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BPS Roadmap to Improvement

Leadership transition plan outlines challenges and opportunities

The transition to a new Superintendent provides the Boston Public Schools with the opportunity to focus on aligning support where it will be most beneficial, according to a transition plan prepared by former Superintendent Michael Contompasis. New Superintendent Carol Johnson, whose first day was August 20, was provided with the plan by Mr. Contompasis, who will continue as her special assistant through the end of September. The transition plan highlights recommendations in the areas of academics, operations, and family and community engagement that are intended to accelerate educational improvement. The report points to the need for a systemic transformation in which support is aligned to teachers and students.

Academics – The report recommended a reexamination of the framework that supports BPS academics. It proposed the following structural improvements:

- Establish a Chief Academic Officer who will focus on integrating curriculum and instruction with classroom practice
- Redesign the current structure of triads and clusters to provide an aligned and coherent strategy for the development, implementation, and assessment of a systemic academic policy
- Provide more support and mentorship for the schools under the new structure than is provided by three Deputy Superintendents responsible for 145 schools in 9 clusters

Operations – Several operational needs were highlighted, including:

- The establishment of a comprehensive facility/capital master plan to manage

resources and find better uses for underutilized buildings

- Reassessment of the Research, Assessment & Evaluation Department in order to broaden its capabilities
- Strengthening of the Institutional Advancement Division to better pursue external resources in a way that is driven by the school system's needs
- The containment of transportation costs, retention of qualified teachers and administrators, and expansion of K1 seats, K-8 schools, feeder campuses, and small high schools

Family & Community Engagement –

Finally, the report focused on family and community engagement, urging the continued improvement of family and community support systems. It recommended the following steps to accomplish this goal:

- Services to families and parents should be strengthened while community partnerships are enhanced
- Communications and market research should be improved, so the school system can better tell the BPS story to parents and the community

In conclusion, the report suggested that there is a need to change the service delivery model by outsourcing work that can be better done by others. It noted that the BPS will not always receive the same incremental increases in resources, which will require a continual drive towards efficiency. This may mean a new budget model in the future. However, the report stressed that the new Superintendent should continue to communicate with the field, no matter how the BPS changes structurally.