

The Boston Public Schools TASAP Project

Technical Assistance for Student Assignment Plans

THE TASAP GRANT:

- ◆ A one-time competitive grant
- ◆ **Grant period:** 2 years
- ◆ **Purpose:** Provide for procuring technical assistance in preparing, adopting or modifying, and implementing student assignment plans to avoid racial isolation and resegregation in schools, and to facilitate student diversity, within the parameters of current law.
- ◆ Grant funds are used to seek assistance and expertise from student assignment specialists, demographers, community relations specialists, facility and other planners, or curriculum specialists and others in comparable districts with relevant and successful experience, as well as specialists and consultants from academia, non-profit organizations, civil rights organizations, and the private sector.

◆ **BPS Grant Award:**
\$241,680

THE BPS TASAP PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Boston Public Schools will engage with BPS families and community members in a collaborative process to review and identify key characteristics for a student assignment plan that achieves equity and diversity while meeting the needs of families and ensuring that all families have access to high quality programs and schools that ensure academic success.

BACKGROUND

Many of the challenges to reaching and engaging the diverse communities of the city of Boston emanate from the complex historical and political context. Under the Boston TASAP Project, a process will be implemented to consider our current school assignment models, as well as new approaches to addressing the persistent challenges of delivering equitable access to world class education within a racially diverse school system. These challenges include:

- Racially isolating housing patterns,
- Concentrations of underperforming schools in predominantly "minority" neighborhoods,
- Unsustainable rising transportation costs,
- On-going budget challenges.

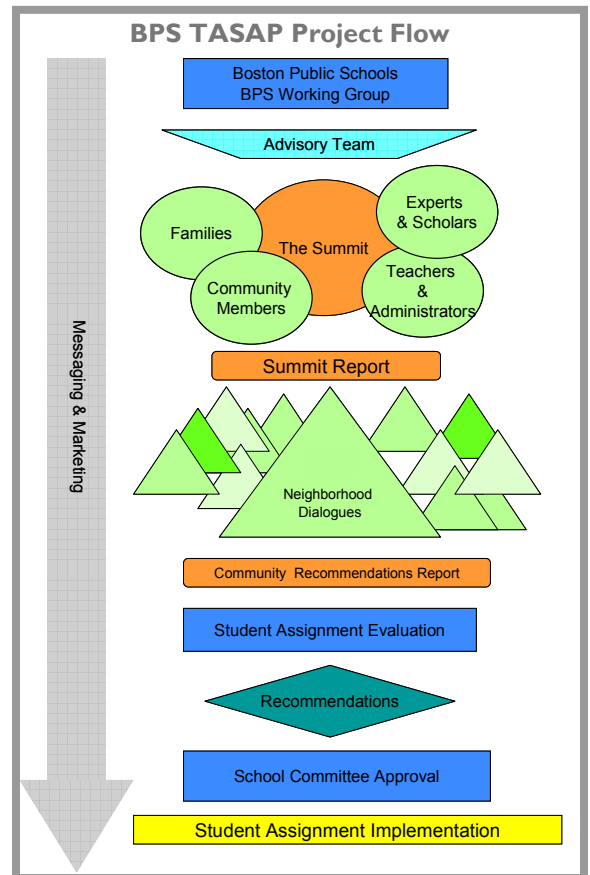
THE TASAP PROJECT

The plan to achieve these two goals (equity and diversity) is through a community-inclusive process which is advised by the most up-to-date research and best practices. Any new student assignment plan will be developed within the context of current BPS initiatives including the Acceleration Agenda, English Language Learner and Special Education initiatives, Circle of Promise and district restructuring. The development of a new student assignment plan will include examining ways to provide high quality educational programs in every community, prioritize investing funds where most needed, and addressing the underperformance in selected schools.

Boston Public Schools will engage a wide range of community members in this process and we hope to partner with community leaders and organizations to reach and engage all segments of the community, especially those that are traditionally under-represented.

The project begins with **The Golden Opportunity Summit: Exploring Equity-Minded Approaches to Student Assignment and School Reform**, on March 27, 2010, an opportunity to get an overview of recent legal actions around student assignment plans, and a review of national promising practices in student assignment and choice. This venue will be an opportunity for local educators, advocates, community members, parents and leading thinkers and practitioners from across the nation to convene, learn about and discuss student assignment and education reform initiatives in metropolitan Boston. One outcome of this summit will be a written report of summit participant recommendations including: models presented that are likely to be successful in Boston, recommendations on key factors and challenges to consider as decisions are made.

The next phase of the TASAP project is community engagement through a series of facilitated Neighborhood Dialogues throughout Boston's diverse communities. The Summit recommendations will inform this next phase of the project, helping to shape the conversation. Through these conversations, BPS and the community can explore promising student assignment practice in the context of current district strategic initiatives. These meetings will also be an opportunity for BPS to share information and gain feedback about district initiatives.



The Boston Public Schools TASAP Project

| | Project Phases | Outcome or Goal | Comments |
|------|--|---|--|
| I. | <p>The Golden Opportunity Summit: Exploring Equity-Minded Approaches to Student Assignment and School Reform. <i>March 27, 2010</i></p> <p>Local educators, advocates, community members, parents and leading thinkers and practitioners from across the nation will convene to learn about and discuss student assignment and education reform initiatives in metropolitan Boston.</p> | <p>Summit Report.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Models likely to be successful in Boston , 2. Overview of other models reviewed and a discussion of the disconnection between them and the Boston context, 3. Recommendations on key factors and challenges to consider in decision-making. | Opportunity for BPS community stakeholders—parents, administrators, teachers, advocates, students —to work directly with nationally recognized experts and practitioners in issues which are of great local concern. |
| | Preparation for Phase 2 | <i>The Summit Report will inform the dialogue in the neighborhood meetings.</i> | TASAP Working and Advisory Groups, Neighborhood Teams. |
| II. | <p>Neighborhood Dialogue Meetings: <i>Spring 2010 — Fall 2010</i></p> <p>Facilitated discussions held in throughout Boston’s diverse communities, where BPS and community members can engage in dialogue about community needs / preferences and explore revising student assignment in the District.</p> | <p>Summary Recommendations Report</p> <p>The outcome of each Neighborhood Dialogue is a recommendations report on the student assignment practice that might be implemented to achieve the objective.</p> | Neighborhood Teams of Community Stakeholders—parents, students, advocates, community members, community leaders. |
| | <p>BPS Student Assignment Redesign: Evaluation of BPS student assignment policy. Develop recommendations on revised policy. Initial implementation planning.</p> | <p><i>The Summary Recommendations Report will inform the evaluation and revision of student assignment.</i></p> <p>Student Assignment Recommendations</p> | TASAP Working and Advisory Groups |
| III. | <p>BPS Student Assignment Recommendation to Boston School Committee <i>Fall 2010</i></p> | Goal: Approval of Student Assignment Recommendations. | BPS Superintendent |
| | <p>Implementation of new or revised student assignment process for SY2011-12</p> | | TASAP Working and Advisory Groups, Neighborhood Teams. |
| IV. | Clear, consistent and timely communication with Community about revised process and implementation. | | TASAP Working Group |

Members of the Boston and BPS Community,

We are excited to embark on this journey and invite you to join us. There are many ways to get involved some of which are listed below. Ways to get involved:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attend Neighborhood Dialogue Meetings | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Liaison |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Facility for Neighborhood Dialogue Meetings | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advisory Team |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Dialogue Facilitator | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Host Organization |

Please email Jocelyn Wright at BPSTASAP@boston.k12.ma.us to let us know of your interest in exploring improving Boston Public Schools.

Sincerely,
Carol R. Johnson
Superintendent, Boston Public Schools

**To get involved or ask questions,
contact Jocelyn Wright at
BPSTASAP@boston.k12.ma.us**



Boston Public Schools

26 Court Street, Boston, MA 02108