

June 2011

## New Teacher Evaluation Regulations Approved by State

*Boston Student Advisory Council members influenced the final regulations approved*

The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted on June 28, 2011 to adopt new regulations in how teachers in the state will be evaluated. Now student achievement will be an important factor in measuring teacher effectiveness. Also significant is the new requirement that school districts must collect student feedback as part of official teacher evaluations.

The Board took the middle of the road approach compared to other states that will make achieving important reform in this area through contract negotiations more challenging. Still the new regulations are a big improvement over the existing process and can be a foundation from which to build an improved system. Since about 17% of teachers teach subjects tested by MCAS, a system of multiple measures of student achievement will need to be developed for all teachers.

Massachusetts did not follow the lead of other states and require that student achievement represent a minimum weight or percent in the teacher evaluation. Instead, the regulations state that student performance measures shall be a "significant factor" in the evaluation which would be determined through negotiations. The teacher evaluation regulations are not mandated by the state on school districts. Instead, the teacher evaluation plan that is negotiated between the district and teachers' union is expected to be consistent with and supplemental to the state guidelines and principles. A model framework will be developed by the state to be used as is or amended by negotiations to fit the local district.

The minimum weight issue is playing out in the Boston contract negotiations with the BPS proposing that student performance represent 40% of the teacher's evaluation and the BTU waiting for the final state regulations and now not having to commit to a set percentage.

The BPS has been gathering data to develop the performance standards for teacher evaluations since the system must be in place in the eleven Turnaround schools for the next school year, and as a Race to the Top participant, in the 2012-2013 school year for all BPS schools.

### Student Feedback

For the first time, student feedback collected by the district and treated confidentially will be a factor in teacher evaluations starting in the 2013-2014 school year. Boston students active in [BSAC](#) played a critical role in convincing the Board of the importance of this requirement. Students met with each Board member and worked closely with the student member on the Board. BSAC and Youth on Board are members of the [Boston United for Students Coalition](#) and Coalition members also reached out to Board members on this issue. Starting this past school year, Boston high school students are able to submit [feedback surveys](#) anonymously to their teachers for information purposes only which has had a positive impact. The School Committee and BTU approved this practice at the urging of BSAC.

