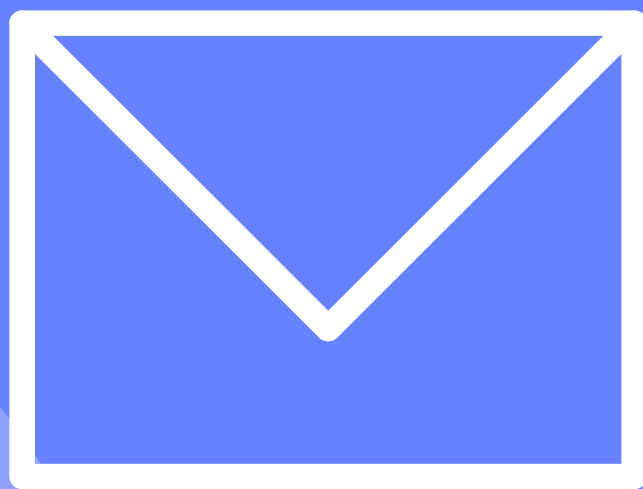




# Boston Public Schools Engagement Toolkit

Information, resources,  
spotlights, and engagement  
opportunities for Christians in  
Boston to partner with and  
support our public school system





# Contact Information

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The Boston Education  
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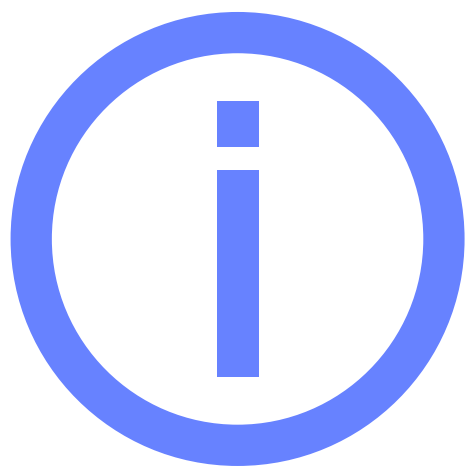
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# TOOLKIT

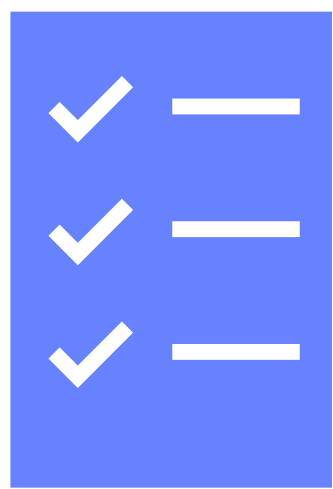
## at a Glance

### RESOURCE PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW



#### STAY INFORMED

Boston Public Schools (BPS) district policies, goals, and leadership are constantly changing. This toolkit provides information on major district initiatives as of fall 2022.



#### TAKE ACTION

With current district goals, BPS wants parents, churches, and community members to get involved. This toolkit includes ways to get involved and advocate for public schools.



#### SUPPORT IN PRAYER

Regardless of time, resources, or relationship, we all can support public schools in prayer. This toolkit includes a prayer guide to prompt praying for BPS.



#### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Navigating BPS and understanding the role of the Church within public education can be confusing. This toolkit provides answers to common questions.

This toolkit is just a starting point for information and involvement. Visit the [Boston Education Collaborative website](#) for more information and ways to participate.

# BPS by the Numbers\*



## SCHOOL AND STUDENT COMPOSITION

### SCHOOLS IN BPS

#### About 120 Schools

7 schools for early learners

41 elementary (K-5)

31 elementary/middle (K-8)

4 middle (6-8)

4 middle/high (6-12)

18 high (9-12)

1 all grades (K-12)

3 exam (7-12)

6 special education

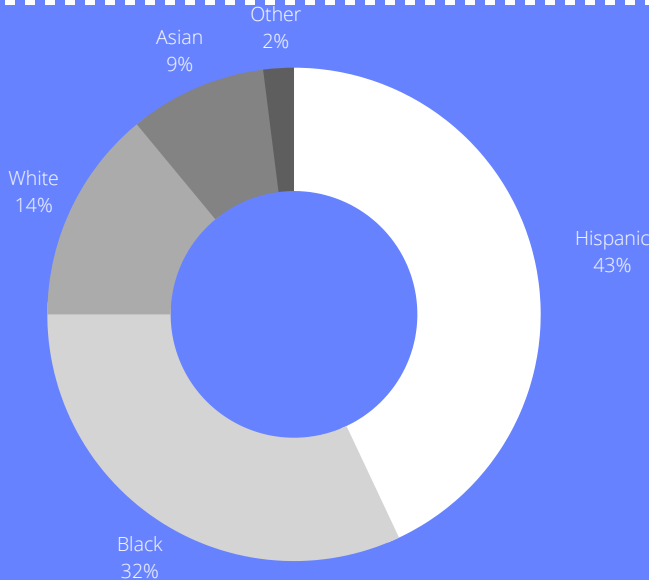
5 alternative

**48,957** students enrolled in BPS, including:

20,499 students in K-5

10,075 students in 6-8

15,216 students in 9-12



### Student Demographics

43% Hispanic

32% Black

14% White

9% Asian

2% Other/multiracial

### English Learners

14,730 students are Limited English Proficient (LEP) or English Learners (EL)

30% of total enrollment

61% were born in the U.S.

66 home languages

138 countries represented

Entitled to English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction

### Special Education

10,523 students with disabilities make up 22% of total enrollment, of whom:

51% are fully inclusive

10% are partially inclusive

31% are substantially separate

7% are in special schools

## History of Boston Public Schools

Home to the first public school in the U.S., the first public elementary school, first public school system, first public high school, and first public day school for the deaf.

\*Based on the 2021-2022 School Year

# BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## DISTRICT INITIATIVES



### GREEN NEW DEAL FOR BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

An effort to reimagine BPS schools as full-service community hubs that meet the evolving needs of students, families, and the city.

- Announced May 2022 by Mayor Michelle Wu, in collaboration with BPS and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- \$2 billion investment in school facilities and capital improvements, starting with a \$605 million investment from 2023 to 2027

BPS aims to rebuild trust with students and families, target declining enrollment, and reduce the environmental impact of BPS buildings

- Includes a Quality Guarantee
- Includes a Facilities Guarantee with an interactive Building Dashboard
- Combining small schools and reconfiguring buildings into K1-6 and 7-12

### HUB SCHOOL INITIATIVE



School community that assesses assets and opportunities to transform students' lives by partnering with parents, teachers, and community organizations

- Includes Critical Pedagogy, anti-racist leadership, and anti-racist system supports
- National equity strategy, built on parental involvement and community engagement



### SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN WITH DESE

Agreement reached between BPS, the City of Boston and Mayor Wu, and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to address systemic issues within the district to prevent state receivership, committing to:

- Improve student safety and resolve complaints quickly
- Propose a plan to improve special education services and update district policies
- Ensure school buses arrive on time with a reporting and evaluation system and external accountability
- Create a long-term facilities master plan and preventative maintenance plan for every BPS building
- Develop a system to ensure English language learners receive adequate instruction
- Regular reports from Mayor Wu and BPS to DESE on the status of commitments



# Statewide Education Data and Resources

Contextualizing public education in Massachusetts through data, policy reports, and current legislation

## **Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

The state's department of education maintains updated school and district profiles on its [website](#).

This includes school attendance data, non-public schools, graduation rates, teacher salaries, enrollment by demographics, and current curriculum.

## **Massachusetts Legislature Joint Committee on Education**

The state legislature includes a committee of both state representatives and state senators on all legislation pertaining to education.

Its [website](#) features members from each chamber, committee contact information, upcoming hearings, and current bills being discussed for that legislative session.

## **Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy**

Combining research, initiatives, and data interpretation, the [Rennie Center](#) aims to support Massachusetts school districts and promote education reform.

Each year they release an annual [Condition of Education in the Commonwealth](#) and publish an interactive [Data Dashboard](#) to provide context for the status of public education in Massachusetts. The 2021 report analyzes who has access to high-quality public education; how students, families, and communities engage with the education system; and what are the social, emotional, and academic outcomes of education.

# ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## FOR PARENTS

WITH ONE HOUR PER WEEK:

- Volunteer in your child's classroom
- Join a tutoring or mentoring program
- Become a member of your school's parent council or school site council
- Organize teacher appreciation events, donation drives, or fundraisers

WITH ONE HOUR PER MONTH:

- Attend or watch a School Committee meeting
- Write letters of encouragement
- Contribute to a teacher's wish list
- Join a neighborhood association or issue advocacy organization

WITH ONE HOUR PER YEAR:

- Pass out school supplies at the start of each school year
- Volunteer at a teacher appreciation event in May
- Attend a local school's theater production or athletic event

## FOR EDUCATORS

WITH ONE HOUR PER WEEK:

- Become a volunteer coach or theater director at your school
- Lead a support group or education roundtable for other educators and community members
- Volunteer with an afterschool club at the school or in the community

WITH ONE HOUR PER MONTH:

- Join a neighborhood association or education advocacy organization
- Host a prayer group with other teachers and leaders
- Start an after-school club for students that meets monthly
- Mobilize people in your church and networks to support students

WITH ONE HOUR PER YEAR:

- Connect with the Boston Education Collaborative to share your experience and perspective
- Create a reading list for students to access in summer
- Meet with your pastor to discuss how your church can better support your students

## FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

WITH ONE HOUR PER WEEK:

- Volunteer with a local school or with a mentorship program
- Offer childcare for school meetings and events
- Become a volunteer coach or theater director at a nearby school
- Coordinate a partnership between your church and a school

WITH ONE HOUR PER MONTH:

- Join a neighborhood association or issue advocacy organization
- Write notes of encouragement to teachers or students you know
- Volunteer with external organizations already serving schools

WITH ONE HOUR PER YEAR:

- Collect and distribute school supplies at the start of the school year
- Volunteer at a teacher appreciation event in May each year
- Help a local teacher set up their classroom at the start of the year

# CHURCH SCHOOL *Partnerships*



## **Timilty School with Peoples Baptist Church and North River Community Church**

Peoples Baptist Church (Boston) and North River Community Church (Pembroke) created the Partnership for Educational Excellence to serve the Timilty Middle School (Boston) from 2012 to 2018. Congregation Lion of Judah (Boston) also joined the team in the last few years to help the school reach the Spanish-speaking population more effectively. Together, they prayed, planned, and met with the principal, administrators, and staff members at the Timilty to find ways in which the churches could come alongside the school to encourage and lend a hand to help them strive to reach their goals.

They prioritized resourcing the teachers by providing sixth-grade teachers and aides with classroom supplies, and students with books exploring “Making Wise Choices in My Middle School Years.” They developed new relationships with the incoming sixth-graders as their last group of students moved on to various high schools. Mentees enjoyed recreational activities as well as opportunities in the arts by attending the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater together.



## **Haley School with Beyond Boundaries Christian Ministries**

During the 2021-2022 school year, Beyond Boundaries Christian Ministries (BBCM) (Boston) was interested in partnering with a local school. The BEC connected them with the Haley Pilot School and asked the church to sponsor a staff breakfast for Teacher Appreciation Week. BBCM supported the breakfast financially, set up and served the breakfast, and welcomed the staff as they entered the room. Pastor Vivian Stephens-Hicks and three other church members were able to encourage the Haley Pilot School staff and inspire their church members to get involved in the community by serving their neighbors. At the end of the school year, Pastor Vivian and the school leadership met to discuss how BBCM volunteers could support the school during school hours with in-classroom help. They hoped this partnership would foster intergenerational relationships and support one-off events throughout the year to support the school.

When Pastor Vivian was asked about her relationship with the Boston Education Collaborative (BEC) and her church's partnership with the Haley Pilot School, she said, “The BEC has been extremely helpful to Beyond Boundaries Christian Ministries through its valuable work of building church-school partnerships. Its support allowed BBCM to establish a relationship with the Haley Pilot School and increase our capacity to serve and engage with the Boston Public School community. From the planning phase to implementing an efficient and fulfilling service project that entailed providing an appreciation breakfast for Haley School staff, BEC showed its tremendous ability to assist with building bridges that contribute to meaningful experiences between the church and school community.”



# BPS PRAYER GUIDE

We acknowledge that God is active and at work within the city of Boston, in our children, and within Boston Public Schools. This guide outlines specific prayer points, asking God to move in the lives of students, educators, and community members. Pray as you feel inspired and led by the Holy Spirit.



## PRAY FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

- For wisdom and guidance for Superintendent Mary Skipper as she steps into her new role and leads the district
- For support from the community and grace as the district seeks collaboration with students and families
- For clear vision and execution of that vision, keeping students at the center of the mission at BPS



## PRAY FOR BPS TEACHERS AND STAFF

- For physical, emotional, and mental support for teachers as they lead students out of the pandemic and virtual learning
- For endurance as teachers and staff manage transitions, social-emotional challenges with students, and mental health crises in their classrooms
- For resources, volunteers, and additional supports to strengthen and complement their teaching
- For rich relationships with each student, rooted in compassion, felt safety, and respect



## PRAY FOR BPS STUDENTS

- For basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing, and safety, to be met for every student as they develop their academic and life skills
- For each student's social, emotional, mental, and spiritual health to flourish
- For each student to have a trusted adult in their life who cares and advocates for them
- For every student to know that God deeply cares for them and has a purpose-filled plan for their lives



## PRAY FOR THE BOSTON EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

- For sustainable, strong, and meaningful relationships between local churches and partner schools that enrich students' lives
- For God to reveal strategic pathways forward and direction in this project, and for God's will to be done
- For God to provide new and support existing connections with leaders in the school system and in churches that can weather the many transitions

Additionally, if there is a specific school, teacher, administrator, or student(s) you are connected with, please mention them by name and lift up specific requests related to their individual experiences and circumstances.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I'm an educator interested in getting a church partner for my school, what are my next steps?

I'm a church partner interested in partnering with a BPS school, what are my next steps?

Reach out to Ruth Wong with the Boston Education Collaborative through the [Interest Form](#) to learn about best practices, prompted by intentionality, reflection, and collaboration.

How can community members without children in the district or education experience support BPS?

Volunteer! Get involved in [existing mentorship programs through the BEC](#) by completing the [Interest Form](#) to get connected with partner organizations and support BPS.

What are BPS initiatives and why should they matter to the community?

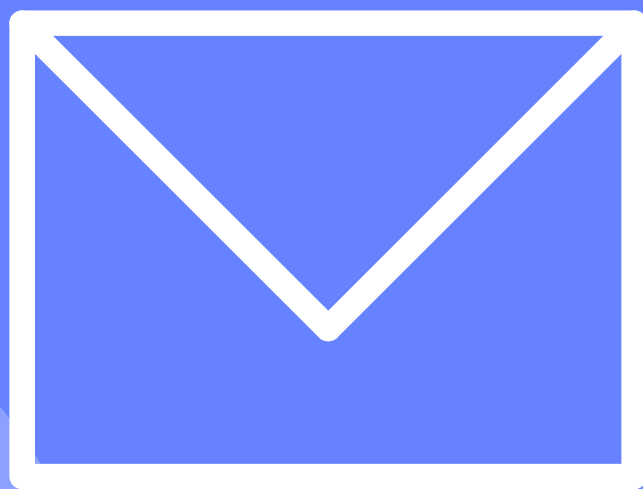
BPS initiatives represent current goals and strategies BPS is implementing to improve the instruction, facilities, and student experience across the district. They direct decision making, interactions with the community, and future plans.

How do I stay up to date with Boston Public Schools news?

BPS releases a weekly newsletter called the [BPS Weekly Update](#), sent out to parents, staff, and community partners. Additionally you can follow the district on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook at [@bostonschools](#).

I have a question for someone at BPS. How do I get in contact with them?

BPS keeps an updated [digital staff directory](#) on its website, organized by department, school, or title. You can also call the [BPS Helpline](#) at 617-635-8873 Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for questions and resources, available in 11 languages.



# Contact Information

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# References

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