

Underperforming BPS Schools Remain a Challenge

The majority of BPS schools assigned performance levels remain underperforming

The December 9th report on 2015 school performance levels from the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) shows little change for Boston Public Schools (BPS) from 2014, due mainly to the adoption of the PARCC exam in grades three through eight. This year, 66 [BPS schools](#) (64.1%) are classified as underperforming, (Level 3 or below), up from 65 schools (63.7%) in 2014. In the current school year, 30,439 students attend an underperforming school, which represents 61.8% of the BPS student body attending schools assigned performance levels.

**Boston Public Schools
2015 Accountability Levels**

Level	#	Enrollment	% of Enrollment
Level 1	13	8,380	17.0%
Level 2	24	10,411	21.1%
Level 3	55	25,849	52.5%
Level 4	9	3,339	6.8%
Level 5	2	1,251	2.5%
Grand Total	103	49,230	100.0%

Boston currently operates 125 public schools, 103 of which were assigned a state Level in 2014. The excluded schools provide adult education, various support programs, early education, are too new to have four years of data, or are Horace Mann in-district charter schools.

This year, the state held all [PARCC schools](#) harmless on performance levels. As a result, only BPS high schools, which continued to administer the MCAS to 10th graders, were subject to a potential downgrade in performance level.

Massachusetts School Levels

Starting in 2012, schools were assessed on a Progress and Performance Index (PPI) based on four years of MCAS scores, dropout rates, and graduation rates, among other measures:

- **Level 1-** Top 80th percentile of achievement and meeting its goals
- **Level 2-** Top 80%, but are not necessarily meeting all goals
- **Level 3-** Lowest 20% of student achievement statewide
- **Level 4-** Selected by the Commissioner of DESE, representing no more than the bottom 4% statewide
- **Level 5-** State Receivership

The most significant change this year was Madison Park High School being assigned to Level 4 status. If implemented correctly, the Level 4 turnaround plan could give the BPS the tools and flexibility needed to improve the District's only vocational school.

While BPS contains 6.4% of schools assigned a 2015 performance level statewide, its share of the state's underperforming schools is 20.3% a slight increase from 19.5% in 2014.

Level 5 Schools

In October 2013, the state took over two underperforming BPS elementary schools. Receivers selected by the DESE Commissioner, [UP Education Network](#) at the Holland Elementary Schools, and [Blueprint Schools Network](#) at the Dever Elementary, are tasked with turning around these Level 5 schools. As part of the state takeover, collective bargaining agreements have been reopened and renegotiated, allowing the District to implement a new performance based [pay structure](#) in these schools for the current school year.