

# Special Report



March 3, 2016 No. SR 16-1

## Highlights

- Early hiring and mutual consent are keys to the BPS competing with suburban districts and charter schools for quality teachers
- Harvard researcher Thomas Kane found that students “who are taught by a teacher in the bottom 5 percent of competence lose 9.54 months of learning in a single year”
- New BPS teachers hired before June were nearly twice as likely to receive “exemplary” ratings as those hired in later months

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## Boston Public Schools Human Capital Initiative

*A bold approach to improve the quality of BPS teachers in the classroom*

Improving teacher quality is the single most important strategy to increasing student achievement. The Boston Public Schools (BPS) is in the second year of the new Human Capital Initiative (HCI) which takes advantage of existing contract language that allows schools to “open-post” positions and select the best teachers from both inside and outside of the District. This small but significant adjustment has allowed the BPS to shift the hiring process months earlier, when the most effective and diverse candidates are still available. Additionally, this change enabled the BPS to expand “mutual consent hiring” to all schools, instead of just a select few that previously had hiring autonomy. Now teacher candidates apply to individual schools, and school-based hiring teams are empowered to create a teaching workforce that matches the needs of their school. In the past, teacher hiring and assignment were heavily controlled by seniority and the central office.

### Two-Year Results

**Early Hiring** – The ability to hire teachers earlier under HCI has been its clearest sign of success. In SY14-15, 63.3% of all new teachers were hired before July 1<sup>st</sup> compared to 8.7% in the previous school year. In SY15-16, 57% of teachers were hired before July. Hiring in August and September has fallen from 64.7% of total hires in SY13-14 to 25.0% of hiring in the most recent cycle.

**Teacher Diversity** – HCI has helped to increase the diversity of the teacher applicant pool, but progress is challenging due to not enough candidates of color and the high retirement rates of Black teachers. In the first three months of hiring (March-May) for FY15-16 24.2% of newly hired teacher were Black and 15.4% were Hispanic. However, in August only 17.9% of newly hired teachers were Black and 9% were Hispanic. Greater use of alternative pathways to teacher certification is needed.

**Cost of Mutual Consent** – The commitment to teacher effectiveness and workforce diversity have come with a cost — some tenured teachers have not secured permanent teaching positions over the past two years, but remain employed by the BPS in positions of “suitable professional capacity” due to state tenure law. The cost of the Human Capital Initiative in fiscal 2015 was \$10.5 million and is budgeted at \$13.3 million in the current fiscal year. Ongoing use of the [teacher evaluation](#) process in addition to needed professional development and reform of the state tenure law are necessary to reduce this cost and dismiss underperforming teachers and teachers who are not hired by schools for two consecutive years.

**Recommendation** – The Superintendent and School Committee should remain committed to fully funding the Human Capital Initiative as the benefits of hiring high quality teachers far outweigh the costs of the “suitable professional capacity” pool.

## Previous Teacher Assignment Process

In the years prior to 2014, Boston hired too many teachers late in the hiring season, which limited its ability to select the best possible teachers. Hiring late in the season was a by-product of the four-phase teacher assignment process from traditional BPS schools, which was dominated by seniority and teacher tenure laws. Below is a brief description of the old teacher assignment process for the BPS. A more in-depth description can be found [here](#).

- 1) **Teacher Transfer Process Pool** – In April, vacancies advertised as transfer postings enabled permanent teachers already employed in BPS schools to secure a new teaching assignment before vacancies opened up to new hires. Principals or headmasters were required to interview all candidates who applied and to hire a teacher from the internal applicant pool.
- 2) **Excess Pool** – After the transfer process had been completed, permanent teachers who still had not secured a new teaching position were placed in an Excess (reassignment) Pool and these teachers were able to bid on the remaining vacancies in order of seniority in their respective certifications, with the most senior teacher selecting a position first.
- 3) **Forced Placement** –Permanent teachers who had not found a position were administratively placed based on seniority and certification, often with little involvement from the principal or headmaster. These placements frequently resulted in “bumping” of promising provisional teachers from positions.
- 4) **Open Posting** – Open posting allowed schools to recruit teachers from outside the BPS, but required either the approval of 60% of the school’s faculty or a stipend of \$1,250 associated with the position. However, principals and headmasters did not utilize this hiring tool as extensively as was intended.

## Human Capital Initiative 2014

In 2014, the BPS implemented a new teacher hiring process designed to start earlier in the year and to increase each traditional school’s autonomy to hire high quality teachers that fit the specific needs of that school. Increasing teacher diversity in schools was also a key objective of the initiative. A full explanation of the result of the Human Capital Initiative in SY14-15 and SY15-16 is provided later in this report.

This new process took advantage of language in the existing contract to create three key improvements in personnel policy over the old system:

- 1) **System-Wide Open Posting** – The Human Capital Initiative took advantage of existing contract language to expand open posting by providing a \$1,250 stipend for each open position. **Under this system, schools now have the freedom to pick the best candidates for a position, whether they are current employees or external candidates, and are not bound by seniority in hiring decisions.**
- 2) **Early Hiring** – By expanding the use of open posting, the traditional schools were able to start the hiring process in March. This early hiring is necessary to be competitive with suburban and charter schools in hiring effective new teachers. Prior to the Human Capital Initiative, the BPS would fill less than 10% of positions between March and June, with 85% hired in July or August, and the remainder hired after the beginning of the school year.
- 3) **Mutual Consent** – The Human Capital Initiative has eliminated administrative placement of teachers not selected for a position. The expansion of mutual consent also eliminated the “bumping” of promising provisional teachers from their positions to place permanent teaches with seniority in their certification. Teachers can only be hired by schools through mutual consent between the

teacher applying for the position and the school-based hiring team (principal or headmaster and the Personnel Subcommittee of the School Site Council). With this change, school leaders are better able to create the workforce that fulfills the needs and mission of their school.

**Redesigned Hiring Process** – The teacher assignment process under the Human Capital Initiative follows a similar design to the previous process. However, by allowing for open posting in the beginning of the hiring cycle, the system now encourages school leaders to post positions early, increasing the quality and diversity of new hires.

- 1) **Open Posting** – Due to the expansion of open posting to all positions, permanent teachers who were excessed from positions must now compete with outside candidates for open-posted positions. During the open posting period, mutual consent is maximized, with the school-based hiring team having total autonomy in hiring decisions. Open posting occurs from March until June when select positions are assigned to the Post-Transfer Placement Process.
- 2) **Post Transfer Placement Process** – For positions assigned to PTPP, the school based hiring team must choose from qualified permanent teachers who bid on the position. PTPP limits mutual consent to an extent, as the school leader must hire a permanent teacher. However, under the collective bargaining agreement, the Office of Human Capital has the right to define which open positions are filled through PTPP. In SY15-16, only 34 positions were filled through PTPP, which is an improvement over the seniority-based placement that occurred in the old teacher assignment system.

Since the Office of Human Capital no longer administratively places permanent teachers, some teachers will remain without positions through the Post Transfer Placement Process.

- 3) **Suitable Professional Capacity (SPC)** – Those permanent teachers who remain in the Excess Pool when the school year begins are required by state law to be placed in positions of “suitable professional capacity” (MGL c.71, s. 42). How these teachers were assigned to classrooms differed in the two years, but in both years, teachers in “suitable professional capacity” worked with students in classrooms and were able to strengthen their teaching skills through mentoring, observations and feedback, and by utilizing available professional development. The intent of this process is to provide teachers in positions of “suitable professional capacity” with the opportunity to put themselves in a stronger position to be selected by a school in the next school year and to be properly evaluated.

## Results of the Human Capital Initiative

The school year that began in September 2015 is the second year of teacher hiring through the new Human Capital Initiative. To date the Initiative has been successful in using expanded open posting, early hiring and mutual consent to improve teacher quality and maintain diversity.

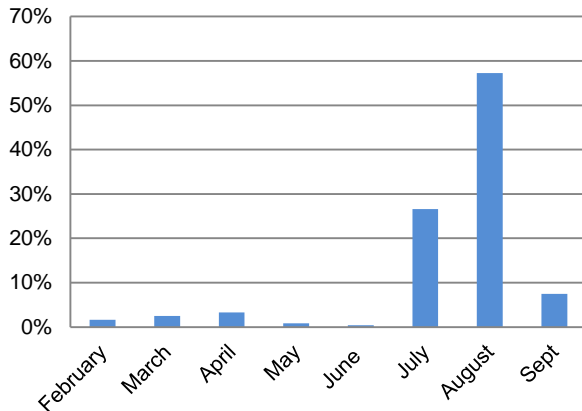
However, challenges remain in increasing diversity in the teacher workforce, controlling the number of teachers who are placed in positions of “suitable professional capacity,” and encouraging all permanent teachers to participate in the placement process.

**Early Hiring** – The ability to hire teachers earlier under the new Human Capital Initiative has been its clearest sign of success to date. As seen in Figure 1, in SY13-14 only 8.7% of teachers new to BPS were hired before July 1<sup>st</sup>, roughly 60 days before the start of school, while 64% were not hired until after August 1st.

This late hiring was a byproduct of a culture that encouraged school leaders to hide open positions until after forced placement occurred. In doing so, the school leaders were able to hire a candidate of

their choosing from outside the BPS. This new hire would be a provisional teacher, giving the leader more flexibility in staffing decisions in future years.

**Figure 1**  
New Teacher Hiring % by Month  
School Year 2013-2014

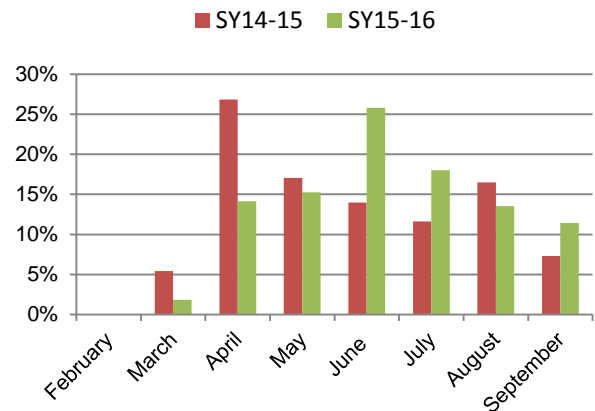


In the first year of the Human Capital Initiative, hiring was moved forward significantly, with 63.3% of new teachers hired before July 1st, compared to 8.7% in the previous school year. Due to this shift, more teachers were hired before the end of June, which meant traditional schools could compete with charter schools and suburban districts for the best teachers available. In SY15-16, slightly fewer teachers were hired before the end of the school year, with 57.0% of hiring occurring before the end of June. **Hiring in August and September has fallen from 64.7% of total hires in SY13-14 to 25.0% of hiring in the most recent cycle.**

**Teacher Effectiveness** – The move to early hiring was an extremely important step, as research has found that early hiring corresponds with high performing teachers and increased teacher retention, which in turn corresponds with improved student performance. A [2003 study](#) undertaken by The New Teacher Project (Tntp) found that early hiring was the key factor in finding qualified candidates. The study found that while more than five candidates applied to every open spot in studied districts, 31-58% of these candidates withdrew their application in August, with nearly half doing so due to a job offer elsewhere. August

is when much of BPS’s hiring occurred before improvements under the new Human Capital Initiative.

**Figure 2**  
New Teacher Hiring % by Month



In a [follow-up study](#) in 2012, Tntp identified five characteristics of “Greenhouse Schools,” which were in the top quartile of Tntp’s national data set. One of these five characteristics was that the schools completed an exhaustive hiring and interview process by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Conversely, schools in the bottom quartile did not have the same early hiring processes and as a result the schools struggled with retention of talented teachers, who may leave a system for a job elsewhere if the hiring process is delayed. Furthermore, Dr. Raj Chetty, of Harvard University, has found that teacher effectiveness is closely tied to student achievement. His [2011 study](#) found that an ineffective teacher can reduce the lifelong expected income of a student by \$250,000 compared to an average teacher.

Data from the first two years of the Human Capital Initiative shows that higher quality teachers are hired earlier in the hiring process. Analysis of the SY14-15 hiring cycle revealed that a teacher hired before June was nearly twice as likely to receive “exemplary” ratings as those hired in later months. Conversely, those hired after June were three times more likely to receive underperforming evaluations (“Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory”).

The BPS also analyzed its schools ability to use hiring to fill a position with a candidate who is more qualified than the teacher who left the position. **In March of the SY14-15 hiring cycle, 78% of the filled positions were filled by a teacher with a higher evaluation than the departing teacher. However, by September 70% of positions were filled with a new teacher that had a lower evaluation rating than the departing teacher.**

**Diversity** – One of the goals of the Human Capital Initiative was to increase the diversity of the teacher workforce so it more accurately reflected the composition of the student body, which is 41% Hispanic, 36% Black, 9% Asian, and 14% White. Previously, this goal was made more difficult by the requirement to place permanent teachers before hiring external candidates. **In 2012, the teacher workforce was only 23% Black and 10% Hispanic, coming close to the Judge Garrity mandate from 1984, but far from matching the student body in 2012 which was 35% Black and 42% Hispanic.**

Currently, this goal is made more challenging by high retirement rates among Black educators, who, compared to white educators were 3.4 times more likely to retire in SY13-14 and 2.3 times more likely to retire in SY14-15. This disproportionate retirement rate is due, in part, to the fact that many of the District’s Black educators were hired in the 1970s and 1980s, shortly after Judge Garrity issued desegregation orders and that cohort of teachers is now reaching retirement age. **As a result of this dynamic, last year the BPS lost 73% more Black teachers through attrition than were hired.**

Progress has been slow towards the BPS’s goal of a more diverse workforce. The BPS has made efforts to hire candidates of color, but has failed to attract a diverse pool of candidates. **Evidence of this for the current school year is that only 10.2% of candidates were Black,** highlighting the need to increase recruitment efforts. **However, 18% of new hires were Black teachers,** showing a commitment to increasing diversity by the Office of Human Capital. Similarly, while only 6.3% of applicants

were Hispanic, 10.9% of new hires were Hispanic teachers.

**Table 1**  
**External Hires Teachers**  
**School Year 14-15**

Race	Candidates		Hires		% of Ethnicity Hired
	#	%	#	%	
Asian	118	3.5%	13	4.2%	11.0%
Black	323	9.6%	56	18.1%	17.3%
Latino	194	5.8%	44	14.2%	22.7%
White	2424	71.9%	172	55.7%	7.1%
Other	13	0.4%	2	0.6%	15.4%
Declined	300	8.9%	22	7.1%	7.3%

**School Year 15-16\***

Race	Candidates		Hires		% of Ethnicity Hired
	#	%	#	%	
Asian	168	4.2%	24	8.2%	14.3%
Black	410	10.2%	53	18.0%	12.9%
Latino	255	6.4%	32	10.9%	12.5%
White	2827	70.5%	161	54.8%	5.7%
Other	22	0.5%	3	1.0%	13.6%
Declined	330	8.2%	21	7.1%	6.4%

\* as of 9/25/2015

Early hiring has been a key tool in attracting a more diverse applicant pool. Charter, private and suburban schools are all also looking to recruit high quality teachers of color, meaning that starting the hiring process early is key to acquiring the most qualified teachers. **Of new teachers hired in March, April and May, 24.2% were Black and 15.4% were Hispanic. However, in August only 17.9% of newly hired teachers were Black and 9% were Hispanic.**

While the BPS still has much work to do in attracting a diverse candidate pool, maintaining the commitment to open posting is the key to any efforts to increase diversity over time. Under the previous system, the priority was given to the

## What School Leaders Say About HCI

The comments of principals and headmasters about the importance of early hiring and mutual consent to their ability, with their school hiring teams, to create a teaching team best suited to serve the needs of their students are worth noting.

*“The hiring initiative makes all the difference in the world. I have discussed the initiative with my colleagues, and every single principal agrees that mutual consent is critical, worth the money the School Department contributes to it. No school can realize its vision for its students without the ability to select its own staff. Our school is full inclusion and we absolutely must have every teacher 100% committed to the work.”*

Ethan d’Ablemont-Burnes, Principal  
Joseph P. Manning Elementary School

*“The hiring initiative equalized the hiring conditions among schools allowing us to compete on the same terms with schools with autonomy and with suburban schools. Perhaps even more significantly, it transformed the hiring process because now we can start early and do a thorough job rather than scrambling in August to fill vacancies that we’d hidden to protect ourselves from a disruptive placement of a teacher. We also have time to find good teachers within the BPS.”*

Stephanie Sibley, Headmaster  
Excel High

*“This initiative has leveled the playing field and put us in a more equitable position with autonomous and charter schools in being able to achieve what we want for our students. The new system enables me to be more strategic in my hiring. I can build a team which is good for the students who will have a faculty who wants to be there and work with students who need great teachers who will put their all into teaching everyday. This initiative is also good for teachers because unhappy teachers, who are placed in schools not of their choosing, negatively affect the whole school and its morale.”*

Will Thomas, Headmaster  
Charlestown High School

internal pool of educators, not allowing the BPS the flexibility needed to effectively increase diversity.

The BPS has undertaken a number of initiatives to increase diversity in the applicant pools. However, these efforts have only resulted in marginal success given the lack of diversity of students graduating from schools of education within the state of Massachusetts. Just one in ten graduates of teacher preparation programs in the state identify as Black or Hispanic.

The BPS has a recruitment team of only two full-time employees, who have traveled the country seeking diverse candidates. Despite these efforts, only 27 out-of-state candidates applied and were successfully hired. This is consistent with the National Bureau of Economic Research’s 2003 report [“The Draw of Home”](#) which found that a novice teacher is three times more likely to accept a position 25 miles from their hometown than one 80 miles away.

In addition to looking for diverse candidates outside of Boston, the BPS has also developed pipeline programs meant to take advantage of the diverse community of Boston:

- The **Accelerated Community to Teacher Program (ACTP)** supports Boston residents who wish to become BPS teachers.
- The **Community Paraprofessional Development Program** provides teacher training to existing BPS paraprofessionals, a group with classroom experience and more diversity than the teacher workforce.
- The **High School to Teacher Program** is a seven-year program that takes current BPS students interested in teaching and supports them through college and in obtaining teacher licensure.
- The **Boston Teacher Residency Program** is a one-year program of the Boston Plan for Excellence for the BPS that allows citizens to earn a masters degree in education and a Massachusetts Initial Teacher Licensure. BTR has been the single largest pipeline of teachers

of color into the BPS since 2003. Of the 548 BTR teachers hired by the BPS, 49% are people of color.

In addition to the existing programs, the BPS is currently working with The New Teacher Project (TNTP) to create the BPS Teaching Fellowship, a new district-operated alternative teacher certification program through which the District will recruit, train, support, and ultimately certify an annual cohort of effective and diverse new teachers in the highest need subject areas. TNTP received a three-year federal grant, which will fully fund the design and launch of the program. Over the next three years, the District will work to make the program self-sustainable based on tuition fees.

**Disengaged Teachers** – The Office of Human Capital has provided many resources to help place excessed teachers including workshops at the BTU Headquarters on the online application platform, workshops reviewing and revising resumes, requirements that schools interview permanent teachers, and personalized emails to excessed teachers providing them with links to positions that fit their licensure.

However, even with all these tools, a disturbingly high percentage of excessed permanent teachers did not apply to any position and instead chose to wait for the BPS to assign them to a position, as guaranteed by state law. When the PTPP process occurred, 35% of excessed teachers had still not applied to any positions. **Permanent teachers who did not apply to positions were more than twice as likely to be assigned to a SPC role at the start of the school year.**

In SY15-16, teachers in the SPC pool participated less in the hiring process than their peers, with only 70% of the pool having applied to a position prior to the PTPP process. By comparison, of the teachers who were excessed but found positions before SPC placement, 95% had applied to one or more positions before the PTPP process began.

This lack of participation speaks to the importance of mutual consent. Under the previous teacher assignment process, these teachers, who have shown an unacceptable level of engagement with the teacher placement process, would have been assigned to a school whose leaders felt they did not meet the needs of the school.

**Two-Year SPC Teachers** – As of November 15<sup>th</sup>, 37 teachers are in SPC position for the second school year. These teachers have failed to secure a position in two consecutive hiring cycles, due in part to the fact that **59% of the second year SPC teachers have evaluations of “Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory,” compared to 14% of the initial Excess Pool.** These 37 second year SPC teachers also lagged behind their peers in terms of participation, with only 59% applying to positions before the PTPP process. Of the 37 teachers, eight are recommended for dismissal and four will likely be evaluated out of the system by the end of the year based on past practice. Three teachers have submitted voluntary severance agreement paperwork, two of which were previously recommended for dismissal. This leaves 24 teachers who will likely remain in SPC positions throughout the school year, and could enter a third year in a SPC role during the next hiring cycle.

## Human Capital Initiative Hiring Process

Over the first two years of teacher assignment through early hiring and mutual consent, the Office of Human Capital has improved data management, created more effective SPC roles where teachers can be properly evaluated and trained, and taken action to reduce the size of the SPC pool to make this system more financially sustainable in future years.

### Excess Pool:

**Year One** – In the first year of the Human Capital Initiative, 439 teachers sought new positions within the BPS.

**Year Two** – In preparation for SY15-16, 476 permanent teachers sought new positions through

the open posting process. This number includes the 76 teachers who were in the Excess Pool in SY14-15 and did not obtain a teaching position during the school year. See Appendix B for detail on the excessing process in SY15-16.

**Table 2**  
**Placement of Excessed Teachers**

	SY14-15	%	SY15-16	%
<b>Initial Excess Pool</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Hired	(203)	46.2%	(216)	45.4%
Retired/Resigned	(52)	11.8%	(28)	5.9%
Terminated	(7)	1.6%	(1)	0.2%
Year-Long Leave	(38)	8.7%	(31)	6.5%
Admin Leave	(4)	0.9%	-	0.0%
Other	(6)	1.4%	-	0.0%
<b>Exits Before SPC</b>	<b>(310)</b>	<b>70.6%</b>	<b>(276)</b>	<b>58.0%</b>
<b>Assigned to SPC</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>29.4%</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>42.0%</b>
Added to Pool	4	-0.9%	11	-2.3%
Rescinded	-	0.0%	(4)	0.8%
Hired	(24)	5.5%	(44)	9.2%
Retired/Resigned	(18)	4.1%	(32)	6.7%
Terminated	(5)	1.1%	(9)	1.9%
Year-Long Leave	(9)	2.1%	(7)	1.5%
Other	-	0.0%	(2)	0.4%
Admin Leave	(1)	0.2%	-	
<b>Exits After SPC Assignment</b>	<b>(53)</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>(112)</b>	<b>23.5%</b>
<b>Remaining SPC Pool</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>18.5%</b>
Projected to Exit During Year	N/A		-18	3.8%
<b>Projected SPC April 2016</b>	N/A		<b>70</b>	<b>14.7%</b>

**Placement of Teachers:**

**Year One** – Of the 439 teachers who sought new positions within the BPS, 310 found positions before being assigned to a position of “suitable professional capacity.” As seen in Table 2, over the course of the year, this pool shrunk to 76 teachers, with some teachers finding permanent teaching roles and others leaving the system.

**Year Two** – Of the 476 teachers initially excessed, 216 or 45.4% found positions while 60 or 12.6%

exited the pool through termination, resignation or long-term leave, leaving 200 teachers who were assigned to the SPC pool in August. Since this assignment, the BPS has successfully reduced the SPC pool to 88 positions. The Office of Human Capital expects 70 teachers in SPC positions by April, at which point the FY16-17 hiring cycle will be underway.

**SPC Placement Process** – Schools apply and are chosen to receive SPC teachers based on a number of factors including school type, strength of the school leader, the teaching styles adopted by the school, programmatic needs, and the school’s evaluation practices currently in place. SPC teachers are paid out of the Office of Human Capital budget, meaning an SPC teacher represents an additional resource for the school leader without detracting from the school budget. Once assigned to a school, the principal has autonomy in assigning an SPC teacher to a specific role. SPC roles are not “rubber room” positions as these teachers continue to provide services to students in the district.

**Year One** – In the first year of the Human Capital Initiative, SPC placements were divided between co-teaching roles and long-term substitute roles, with the majority of teachers assigned to co-teaching roles working with a more experienced teacher in the same certification area.

**Year Two** – In the second year of the Human Capital Initiative, the BPS has moved to assigning most SPC teachers into one of two full-time instructional positions, where they provide instruction in addition to the core work of permanent teachers:

- 1) Full-Time Teaching Schedule** - This year, many principals have chosen to expand offerings in their school by giving SPC teachers full-time teaching schedules. This allows the principal to take advantage of the SPC teacher’s licensure to provide additional programmatic offerings to their school, such as computer classes. The addition of these SPC teachers can also increase planning and lesson preparation time for



existing teachers while their students are with the SPC teacher.

**2) Academic Interventionist Roles-** SPC teacher work with a select group of students who need additional instruction in certain subject areas. The Interventionists are responsible for instruction, lesson planning and time management of this sub-group of students.

With both roles, the responsibilities of SPC teachers are intended to both improve their teaching skills and give the BPS a better opportunity to evaluate these teachers in order to provide the professional development needed to either secure a teaching position in the next school year or to separate them from the system. The Office of Human Capital employs 2.5 Professional Growth Specialists, who assist in assessment and professional development of a group of SPC teachers.

teaching. This model ensures that the teachers are involved in instruction and can be properly evaluated and supported through the year.

**Inactive SPC Positions –** In addition to the 90 teachers who are in an active SPC position, 23 teachers have inactive SPC roles. Inactive roles include: leaves of absence, administrative leaves, and workers compensation. Twenty of these teachers continue to be paid under the rules of the collective bargaining contract. However, the Office of Human Capital is monitoring leaves to prevent abuse of the programs that are meant to support workers with true needs. The BPS Leave Coordinator monitors the use of leave in an effort to prevent abuse.

**Reducing SPC Pool –** In October 2015, the BTU and the Office of Human Capital entered into two agreements intended to reduce the number of teachers who remain in the SPC pool for a second year. The first approach is to enroll teachers in the SPC pool in the Pathways Program, which allowed teachers to obtain an additional license in English as a Second Language or Special Education. With a second certification, these teachers are eligible to apply for more positions and are in a stronger position to be selected for a permanent teaching position. This program costs \$900 per teacher, and the BPS and BTU agreed to split the cost. To date, only three teachers have applied to this Pathways Program, a discouraging sign for the participation levels of the SPC pool teachers.

The BTU also agreed to a voluntary severance plan that would allow teachers in the SPC pool to choose a lump-sum payment if they agree to separate from the school system. The maximum severance package is 40% of the teacher’s annual salary if the teacher separates from the system before December 21<sup>st</sup>. The payment would be reduced to 20% for those who separate by January 18<sup>th</sup>, and 10% for those who separate by February 12<sup>th</sup>. If embraced, this voluntary severance package could be a useful tool in reducing the number of teachers who remain in the SPC pool for multiple years.

Table 3

**Placement of SPC Teachers**

Position	SY14-15	%	SY15-16	%
Full-Time Teaching Schedule	1	1.3%	43	38.1%
Academic Interventionist	-	0.0%	23	20.4%
Co-Teacher	63	82.9%	11	9.7%
Social Worker/Guidance	-	0.0%	7	6.2%
Long-Term Substitute	11	14.5%	-	0.0%
Other	1	1.3%	6	5.3%
<b>Subtotal Active SPC</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>79.6%</b>
Admin. Leave	-	0.0%	13	11.5%
AWOL	-	0.0%	2	1.8%
Leave of Absence	**	**	5	4.4%
Workers Comp	-	0.0%	3	2.7%
<b>Subtotal Inactive SPC</b>	<b>**</b>	<b>**</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20.4%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*\* In SY14-15, 16 SPC teachers went on leave for some portion of the school year

In some schools, teachers were once again assigned to co-teaching roles, but this only occurred in schools where co-teaching is the model for all

**To date, 22 SPC teachers have taken advantage of the voluntary severance agreement.** However, 15 of these teachers were previously recommended for termination. Even so, the voluntary severance agreement allows the Office of Human Capital to avoid the timely and costly process of terminating an employee and the potential arbitration that can follow the termination process.

### Expense and Financing of HCI:

**Year One-** In its first year, the expense of the Human Capital Initiative was \$10.5 million, consisting of three main parts. First, the expansion of open posting required the BPS to pay stipends of \$1,250 to 462 teachers, for a total of \$577,500 in fiscal 2015. Second, the 76 teachers who were assigned to positions of “suitable professional capacity” were paid their full salary at a cost of \$7.8 million. Third, In addition to their salaries, these SPC teachers also receive full benefits at a cost of \$2.0 million.

**Table 4**  
**General Fund Expenditures**

	FY15	FY16
Stipends	\$577,500	\$550,000
SPC Salary	7,848,202	10,200,000
Benefits	2,027,809	2,500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,453,511</b>	<b>\$13,250,000</b>

**Year Two-** The Office of Human Capital projects that the Initiative will cost \$13.3 million in fiscal 2016. Meeting this budget will depend on the Office’s ability to reduce the number of teachers in positions of “suitable professional capacity.”

**HCI External Fundraising** – The Office of Human Capital also received \$1.5 million in external grant funds in fiscal 2015, which was invested in improving the office’s recruitment, evaluation and professional development efforts. These efforts are crucial to expanding diversity in the workforce and to helping prepare excess teachers to find teaching positions, with the intent of reducing the SPC pool in future years.

External funding for the Human Capital Initiative has come from two sources. The Lynch Foundation has made a contribution of \$250,000 in both years. The remaining external funds revenues were received from EdVestors, which serves as a conduit for private funding sources to invest in urban education, primarily focusing on Boston schools.

**Table 5**  
**External Funds Budget**

	FY15	FY16
Evaluations	\$800,547	\$790,000
Recruitment	177,063	36,000
Professional Development	475,660	72,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,453,270</b>	<b>\$898,000</b>

**The private fund raising effort has fallen short, with the Human Capital Initiative raising \$3.5 million less than originally planned for fiscal 2016, limiting the Department’s ability to invest further in recruitment, teacher evaluations, and professional development.**

### Recommendations

After two years of experience, the BPS’ Human Capital Initiative for early teacher hiring has enabled school-based hiring teams to select more qualified teachers and attract a more diverse teacher applicant pool which should lead to improved student achievement. However, this initiative is not without challenges. To protect early hiring sustainability in future years and further improve the quality and diversity of the BPS teaching workforce, the Research Bureau makes the following recommendations.

**The BPS Should Remain Committed to Early Hiring and Mutual Consent** – The Human Capital Initiative is central to the core mission of the BPS and should be fully funded despite the tough decisions that will be made to balance the budget. The BPS should maintain its commitment to early hiring and mutual consent, despite the cost of placing teachers in

position of “suitable professional capacity,” in order to increase the quality and diversity of the BPS workforce.

The SPC pool is a by-product of allowing mutual consent and early hiring. Eliminating the pool would require either a change to state teacher tenure law — which should certainly be pursued — or a return to the use of administrative placement, which would undermine the principle behind the Human Capital Initiative and reduce teacher quality in the classrooms by force-placing teachers who have consistently demonstrated ineffective teaching practices and have failed to improve despite support.

The decision in *Vergara v. California*, which found that five California statutes involving teacher tenure and placement were unconstitutional burdens on students’ right to an adequate education, highlights the effect a poor performing teacher has on students. In his ruling, Judge Treu accepted the findings of Harvard researcher Thomas Kane that Los Angeles students **“who are taught by a teacher in the bottom 5 percent of competence lose 9.54 months of learning in a single year compared to students with average teachers.”** The education of Boston residents is far too important to let any student experience such a significant loss in instruction.

**No Cap Should Be Placed on the SPC Pool** – The financial savings of putting a cap on the number of teacher who begin a school year in position of “suitable profession capacity” would be outweighed by the negative consequences. School leaders would once again be encouraged to hide positions from the central office until late in the hiring cycle in order to avoid an administratively placed teacher and hire an outside candidate of their choosing. This new hire would also be a provisional teacher, giving the leader more flexibility in staffing decisions in future years. Any cap on the SPC pool would undermine the success the District has had with early hiring and mutual consent. Instead, the District should focus on finding positions though

mutual consent for SPC teachers with strong evaluations and move to dismiss underperforming SPC teachers from the system.

**Reform State Tenure Law** – State law regarding teacher tenure should be reformed to allow the BPS to dismiss teachers who fail to find a position for two consecutive hiring cycles and those teachers who make no effort to participate in the teacher assignment process. With the resources available, there is no excuse for permanent teachers to not apply to open positions. Without change in state law, teachers who do not apply to positions can remain in the system for years while administrators work to terminate them through the evaluation process. Boston students deserve more from their teachers.

**Expand The Human Capital Initiative to Assistant-Principals and Paraprofessionals** – As the BPS prepares to renegotiate contracts with paraprofessionals and assistant principals, the initiative of open posting and mutual consent should be expanded to these two employee groups. Since these two contracts do not contain the same language in regard to open posting of positions, the Human Capital Initiative can only apply to teachers. Principals and their hiring teams should have total autonomy over the staffing decision in their schools. Recent changes in the contract for headmasters and principals have tied their compensation level to performance measures. These school leaders cannot be held fully accountable if they do not have complete authority to select their school’s administrators and classroom staff.

**Improve Teacher Professional Development** – While the flexibility in hiring teachers is a key tool to improving performance, the BPS should remain focused on continued professional development for the existing teacher workforce. Professional development opportunities should be structured to help teachers to be more effective in their classroom management and instructional practices, and enhance their ability to secure a new position.

**Expand Recruitment Efforts** – The BPS should expand its recruitment efforts to hire more quality teachers of color to create a workforce that more closely reflects the diversity of Boston students. Open posting and early hiring have helped create a more diverse applicant pool, but the BPS has failed to attract a large enough pool of diverse and qualified candidates. The recruitment effort should be expanded by dedicating more resources to recruiting candidates from both inside and outside of Boston. The Office of Human Capital should reenergize its external fundraising efforts to increase support to the recruitment team.

Local colleges and universities should commit to graduating more diverse cohorts of teacher candidates to be hired in urban school districts. The BPS should place more emphasis on expanding or creating pipeline programs that offer alternative pathways for teacher certification, such as its partnership with TNTP, to increase diversity in the teaching workforce.

**Principals Should Focus on Recruitment** – The recruitment and development of a skilled teaching team should be considered a crucial part of a headmaster or principal's annual evaluation. Superintendent Chang has prioritized the role of headmasters and principals as the academic leaders of their schools. A key part of this role should be to focus on teacher recruitment, professional development and performance evaluations, as a highly qualified teaching workforce is crucial to a school's academic success. School leaders should embrace the flexibility allowed through the new hiring process and focus on recruitment as a key tool to closing the achievement gap and improving academic performance.

**Utilize Existing Evaluation System** – The District should focus on implementation of the evaluation system to accurately assess teacher performance by incorporating multiple measures into the overall rating, supporting principals and holding them accountable for thorough implementation of the evaluation system. The current evaluation system

allows the BPS to dismiss teachers who receive four formative or summative evaluations that do not meet standards within a one-year period. The current evaluation system was designed with four ratings categories (“Unsatisfactory,” “Needs Improvement,” “Proficient,” “Exemplary”). These categories ostensibly allow for meaningful differentiation of performance that could inform hiring, professional development, and retention decisions across the district. However, current implementation of the evaluation system has resulted in 95% of teachers receiving ratings in the top two categories, rendering the evaluation significantly less useful than its design intended.

The District should be especially diligent in evaluating teachers in a SPC position in order to provide needed support and training to strengthen their teaching skills, but also to identify teachers who do not meet standards and should be terminated. The new Academic Interventionist role and full-time schedules for SPC teachers introduced this year put SPC teachers in instructional positions that make it easier for school leaders and Professional Growth Specialists to perform evaluations, while also providing additional academic support to students. While termination through evaluation can be a drawn out process, it is an important tool in increasing the quality of the BPS workforce and controlling costs.

**PTPP Should be Restricted to Teacher with Positive Evaluations** – Teachers who have an overall evaluation rating of “Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory” should not be allowed to participate in the PTPP process to ensure that teachers who participate are qualified to be in a classroom. As PTPP is included in the current BPS-BTU contract, this change will need to be negotiated through collective bargaining.

**Adopt Performance Based Excessing** – While seniority no longer plays a role in the hiring process, it still controls the excessing process. When a school must reduce its number of teaching positions, for enrollment or budgetary reasons,

school leaders must first excess provisional teachers, followed by permanent teachers with the least seniority. This process undermines the goal of the Human Capital Initiative, as successful young educators may be separated from their positions before underperforming, but more senior educators are dismissed. As a result, while school-based hiring teams have flexibility in staffing decisions when positions are expanding, they lack similar flexibility in staffing decisions in schools that are facing reductions in staff.

every Boston Public School student deserves a qualified, committed teacher in their classroom.

Proposed state legislation that would expand Level 4 flexibilities to a sub-set of Level 3 schools would allow principals in these schools to require all teachers to reapply for positions, essentially allowing performance-based excessing. Absent state reform measures, the excessing procedures would need to be negotiated through the collective bargaining process and would still hinge on quality implementation of the evaluation system.

## Conclusion

Improving teacher quality is the single most important strategy to increasing student achievement. Guided by this principle, the BPS initiated the Human Capital Initiative in 2014 to enable schools to select more qualified teachers sooner and increase the diversity of the applicant pool. The experience over the last two hiring cycles has shown promising results, making it clear that this program should continue and that the benefits over time for the students of Boston should prevent any retrenchment of this program.

The cost of this initiative is more expensive than it should be. This issue can be addressed by the BPS' continued efforts to improve professional development opportunities and evaluation procedures for its teachers. The BTU has a real stake in helping make the BPS more competitive with charter schools and should work collaboratively on contract language to facilitate the dismissal of tenured teachers not selected by a school for two consecutive years. Finally, the Commonwealth should be a partner in reforming state tenure law. Reform is needed now because