

Archdiocese of Boston Schools Partner with Boston Plan for Excellence

Editor's Note: The Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Boston have joined with the Boston Plan for Excellence in the formation of the Boston Schoolchildren's Consortium – an effort that is intended to insure excellence in every classroom, in every school, for every student in Boston. (Please see news release below.) For more information, go to [www. http://www.bpe.org/](http://www.bpe.org/).

BOSTON'S CHARTER, PAROCHIAL, PILOT, PRIVATE, PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND METCO FORM A NEW CONSORTIUM

Boston (December 1, 2009): At its 25th anniversary celebration today at Bank of America, the Boston Plan for Excellence in the Public Schools (BPE) announced the formation of the Boston Schoolchildren's Consortium. Members include superintendents and directors of Boston charter, parochial, private, traditional, and pilot schools and METCO. It is believed to be the first cross-sector collaboration intended to improve education for all schoolchildren in a major American city.



**Mary Grassa O'Neill, Secretary of Education, Archdiocese of Boston;
Paul Reville, Massachusetts Secretary of Education, and
Kevin Andrews, Founding Headmaster, Neighborhood House Charter School.**

In announcing the Consortium, BPE Executive Director Ellen Guiney said, "Together, we believe we can make Boston the first city with a new, larger vision for educating its children and lead the way for the rest of the country, as Boston has so often done in the past. It is time to join forces above the political fray and undertake common work for the common good."

The goal of the Consortium is to explore how, in each sector, the strongest schools achieve a culture of high achievement among students and staff and what lessons from successful schools can be spread to all schools.

Mayor Thomas M. Menino applauded the effort, saying, "As Mayor of all Boston children, I strongly believe that every young person deserves a quality education — whether they attend a public, parochial, charter, or private school. The Boston Schoolchildren's Consortium is a positive step forward and allows us the opportunity to learn from one another, to exchange ideas, and to share best practices."

Boston's Superintendent of Schools Carol Johnson, who has actively participated in shaping the Consortium since the idea was proposed, agreed: "We are committed to looking for the most

successful models, both internally and externally, for building more schools of excellence. All of us want to give the children of Boston the best education possible, and there is so much we can learn by sharing our work and visiting each other's schools."

BPE first convened the leaders in April, and the group of leaders has met four times since. Last month, they "got on the bus" and visited two schools: Roxbury Preparatory Charter School and Boston College High School. In January, Consortium members will follow up with visits to a traditional and a pilot Boston school. Out of these common experiences, members will choose a focus to explore together even further and begin undertaking common work.

Kevin Andrews, founding principal of Neighborhood House Charter School in Dorchester and President of the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, described the potential: "There has been much talk about sharing best practices and bringing people together but that is all it has been: talk. The Boston Schoolchildren's Consortium has taken action by convening educational leaders from the city of Boston in sharing best practices to ensure that all of our students receive a quality education."

Mary Grassa O'Neill, former Boston Public Schools principal and administrator and current Secretary of Education and Superintendent of Schools of the Archdiocese of Boston, is another enthusiastic member: "The Boston Plan for Excellence is well known for its many great contributions to education over the past 25 years. I applaud BPE for this new, historic initiative, and look forward, as we all do, to working together."

BOSTON SCHOOLCHILDREN'S CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

Archdiocese of Boston Schools

Mary Grassa O'Neill, Secretary of Education and Superintendent

Association of Independent Schools in New England

Steve Clem, Executive Director

Boston Charter School Alliance

Michael Goldstein, Founder, MATCH Charter School

Boston Plan for Excellence

Ellen Guiney, Executive Director

Boston Public Schools

Carol Johnson, Superintendent

Janet Palmer-Owens, Academic Superintendent for Pilot Schools and Interim Chief Academic Officer

Center for Collaborative Education & Boston Pilot Schools Network

Dan French, Executive Director, CCE

Combined Jewish Philanthropies

Alan Oliff, Director, Initiative for Day School Excellence

Massachusetts Charter Public School Association

Kevin Andrews, Founder, Neighborhood House Charter School

Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

Kate Carbone, Office of Urban & Commissioner's Districts

METCO

Jean McGuire, Executive Director

Facts about Boston's Schoolchildren

75,400 school-age children live in Boston

56,340 of them attend the Boston Public Schools

6,420 go to parochial schools

4,820 go to public charter schools

3,770 go to private schools

3,150 go to suburban schools through METCO

440 attend private special education programs

250 are home schooled

Source: Boston Public Schools "At a Glance, 11-4-09"

ABOUT THE BOSTON PLAN FOR EXCELLENCE

The city's local education foundation, BPE was established in 1984 by Bank of America (then the First National Bank of Boston), who was joined at the outset by The Boston Foundation and later by generous corporate leaders including John Hancock Financial Services, New England Life, and Goodwin Proctor & Hoar.

For 25 years, BPE has worked toward one goal — excellence in every classroom, in every school, for every student in the Boston Public Schools. BPE partners with the Boston Public Schools to operate the Boston Teacher Residency, the district's own teacher preparation program and a national model for teacher education. Also in partnership with the Boston Public Schools, BPE runs Accelerating Improvement through Inquiry (AI²), a partnership of 15 schools that are using student performance data and a structured inquiry approach to accelerate outcomes for struggling students.

Looking ahead at the next 25 years, BPE is extending its commitment to all Boston schoolchildren, many of whom attend more than one type of school over their educational careers. www.bpe.org

MEDIA CONTACT:

Katie Bayerl, 617-275-0745/ 617-872-6845 (cell), kbayerl@bpe.org