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WHO CHAIRED THE READINESS PROJECT?

Jackie Jenkins-Scott, President,
Wheelock College

Tom Payzant, Professor of Practice,
Harvard Grad School of Ed

Joe Tucci, Chairman, President, &
CEO, EMC Corporation

IF YOU MISSED IT ...

The last issue of "School Clips" had a link to recent personnel appointments. Since then, Supt Carol Johnson has filled even more vacancies. From February to early July, she has named 17 central staff and appointed principals-headmasters to 31 (of 144) schools.

Check out *all* of her choices.

<http://www.bpe.org/documents/bpsapptsfeb-july2008.pdf>

■ SPOTLIGHT "Readiness Project" members — 200+ citizens — report back to Governor Deval Patrick on the state of education in the state

For the last nine months, the governor's task force has been grappling with the status and future of public education, and its final recommendations address 13 major areas: Accountability & Assistance, Curriculum Alignment, Early Education & Care, Education & Technology, Expanded Teaching & Learning Time, High School Plus, Innovative Schools, Long-Term Financing, MCAS & Assessments, Public & Private Higher Education, Recruiting & Retaining Educators, UMass & Public Education, and the Whole Child.

The governor's office drew from the 13 subcommittee reports to create a 40-page "Education Action Agenda," which calls primarily for adapting existing efforts for closer alignment, more rigor, increased data use, and additional funding. His agenda also supports expanding statewide many initiatives that started in Boston, including teacher residencies, pilot schools, and whole-school improvement.

The recommendations are not detailed. A typical one reads as follows: "Ensure every student in the Commonwealth is taught by highly competent, well-educated, strongly supported and effective educators." Another: "Increase the state's production of postsecondary degrees."

For those who want to dig deeper, the Education Action Agenda and subcommittee reports (200+ pages) are at: <http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=gov3topic&L=3&LO=Home&L1=Key+Priorities&L2=World-Class+Education++The+Readiness+Project&sid=Agov3>

■ MA has two new members — including a new chair — of the state board of education

Long active in statewide (and Boston) school work, **Maura Banta**, IBM's East Coast Regional Manager for Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs, starts her term as member and chair July 1. Governor Patrick also named MassMutual Financial Group's **Beverly Holmes**, from Springfield, as a member.

■ What's the status of applications for Pilot and Discovery schools?

Staff in two schools that were awarded planning grants¹ have voted to convert to pilot schools, and both conversions were approved (in July) by the joint BPS-BTU Steering Committee. The **Lyon School** (kindergarten-grade 8) in Brighton will convert to a pilot school and expand through grade 12; the **Harbor School** (grades 6-8) in Dorchester is already a pilot school and will expand through grade 12. The final step is approval by the school committee, expected this fall.

Also this fall, BPS schools will get guidelines on how to apply for Discovery School status, which would give them autonomy over two of the five

¹ In February, The Boston Foundation awarded 20 planning grants to current BPS schools interested in converting to a pilot school and to groups proposing new pilot schools.

WHAT HIGH SCHOOLS DID ERS STUDY?

Academy of the Pacific Rim, Boston

Noble Street Charter High School, Chicago

University Park Campus School, Worcester

* Boston Arts Academy, Boston

Life Academy of Health & Bioscience, Oakland

Perspectives Charter School, Chicago

* TechBoston Academy, Boston

High Tech High School, San Diego

MetWest High School, Oakland

* a Boston public school

autonomies pilot schools have — budget and curriculum/assessment — but not over the other three — staffing, governance, and scheduling.

■ **ERS releases report on small urban high schools' use of resources: people, time, money**

In its in-depth analysis, Education Resource Strategies² found that the nine high schools studied, each different but all outperforming their district counterparts, share common practices. These “Leading Edge” schools do the following:

- Create customized strategic designs that organize resources to advance a clearly defined instructional model
- Invest in teaching quality, use student time strategically, and create individual attention for students to advance their instructional model
- Work within small school size and funding-level constraints to prioritize core academics and professional community over program diversity
- Require flexibility from traditional administrative practices and union contracts on hiring, staffing, and time to implement their strategic designs

What has been the result? What have they done?

- Principals carefully select staff to meet the school's specific design needs
- Students are in school 20% more each day; over four years, they spend 233 more days on core academics than their peers in traditional high schools
- Teachers devote five times more hours to collaboration and professional development than their local district requires
- Administrators focus resources on core academics and find creative, cost-effective ways to provide non-core subjects

The two Boston schools in the study are both pilot schools — the only group of BPS schools with the flexibility to spend their budget allocation as they decide.

“Strategic Designs: Lessons from Leading Edge Small Urban High Schools”: http://www.educationresourcestrategies.org/small_schools.htm

WHO'S IN BOSTON PRINCIPAL FELLOWS CLASS OF 2009?

Kate Carpenter Bernier, corporate and nonprofit management consultant and former BPS teacher

Ethan d'Ablemont Burnes, BPE's policy director and former charter school teacher

Walter Henderson, BPS teacher

Cynthia Paris Jeffers, BPS teacher

Joel Jocelyn, BPS teacher

Jeffrey Liberty, BPS program coordinator, Office of High School Renewal

Sala Semmes, BPS teacher

Maricel Sheets-Ortiz, BPS administrator, Office of Equity

■ **BPE tallies up its achievements for SY2007-2008: the annual “toot-our-own-horn” list**

- Developed new literacy assessments for BPS: a grade 9 “anchor” assessment for all core subjects; guided reading group evaluations for the early grades; and more FAST-R question sets (53 are now available for grades 3-12)
- Co-developed with BPS the Mid-Year Assessment (MYA) in literacy for grades 6-12 and returned results to schools quickly, in easy-to-read reports
- Piloted initiatives — SAM-Boston and REAL — that help school teams hone in on instructional and other support for struggling students
- Developed the Composite Learning Index (CLI), allowing schools to identify students most at risk because of multiple factors
- At the request of BPS's HR office, surveyed new-to-BPS teachers and those leaving the district to help improve recruitment, induction, and retention
- Staffed REACT, the superintendent's top-level operations team, as well as the district's Funding Systems Task Force
- Graduated BTR's Class of '08, with 70+ new teachers prepared to work in BPS, and started the next training program with 75 more in the Class of '09
- For the fifth year, hosted Principal for a Day for city leaders and awarded Fund for Teachers-Boston grants for summer travel and study
- Finalized with Superintendent Johnson the work of the Boston Plan for SY2008-2009 so that it's tightly aligned with her district priorities

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² National firm that specializes in helping districts and schools use their resources most strategically to improve achievement