the issuing of Requests for Proposals (RFP). The RFP will be developed and reviewed by the BPS/BTU Steering Committee. No pilot school shall be established without the approval of the Joint BTU/BPS Steering Committee and the School Committee.

Teachers, paraprofessionals, nurses, guidance counselors, substitutes, and all other employees at pilot schools who fall under the jurisdiction of the BTU contract throughout the school system will be members of the appropriate BTU bargaining unit. These employees shall accrue seniority in the system and shall receive, at a minimum, the salary and benefits established in the BTU contract.

Employees in Pilot Schools will be required to work the full work day/work year as prescribed by the terms of the individual Pilot School proposal. Further, they shall be required to perform and work in accordance with the terms of the individual Pilot School proposal.

Nothing in this Agreement shall prevent Pilot School governing bodies from making changes to their programs and schedules during the year.

All BTU members who apply for positions at pilot schools shall receive the following information at the time of their application:

• the length of the school day and school year;

* See the Boston Teachers Union website to download the contract: http://www.btu.org/left-navbar/contractdownload.html
• the amount of required time beyond the regular school day;
• any additional required time during the summer or school vacations;
and
• any other duties or obligations beyond the requirements of the BTU contract.

BTU members who are employed at a pilot school shall receive, prior to the end of the school year, the same information as stated above.

The Governing Board of each Pilot School shall develop an internal appeals process to allow any staff member to raise issues, concerns, or problems. The internal appeals process shall be submitted to the Joint BTU/BPS Steering Committee* for approval. The internal appeals process shall be provided in writing to all BTU staff members.

Issues not resolved at the school level may go to mediation under Article X-C of this agreement. Final resolution will be made by the Superintendent of Schools and the President of the Boston Teachers Union....

Employees shall work in Pilot Schools on a voluntary basis and may excess themselves at the end of any school year.† No BTU member may be laid off as a result of the existence of Pilot Schools.

The specifications for the RFP on Pilot Schools is agreed to by the parties and is hereby incorporated by reference.

Pilot school positions will be posted on the BPS web page.

**New Article III E**

1. The parties agree that a minimum of seven Pilot schools, provided there are sufficient proposals to consider, will be created through September ’09 under this agreement. The new Pilot Schools may result from conversions, newly created schools, and/or charter schools that opt to become Pilot schools. There shall be a union-sponsored, teacher-run Pilot School at the site of the Thompson Middle School, effective 9/2009 or as soon as the Thompson building is available for such use. This school shall be run exclusively by the BTU Bargaining Unit members on staff. This Pilot at the Thompson shall be counted as one of the seven schools. Nothing described in this paragraph shall supersede the Contract language found in Article III D, specifically, the language that gives the BTU president or superintendent veto power over any particular Pilot School.

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* The BTU/BPS Steering Committee is created through the BTU contract. The committee consists of an equal number of members appointed by the superintendent and teachers union president, presided over by the superintendent and teachers union president. The committee’s charge is to oversee implementation of the BTU contract, of which Pilot schools are one provision.
† This process must take place within the Voluntary Excess timeline set forth in the BPS Staffing Calendar, which is included in Superintendent Circular HRS-25.
2. The parties agree that a teacher work year schedule (including length of work year, length of work day, professional development time in and out of school, and summer work) shall be created by the Governing Board and shall be given to affected staff no later than January 15 of the previous school year. By a 66% or 2/3 vote, affected BTU Bargaining Unit staff may vote to override the proposed schedule, sending it back to the Governing Board for possible reworking. If a schedule for an upcoming school year has not been approved by February 15th, the previous year’s schedule shall remain in place. Staff wishing to excess may do so on February 15th. If after the start of [the] school year, the Governing Board of a Pilot School wishes to change, it must be approved by a 66% or 2/3 vote of the affected BTU Bargaining Unit staff. The following paragraph, currently found in Article III D of the 2003–2006 CBA, shall be deleted: "Nothing in this agreement shall prevent Pilot School governing bodies from making changes to their programs and schedules during the year."

   i. Bargaining Unit members who work in a Pilot School shall get paid at the contractual hourly rate for hours scheduled in accordance with the above paragraph as follows: For all hours scheduled in excess of the traditional teacher work day and year (as mentioned in the first sentence in section 2) for their respective school levels (elementary, 6:30 per day; secondary, 6:40 per day of 183 days and 18 hours), the following schedule shall be in effect:

   1. In 2006/2007, excess hours up to 105 per school year shall not be compensated. Compensation for hours from 105–155 shall be paid by the school department. Compensation for hours beyond 155 shall be the responsibility of the individual Pilot School.

   2. In 2007/2008, excess hours up to 100 per school year shall not be compensated. Compensation for hours from 100–150 shall be paid by the school department. Compensation for hours beyond 150 shall be the responsibility of the individual Pilot School.

   3. In 2008/2009, excess hours up to 95 per school year shall not be compensated. Compensation for hours from 95–145 shall be paid by the school department. Compensation for hours beyond 145 shall be the responsibility of the individual Pilot School.

   ii. All pay, regardless of the source of funding, will be annualized and retirement-worthy.
3. [This is a section on Discovery Schools, not pertaining to Pilot Schools.]

4. The parties agree that there will be established an intervention process that can be invoked under certain conditions to be established. Either party will be able to initiate an intervention process. The process will parallel the process as found in Article IV C of the CBA.

5. Each Pilot School’s Governing Board shall include no less than four teachers.

6. Disputes over the interpretation or application of Article III E i 1, i 2, and i 3 shall be resolved in accordance with the arbitration procedure, waiving all intermediate steps, of the parties’ collective bargaining agreement unless the superintendent and the union president can agree on a resolution.

7. The two Boston Horace Mann Charters, the Boston Day and Evening Academy and the Health Careers Academy, will fall under this newly named Article III E of CBA.

8. Teachers in Pilot Schools must excess themselves by February 1 of a given school year. Pilot School principals and headmasters must excess teachers by February 1 of a given school year.

9. The parties agree that sections 2i 1, 2, 3 and section 6, if applicable, apply to paraprofessionals.

10. Article III E in the CBA will be renamed Article III F j.
### Pilot Schools Overview Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Grades Served, 2005–06</th>
<th>Enrollment, 2005–06*</th>
<th>Initial Year of Pilot Status</th>
<th>How School Became a Pilot School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baldwin Early Learning Center</td>
<td>K0 to 1</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Converted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Gardner Elementary School</td>
<td>K0 to 5</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Converted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lee Academy</td>
<td>K0 to 5</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Start-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Mason School</td>
<td>K0 to 5</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Converted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary-Middle</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyndon Elementary School</td>
<td>K to 8</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Start-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Hill School</td>
<td>K to 8</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Start-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchard Gardens Pilot School</td>
<td>K to 8</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Start-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Achievers Science and Mathematics Pilot School</td>
<td>K to 8</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Start-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School</td>
<td>6 to 8</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Start-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Harbor School</td>
<td>6 to 8</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Start-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-High</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Josiah Quincy Upper School</td>
<td>6 to 12</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>Start-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Another Course to College</td>
<td>9 to 12</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Converted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston Arts Academy</td>
<td>9 to 12</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Start-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston Community Leadership Academy</td>
<td>9 to 12</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Converted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boston Day and Evening Academy (Horace Mann Charter)</td>
<td>Ungraded</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Start-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fenway High School</td>
<td>9 to 12</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>Converted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Egleston Community High School</td>
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<td>107</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Converted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Careers Academy (Horace Mann Charter)</td>
<td>9 to 12</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Start-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mission High School</td>
<td>9 to 12</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Start-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech Boston Academy</td>
<td>9 to 12</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Start-up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Enrollment data is from the Massachusetts Department of Education, School Profiles, http://profiles.doe.mass.edu
Pilot School Mission Statements

Another Course to College
Another Course to College (ACC) is a college preparatory high school in the Boston Public Schools, serving students from diverse backgrounds and neighborhoods. It is dedicated to providing rigorous academics for students in a supportive environment. ACC fosters intellectual curiosity and prepares its students for analytical reading and writing at the college level. ACC measure its success on its alumni’s success.

Baldwin Early Learning Center
As a laboratory school, Baldwin ELC will serve as a professional development site for Boston Public Schools and community early childhood centers. Our school is dedicated to the study, improvement and dissemination of challenging and developmentally appropriate early childhood practices. Our program highlights children’s varied learning strengths and special interests through ongoing observation, assessment and reflection in the creation of an early childhood curriculum.

Boston Arts Academy
The Boston Arts Academy, a pilot school within the Boston Public Schools, is charged with being a laboratory and a beacon for artistic and academic innovation. The Boston Arts Academy prepares a diverse community of aspiring artist-scholars to be successful in their college or professional careers and to be engaged members of a democratic society.

Boston Community Leadership Academy
Boston Community Leadership Academy’s mission is to develop the capacity for leadership in all students, empowering them to make a positive contribution to their communities. BCLA’s rigorous curriculum prepares students to succeed in college, to lead fulfilled lives, and to participate in our diverse and complex democracy.

Boston Day and Evening Academy
Boston Day and Evening Academy is an innovative public high school that educates urban students who are over-age for grade level and seek an educational alternative in order to overcome personal and academic challenges and to graduate as critical and creative thinkers, independent learners, and active citizens.

Fenway High School
Fenway High School’s mission is to create a socially committed and morally responsible community of learners which values its students as individuals.
Its goal is to encourage academic excellence and habits of mind, self-esteem and leadership development among all the school’s students.

**Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School (formerly New Boston Pilot Middle School)**

The Mission of the Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School is to provide students in grades six through eight with a rigorous academic curriculum within a stimulating and nurturing environment.

Our school serves the whole child—mind, body, and spirit—as well as families and the community in which our children reside.

The roots of the child—family, heritage, and community—are explored and affirmed as a source of knowledge, connection and pride. We strive to help students develop a strong sense of belonging by providing nurturing adults who work within small academies—four learning communities within the school.

Inquiry, exploration, experience, connections and hands-on learning all facilitate and complement the core academic curricula and support our vision of developing lifelong learners.

**Greater Egleston Community High School**

Greater Egleston Community High School is a small pilot school for young adults ages 16 to 21. Our mission is to provide quality instruction to meet the educational needs of our diverse range of young adult learners while they concurrently learn effective communication skills. Our young adult students also learn the importance of character building as an essential part of a process for developing successful life skills. Greater Egleston places emphasis on ensuring graduates are well prepared to access either college or vocational training opportunities beyond high school as well as having the capacity to emerge as leading contributors within their community.

**The Harbor School**

The Harbor School’s mission is to inspire in our students an inextinguishable drive toward excellence, craftsmanship, service, and adventure. We view learning as an expedition and work to instill uncompromising academic skills, habits of work and character, and a personal sense of direction and tenacity that will lead to success in high school, and to a life-long love for learning and service to others.

**Health Careers Academy**

Health Careers Academy (HCA) is a college preparatory high school for students exploring careers in the health professions. The Academy provides a supportive learning environment that promotes respect and
embraces diversity. Students will attain the life skills needed to become productive and positive members of society.

**The Lee Academy**
Our mission is to ensure the healthy, full development of the whole child by building academic skills, social/emotional competencies, and effective habits of being. We support the whole development of our children by bringing together a caring and engaged community of adults. We support staff by being a staff-centered school—a school committed to fostering and tending to the collegiality, professional growth, intellectual exploration, leadership development and the emotional well-being of our staff. Further, we strive to develop authentic relationships with families, engaging them as co-teachers in their children’s learning and development.

**Lyndon Elementary School**
The school’s over-arching goal is to foster a lifelong love of learning in students while helping them develop the specific skills needed for ongoing academic success and personal maturation. The Lyndon works to help students become successful, contributing community members and responsible future citizens.

**Samuel W. Mason Elementary School**
The mission of the Mason School is to provide a comprehensive and rigorous full inclusion academic program supported by committed teachers, staff, teacher interns, devoted parents, and a strong community working collaboratively and learning together.

**Mission Hill School**
The task of public education is to help parents raise youngsters who will maintain and nurture the best habits of a democratic society—be smart, caring, strong, resilient, imaginative and thoughtful. It aims at producing youngsters who can live productive, socially useful and personally satisfying lives, while also respecting the rights of all others. The school, as we see it, will help strengthen our commitment to diversity, equity and mutual respect.

Democracy requires citizens with the capacity to step into the shoes of others, even those we most dislike, to sift and weigh alternatives, to listen respectfully to other viewpoints with the possibility in mind that we each have something to learn from others. It requires us to be prepared to defend intelligently that which we believe to be true, and that which we believe best meets our individual needs and those of our family, community and broader public—to not be easily conned. It requires also the skills and competencies to be well informed and persuasive—to read
well, to write and speak effectively and persuasively, and to handle numbers and calculations with competence and confidence.

Democracy requires citizens who are themselves artists and inventors—knowledgeable about the accomplishments, performances, products and inventions of others but also capable of producing, performing and inventing their own art. Without art we are all deprived.

Such habits of mind, and such competence are sustained by our enthusiasms, as well as our love for others and our respect for ourselves, and our willingness to persevere, deal with frustration and develop reliable habits of work. Our mission is to create a community in which our children and their families can best maintain and nurture such democratic habits.

Toward these ends, our community must be prepared to spend time even when it might seem wasteful hearing each other out. We must deal with each other in ways that lead us to feel stronger and more loved, not weaker and less loveable. We must expect the most from everyone, hold all to the highest standards, but also respect our different ways of exhibiting excellence. We must together build a reasonable set of standards for our graduates so that they can demonstrate to us their capacity to meet this mission.

New Mission High School

New Mission High School's mission is to empower students in the city of Boston to become self-directed, life-long learners. NMHS provides an intellectually rigorous high school education in a small, supportive, personalized learning community. Enabling students through multiculturalism, community, creativity, and inquiry are at the core of this school's culture.

Orchard Gardens Pilot School

The Orchard Gardens Pilot School is a neighborhood-centered school that provides quality education for the Orchard Gardens community and communities across Boston in an environment that is clean, safe, and welcoming to children, families, and community members as equal partners.

Josiah Quincy Upper School

The mission of JQUS is to develop its students to be knowledgeable, productive members of a global society through an education that promotes cultural awareness, skillful use of information, personal renewal, and both individual and community path-finding for the twenty-first century.
Tech Boston Academy

Every student can learn and develop into a responsible citizen in a school that provides an environment which is both nurturing and challenging. Tech Boston Academy offers a college preparatory curriculum which includes interdisciplinary project-based learning, where technology is the bridge that connects the student to his/her learning experience.

Young Achievers Science and Mathematics Pilot School

The Young Achievers Science and Mathematics Pilot School is dedicated to creating an exceptional teaching and learning environment in which science and math concepts, explored by new technologies, are central to teacher and student inquiry. Our school is governed by a democratic process that relies on active partnerships with families, students, community members and community institutions. We make a collective commitment to social justice through academic excellence for the diverse student body enrolled at our school from throughout the city of Boston. Our rigorous academic and social curriculum is designed to maximize each student’s potential for critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, community involvement, and responsible leadership.
CCE Services Provided to the Pilot Schools Network

1) Network Professional Development
This includes the following:

• Annual Fall Staff Sharing Conference
• Spring Leadership Retreat
• Monthly Pilot leadership meetings
• Monthly Staff Network meetings
• Monthly Family/Community Network meetings
• Annual Youth Conference
• Annual Family Engagement Conference

2) Individual School Coaching
Coaching is conducted at the school site and covers the topics of governance, curriculum design and content, graduation competencies and exit performances, inclusion, assessment, advisory, use of autonomy, and use of data.

3) Negotiating Annual Pilot Budgets and Funding
Over the years, this has included the following:

• Negotiated one consistent lump sum per pupil figure for each grade level (in the beginning, there were separate budget negotiations with each individual Pilot School, resulting in inequitable budgets per school);
• Negotiated central office discretionary line items, resulting in additional funds per pupil available to Pilot Schools;
• Negotiated start-up funds for Pilot Schools enrolling students with substantially separate special education needs;
• Leveraged grant funds for Pilot Schools.

4) Negotiating Policy Flexibility
Over the years, this has included Pilot Schools gaining autonomy in the following areas:

• District curriculum and assessment requirements
• The district’s whole-school improvement plan requirements
• BPS Six Essentials requirements
• Most human resources requirements

5) Managing the School Quality Review Process

• Negotiated and developed a rigorous accountability process by which Pilot Schools are assessed every five years
• Coordinate and facilitate all School Quality Reviews, including self-assessments and preparation by schools and the external review team site visit

6) Research and Evaluation

Past and present activities include:

• Created an extensive longitudinal database and used this to track progress of all Pilot Schools on student engagement and performance;
• Published reports on Pilot Schools’ performance, engagement, and demographics; parental engagement; how Pilot Schools address race and diversity; use of the areas of autonomy; use of authentic assessment;
• Presented on Pilot Schools’ progress to the Boston School Committee and City Council, and also at local, state, and national conferences;
• Conducting studies on Pilot Schools’ use of collaborative practices, staffing, and special education.

7) Advocacy

To promote the Pilot School model, CCE continues to:

• Conduct the annual Pilot Schools Expo for interested parents and students;
• Work with the Boston Teachers Union on strengthening the Pilot School model;
• Work with community organizations to build support for Pilot Schools;
• Work with the media to increase attention on Pilot Schools;
• Maintain the Pilot website and listserve.
Notes

Chapter 1

Quotes from members of Pilot Schools in Chapter 1 are from the following sources:


Observation by author, Professional Development Meeting, Mason Elementary School, September 28, 2005.


Marc Seiden, Boston Arts Academy teacher, email message to author, April 6, 2006.

Janet Palmer-Owens, Mason Elementary School principal, fax message to author, June 1, 2006.

Anne Clark, Boston Arts Academy teacher, email message to author, June 12, 2006.

Carol Ostiguy, Mason Elementary School teacher, interview with author, Essex Conference Center, April 8, 2006; email message to author, May 4, 2006.

Rosann Tung, Baldwin Early Learning Center parent, email message to author, June 28, 2006.


9. Ibid.

**Chapter 2**


**Chapter 3**


Chapter 4

Quotes from members of Pilot Schools in Chapter 4 are from the following sources:

Observation by author, Pilot/Horace Mann Schools Network Leadership Meeting, Mission Hill School, October 20, 2005.

Observation by author, Pilot Schools/Horace Mann Staff Network Meeting, Boston Day and Evening Academy, January 30, 2006.

Observation by author, Pilot Schools/Horace Mann Staff Network Meeting, Orchard Gardens Pilot School, October 24, 2005.

Reflections, Annual Spring Leadership Retreat, April 8, 2006.

Event Feedback, Boston Pilot Schools/Horace Mann Network Sixth Annual Staff Sharing Conference, Harbor School, October 11–12, 2005.


Chapter 5

Quotes from members of Pilot Schools in Chapter 5 are from the following sources:

Anonymous, Boston Community Leadership Academy students, teachers, and administrators, interviews by Rosann Tung and Monique Ouimette, Fall 2003-Spring 2005.

1. Memorandum of Agreement between The Fitchburg School Committee and The Fitchburg Teachers’ Association, May 17, 2006, signed by Andre Ravanelle, Superintendent of Fitchburg Public Schools, Chad Radock, President of Fitchburg Teachers’ Association, Dan French, Executive Director of Center for Collaborative Education.
Bibliography


