

City of Boston Issues/Topics:

Underlying issue: we need to do more with less...

1. Challenges faced as we work to **close achievement gap and ensure graduation for all** – appreciate the value in educating a diverse, population; constant monitoring to ensure that we are recognizing the needs of:

**increasing number of ELL students from 40+ countries – many whose parents speak different language in the home*

**significant number of special ed students (work toward integrated classrooms, with special and typical ed students)*

**shifting population: high degree of mobility within the district and coming into the city (like other cities, Boston is gateway to US – ex: 100 recent arrivals from Haiti)*

2. Drive to create **menu of school options** that work for families:

**we feel real competition by charters – which can drain \$ and students – push here is to work collaboratively – to learn from one another – but we can no longer assume that all families will attend our public schools – need to work harder at attracting and keeping families and marketing our schools.*

** our new Ed Reform bill gives us far more opportunities to develop school options: in-district charters and the chance to revitalize our underperforming, turnaround schools.*

3. **Union negotiations:** essential to execute a new contract that will allow flexibility and accountability – during these tough economic times; also need to generate public support for such a contract
4. **Infrastructure:** we have pockets in our city where there is great demand and few public schools; at the same time, we've schools that are under-chosen and in poor repair. Faced with escalating costs, need to assess what schools could close and/or, merge, while mindful of demographics.
5. **Student assignment:** In Boston, where students are not automatically assigned to their closest school and where some schools are considered stronger than others, there is pressure to re-design the student assignment plan that parents feel is fair and equitable.
6. **Extended school day:** have seen the value in extending school hours (Boston has among the shortest school day in the nation)
7. **Music, the arts, and athletics:** standardized testing has focused attention and money on academics. Music, the arts and athletics have suffered. Fortunately, private foundations have helped to restore.
8. **Bullying and cyberbullying:** cross departmental efforts, including city's "Tip Line" has already had numerous successes – bringing trained mentors to schools; pulling all parties together.
9. **Circle Promise:** Boston's approach to target and coordinate the many resources and supports to area of city which is of great need and of which many of the city's underperforming schools are situated.