

Underperforming Boston Schools

Authority to restructure schools needed

Half of Boston’s public schools have been formally identified as being in one of four stages of needing improvement under the federal *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation. NCLB requires schools, districts and states to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward the goal of bringing 100% of their students to academic proficiency in reading and mathematics by 2014. Progress toward this goal is measured by the MCAS test and AYP determinations are made for all students as well as for each federally mandated student subgroup (five racial groups, Limited English-proficient students, students with disabilities and students receiving free/reduced lunch).

The Massachusetts Department of Education and the federal government have established interim performance targets and individual school and district improvement targets with sanctions associated with failure to make AYP. When students in aggregate or a particular subgroup in a school do not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in ELA or math for two consecutive years, the school is formally identified for improvement and must revise or develop a school improvement plan. Schools receiving federal Title I funds must offer their students supplemental support services or the option to transfer to another school. Schools not making AYP for three consecutive years are identified for corrective

action, which requires changes in curriculum, instruction, governance or staffing. After five consecutive years, a district must prepare a plan to restructure the school.

Of Boston’s 136 schools, 66 are in one of four categories of needing improvement. Eight schools are new and do not have data to establish an AYP rating. As shown below, 15 schools have not met AYP for three or more consecutive years and require either corrective action or restructuring.

NCLB School Status

Category	# of Schools	No AYP
Improv. - Subgroups	16	2 yrs.
Improv. - School	35	2 yrs.
Corrective Action	7	3 yrs.
Restructuring	8	5 yrs.
Subtotal Action Required	66	
Meet Requirements	62	
No AYP status	8	
School Total	136	

Boston and other school districts are limited in their ability to move forward to restructure schools. State authority or agreement in the current contract negotiations between the Boston School Committee and the Boston Teachers Union are needed to effect changes required in a school restructuring process.