

Boston Full Service Schools Roundtable

November 2004

"helping schools, families and communities to ensure children's success"
443 Warren Street Dorchester MA 02121 617 635 6537

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Roundtable Report: Advancing Our Agenda

A critical strategy in achieving the Roundtable's objectives of growing more intentional, integrated school-community partnership is the engagement of Roundtable members in workgroups. The Membership, Program/Content, and Resource Development workgroups were instrumental in the establishment of the Roundtable. Through their efforts, membership grew from 40 to over 75 individuals and 50 public/private organizations; sufficient funds were raised to hire an Executive Director and add a 2nd staff position in January 2005; and, in collaboration with the Coalition for Community Schools, a successful conference that attracted over 300 attendees took place in February 2004 and is now serving as the basis for the Roundtable's first publication in December.

This fall, three new workgroups were established to inform the next phase of the Roundtable's development. They include:

- 1. Technical Assistance Workgroup:** Develop protocols and best practices for providing high quality on-site consultations, workshops, training sessions and resources to both school and community partners. This group has undertaken an inventory of member resources and is in the process of developing an action plan to guide the development of the Roundtable's technical assistance work. **Next Meeting: TBA**
- 2. Data Collection/Research Workgroup:** Build on the efforts of the Children's Hospital Neighborhood Partnership to document mental health services being provided to BPS by compiling existing data about health services, social services and community resources. Develop a systematic evaluation strategy designed to document the impact of the Roundtable's work. This group is reviewing existing data and determining how to proceed. **Next Meeting: 12/21, 12 p.m. to 2 p.m., Location TBA**
- 3. Financing/Sustainability Workgroup:** Generate long-term systemic funding strategies that maximize public and private resources to support both full service school program delivery and infrastructure support. This group has begun to document current funding streams and plans to develop financing recommendations that can be useful to those seeking ways to sustain school-based services. **Next Meeting: 12/16, 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., PA Shaw School, 429 Norfolk Street, Dorchester**

For more information, or to participate in a workgroup, please contact Marta Gredler at 617 635-6537 or email: mgredler@boston.k12.ma.us.

What's Happening in Boston Public Schools:

Full Service Schools Roundtable is to advance the healthy development and academic success of students in Boston through integrated school/ community partnerships. In alignment with BPS goals, the Roundtable increases Boston's capacity to provide comprehensive, school- based supports for children, youth and families."

Contact Us

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Health and Wellness Issues

On February 6, 2004 at the conference, "Building Strong Community Schools: Now More Than Ever," Lloyd Kolbe (Centers for Disease Control and Indiana University) emphasized the critical role of health services in education: "The public health/education system is a complex network of individuals and organizations that, when working together, can represent what we as a society do collectively to assure the conditions in which people/young people can be healthy/educated."

Boston Public Schools (BPS) recognizes the importance of health services in education and is working to improve and expand health services in schools. Through the STEPS grant, a 5 year national CDC grant awarded to the Boston Public Health Commission, BPS Health Services has developed a Community Action Plan aimed at reducing the burden of diabetes, asthma, and obesity for students in Boston neighborhoods. The school plan integrates with a greater community plan. The overall plan for the city seeks to:

- Develop wellness activities across multiple venues, creating opportunities for "where people live their lives;"
- Improve community and school-based health systems;
- Address environmental factors that influence and contribute to poor nutrition; and
- Develop partnerships with public and private agencies that address land use, building design, environmental protection and food accessibility and production.

The community action plan emphasizes an integrated approach towards improving the health of children and families. The plan seeks to create a network of wellness activities in neighborhoods that help children and families develop healthier lifestyles. Anticipated outcomes of the project include an increased number of students and families engaging in regular physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption, along with a decrease in obesity, tobacco use, and asthma hospitalizations. Activities include BMI surveillance, school-based wellness assessments, development of management strategies, and increased health and physical education.

Five demonstration schools have received funding to coordinate and integrate all of these activities: Dever ES, Murphy K-8, Young Achievers K- 8, John F. Kennedy ES, and Manning ES. For more information about the STEPS Community Action Plan or Health Services at BPS, please contact Linda Grant, Medical Director at lgrant@boston.k12.ma.us.

Profile of a Full-Service School: The James Otis Elementary School

Through its partnership with The Home for Little Wanderers, the James Otis Elementary School is a full-service school in East Boston that embraces the philosophy, "Teach the mother, reach the child." The school is a warm, bright place that recognizes the central role parents play in educating their children. The school's curriculum and programs seek to enhance literacy within families and improve parents' abilities to be the primary teachers of their children by offering parent support and education services. Full-service components at the school include a comprehensive family literacy

“Teach the mother, reach the child.”

program, weekly parent breakfasts and workshops, a school based bilingual clinician and a full time, trilingual parent/community coordinator.

The Family School, the school's family literacy program, is the Otis' most comprehensive full-service school component. Funded through a federal Even Start grant, with a match from the Home for Little Wanderers, the program serves 30 parents and all their children ages 6 months to 12 years. It is designed to meet the needs of non English speaking immigrant parents who comprise 85% of Otis families. Based on the family literacy educational theory that children learn more when their parents also address their own literacy needs, Family School parents study ESOL every day at the Otis from 2:30-4:30 pm while children are in concurrent pre-school and after school programs. Other Family School components include weekly native language parenting support groups, weekly interactive literacy times between parents and children, monthly home visits and monthly family field trips.

In addition to providing family literacy services, school based LICSW Tim Hintz offers individual and family counseling, and parent coordinator Mara Dos Santos, home visitor Luz Gallego and family literacy director Susan Klaw provide support to families on issues such as immigration, employment, affordable housing and how to access community resources.

Both child and parent participants of the Family School say positive things about the program. One parent admits, “To be honest, I never thought I was going to learn so much in the Family School. Besides English, I have learned also to help my children in school.” Another parent explains, “My children have learned many beautiful things from the Family School. For example, my older son didn't like to read or do his homework before. Now he enjoys reading and his homework.”

The Family School is funded by a federal Even Start Grant offered by the Department of Education, the Home for Little Wanderers/ Boston Excels and the Otis School.

For more information, contact Susan Klaw, the Family Literacy Director at the Otis School, at (617) 635-8372 or at sklaw1@aol.com.

Upcoming Funding Opportunities

1. **Bright Horizon's Founders Grants:** provides general grants up to \$5000 to non-profit organizations that serve at-risk children aged 12 and under with an emphasis on the early education years 0-6. Visit <http://www.brighthorizons.com/foundation/> for more information. DEADLINE- November 30
2. **The Gillette Company:** provides support for programs that focus on literacy, health care, housing and emergency shelter. Visit <http://www.gillette.com/> for more information. DEADLINE- December 31
3. **State Street Global Philanthropy Program:** provides support to organizations in Greater Boston in the following areas: education & job training, neighborhood revitalization, health and human needs, youth programs, arts and education, and civic improvement projects. Visit http://www.statestreet.com/company/community_affairs/ for more information. DEADLINE- January 15
4. **Amelia Peabody Foundation:** provides support to projects and programs in MA that serve disadvantaged, inner city youth populations. Visit <http://www.ameliapeabody.org/> for more information.

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DEADLINE—January 30

5. **New Balance Foundation:** provides support to programs that emphasize local outreach efforts, the involvement of community, and children's initiatives. Visit <http://www.newbalance.com/> for more information.

ACCEPTING YEAR ROUND

For Your Information: New Family Strengthening Policy Center Website

The Family Strengthening Policy Center (FSPC) website is a clearinghouse of information and tools dedicated to family strengthening practices, programs and policy. The family strengthening approach is a framework for serving children and families that is rooted in the following principles: 1. Family is the most fundamental factor influencing the lives and outcomes of children; and 2. Families are strong when they are supported by safe and thriving neighborhoods.

Family strengthening is a 'new way of doing business' because it recognizes that families must be at the center of the process of neighborhood transformation and family development. The website draws from the knowledge and expertise of a broad array of professionals from service providers to researchers to bring visitors policy information, news from the field, and funding opportunities, and was created with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
<http://www.nassembly.org/fspc/>