

2009-2012 Library Long Range Plan

for submission to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners

Plan for all Boston Public School Libraries

Office of Instructional & Information Technology

Center for Media Technology

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Long Range Plan Component Definitions

- **mission statement.** a concise declaration of the purpose of an organization, specifying the fundamental reason for its existence and identifying its major service roles and the major user groups at which they are directed.
- **assessment of user needs.** a description of the needs of the community the library serves; includes a gathering of information based on an analysis of the population, results of surveys, and a description of the library's existing services in relation to the community's needs and/or those in other similar libraries; addresses the library's need for technology; and takes into consideration other plans developed at the state, regional, and local levels. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), effective January 1992, every public library regardless of staff size was to have completed a review of its facility for architectural accessibility and compliance with the ADA. The needs assessment component of the library's long-range plan should include this subject and identify barriers, outline corrective action, and include a mechanism to involve community members to discuss the process of making the library and its services fully accessible to all patrons.
- **multi-year goals and objectives.** goals are broad statements describing desirable end results toward which the library will work over the long term, encompassing a vision of what services should be available; a goal is not measurable and may never be fully reached but will probably not change over a three to five year period; together with objectives, goals define a course of action for meeting the needs of a community. Objectives are specific, short range statements of results to be achieved to implement a goal; they define how it will be done, who will do it, and when and under what conditions; objectives are measurable, include time frames and may or may not change over a three to five year period depending upon progress made.
- **action plan with specific timeframes and/or other measurements for achieving objectives.** the means used to accomplish an objective including specific tasks that will be done in a given year to achieve that objective; activities

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should include specific timelines and/or other measure for determining when the activities will take place and how the objective will be accomplished.

- **brief description of planning methodology.** identification of a specific planning process, such as the PLA process or MBLC school library planning process, and any modifications to it; or, if a library has not used a particular process, a description of what was done, who participated, to what extent, how and what data was gathered, and during what period the plan was developed.
- **approval of governing board.** assurance that the library's trustees for a public library; principal, superintendent or school committee as appropriate for a school or district; dean, provost or president for an academic library; or other governing unit as appropriate has reviewed the contents of the plan and voted to accept it.
- **annual updates of action plans.** by December 1 of each year, the action plan should be reviewed and revised to reflect activities that will take place in the next fiscal year to achieve the long-range plan's goals and objectives.

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Vision

The BPS library program will foster in every student an appreciation and understanding of libraries throughout their lives. School libraries are integral to that learning; teaching students to negotiate the many forms of information, teaching students to love reading and teaching students to be skilled and engaged in their own learning.

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Mission

In pursuit of the broader mission of the Boston Public School's, the Boston Public School Library Program collaborates in the teaching and learning of students to find and use information, effectively instilling a love of reading, providing a flexible space for individualized learning, and offering personalized connections with print, digital, and media resources, and information to support all facets of 21st century academic learning.

Boston Public Schools Mission

We welcome the children of this city into the Boston Public Schools, where effective teaching and learning prepare all of our students to achieve at high levels, and where the entire community works together to focus on children.

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Community Profile

The City of Boston is the largest in New England and is second to San Francisco in attracting tourists for US cities. Boston is quite compact geographically, being only 48 square miles and being home to 600,000 people. The city has an excellent transportation system (MBTA) and commuter rail system (MBTA). (MA tourist information) Mayor Menino's website thoroughly explains the flavor of the unique neighborhoods that comprise the city <http://www.cityofboston.gov/neighborhoods/>. For example, the South End is described as being close to downtown and Back Bay and home to Victorian brownstone buildings, an urban professional environment with many parks, restaurants, and an arts community with many galleries. In contrast, just miles away is Mattapan, a neighborhood not only identified by its level of economic and racial diversity, but also a history of a large immigrant population. This area is one that Mayor Menino is actively trying to promote business and revitalization.

Boston is home to the largest number of first class colleges in the US, nationally renowned sports teams, museums, and art galleries. The per capita income of residents falls below the national average by age and range in nearly all target areas. (U.S. Census)

Like many other urban communities, the Boston Public Schools has a desegregation and bussing history, that created an extensive school choice model. As a result, the system still offers choice and busses students to schools within zones creating a complex and diverse structure of neighborhoods and school environments. Given this choice plan, students may not have access to after school neighborhood public libraries because they arrive home late from being bussed across a zone and regular access to the public library may be limited.

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The Boston Public Schools serve approximately 55,800 students across the city of Boston in 135 schools. The schools are made up from 6 early learning centers (K-Grade 1), 53 elementary schools (K-5), 23 elementary and middle schools (K-8), 10 middle schools (6-8), 2 middle and high school (6-12), 29 high schools (9-12), 3 "exam schools" (7-12), 6 special education schools (K-12) and 2 alternative (at-risk) schools. Included are 21 pilot schools (1 early learning center, 4 elementary, 5 K-8, 2 middle, 2 middle/high, 6 high, 1 elementary/high); 2 high schools are Horace Mann charter schools approved and funded by the BPS. Schools providing services to students are as varied as the students themselves, and services within the schools are able to provide unique and customized learning opportunities for students.

One middle school is able to focus on the performing arts and the programs within the school reflect the school theme. In the library, materials support the curriculum and the focused school theme. Many of our middle and high schools have declared such a theme or focus to their programming, in an effort to focus their academic learning and attract students and community partners.

Demographic information published by the BPS indicates that 39% of the student population is Black, 37% are Hispanic, 13% are White, 9% are Asian, 2% are Multi-Racial (non-Hispanic), and <1% Other. Twenty-five percent of the student population (18,900 students) does not attend the Boston Public Schools. Of those students, 46% are Black, 38% are white, 12% are Hispanic, and 3% are Asian. Students not attending the BPS go to private and parochial schools (10,760), go to suburban schools through METCO (3,030), go to public charter schools (4,420), are placed by the BPS Special Education Dept. in non-BPS schools and programs (510) and are home schooled (200). (BPS statistics) Boston Public Schools has maintained 75% of the school age population over the last two decades but educates a higher percentage of students who are eligible to receive free or reduced priced lunch (62% free and 10% reduced). (BPS statistics)

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The Boston Public Schools' enrollment has remained somewhat constant with only a slight decrease for the coming year. Some causes for the decrease are that there are fewer school age students in the city; an increased number of charter and traditional private schools create a choice for parents; and the population of the City overall is shrinking. While progress has been steady, for example, in 1998 42% of the 10th grade students passed ELA MCAS compared to 91% in 2009, the district continues to face achievement gaps in graduation rates, MCAS proficiency, and student mobility.

Students in all grades showed progress on the Spring 2009 MCAS exam, except in grades 6 and 10, where progress remained the same at 80% and 80% respectively.

SAT scores for BPS students have demonstrated a consistent pattern of progress and while they remain below state and national averages the progress has outperformed both. The district has set a target goal of a 1650 average across the three SAT tests to be achieved by 2012. The current rate is 1331 based on data from January 2009.

Dropout rates have decreased slightly in recent years. In 2007, the rate was 7.9% and in 2008, 7.2%.

Four year graduation rates have remained flat over the last decade. The 2008 rate was 59.9 compared to the 2007 rate of 57.9. The district commissioned the Parthenon Study and has specifically put in place several programs to address the drop out problem and increase the graduation rate.

Among the challenges facing the Boston Public Schools is the need to accelerate the literacy and mathematics performance and specifically to use the library programs as a vehicle for responding to the achievement and access gaps, the language and cultural diversity needs of a multicultural and socio-economically diverse population of families

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and working to make our schools as inviting and welcoming places for students and families

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Current Status

The current library program in the Boston Public Schools represents unequal access and opportunity. There is no standard for what each school should have for a library space (if a library is required), how a library should be staffed, what part of the curriculum would be taught or what print or non-print materials would be included. Perhaps the most obvious in the libraries is in the area of staffing. A variance exists across the schools in terms of specified locations for a library vs. classroom collections, between staffed and not staffed by librarians, and between professional and para-professional staff.

Not all of the BPS school libraries have an automation system, though the ones that do either have the Winnebago/Follett system which does not provide a union catalog access, access from home or interlibrary loan access. The schools utilizing this program are mainly elementary and middle schools. The high schools all belong to the Boston Public Library Horizon OPAC which does provide a union catalog, access from home and an inter library loan service for a fee to schools to be a member. This is required at the high schools as a part of NEASC accreditation. Some middle and elementary schools have opted to pay the annual and initial fee to belong, but this has been a site based decision and one that depends on funding. (see Appendix A)

Automation for the Horizon system connected to the BPL goes through the Campbell Resource Center. Recent discussions between the BPL and the BPS have resulted in a review of the needs and a proposal to upgrade the line to a TLS.

At one time, the Center for Media Technology at the Campbell Resource Center was a center for professional research and video check out. Currently, due to fiscal challenges, the professional journals have lapsed and new materials have not been added to the collection. The district is also expecting to identify new leadership for the Library and Media Centers position. The center needs updating and a revitalization of the collection and renewal of the professional journals to renew its relevance and to prevent duplication of efforts of the schools. New videos have not been purchased in many years, forcing the schools to purchase their own copies and duplicating efforts

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and expense. An assessment of the purpose and scope of the Center for Media Technology needs to take place as the resources previously provided by the Center are quickly becoming obsolete as more content, curriculum resources, and multimedia videos/podcasts are available freely online. Further expansion is also needed to ensure that the resources of the district are aligned with the district and state standard framework. A focus on updating this center, and shifting hours to be accessible to teachers after school hours and on the weekends, would attract more district teaching staff through increasing center use and limit duplicate purchasing in the schools.

Staffing for libraries at the district level is currently limited to the Director of Libraries and an assistant. The staffing situation limits the effectiveness of a thriving library program. Many of the services that are provided with limitations but need expansion (either with additional district staff or a restructuring of currently available staff include) include: librarian staff development, teacher staff development, attendance at school faculty meetings as requested, planning meetings with school administrators (creating, expanding, upgrading or closing libraries), NEASC assistance (library analysis and preparation, conferences with NEASC teams), collaborating with all curricular departments at the district level (collaborate with subject area PD, provide research assistance, provide purchasing assistance for supplementary materials for the curriculum), assisting librarians and library staff with specialized projects (developing orders, de-selection process, automating and cataloging) and spearheading district library policies. Opportunities could be explored to leverage the expertise and knowledge of our professional library staff out in the schools to support each other through professional learning communities and online networks.

Our libraries are as varied as the schools in services provided and staffing available. We range from thriving library programs in the schools to schools with very limited library services, thus creating an inequity in the library services offered to the BPS students. For example, the West Roxbury complex has one library serving four small high schools. The library has a solid library program where instruction is a part of the program on a daily basis and students from all schools have access to computers for research and word processing. The collection and library floor space are of an adequate size, though the collection is aging as indicated through the collection analysis in December 2007. The furniture needs replacement and the decor could be updated to

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become more inviting and less 1970's appearing. Except for the loss of the assistant and the aging collection, this program is thriving and should be an exemplary model of what is happening in the BPS libraries. In complete contrast, the Boston Latin Academy is staffed by two full time certified media specialists and a para-professional. The library is on two floors, with the research center overlooking the main floor. The collection is updated, due in part to outside grants, the decor is inviting and looks more of a bookstore than a school library. Because of the additional staff, more classes can be accommodated at one time, allowing for additional instruction/research time.

The elementary libraries present a very significant challenge. Some elementary schools are fortunate enough to have a certified media specialist teaching research skills. Other elementary schools have only classroom collections or are unstaffed. The Clap is a small elementary school in Dorchester trying to bring back a library program. This school has a cadre of volunteers, and has purchased software to catalog books, and has begun the process of building a collection. The school administration and community believe strongly in a library that is staffed and one that will be able to offer classes on research and story-time for students.

Another elementary school is the Perkins, in Dorchester. When the Perkins had a space issue in the 05-06 school year, the library lost out to the computer lab. The Perkins administration and staff are interested in bring back a library program, but for the time being, the books and shelving for the library are in locked cabinets in the hallways. There is no automation system and no library staff. Another elementary situation shows the devotion of the parent group in creating a library. The Hurley, a K-8 school in the South End will for the third year staff the library position from donations from the PTO. The school invested in an automation system, and purchased many new materials for the collection through a grant. The parent group has largely been responsible for many initiatives in the school, and the success of their library program is only one of their achievements. Continuing this unequal system is unacceptable.

What is encouraging, is that funding in recent years has been equitably distributed to all libraries that are staffed, with the exception of libraries going through the NEASC accreditation process. Consideration is provided the NEASC libraries and additional funds are allotted per student in that year of accreditation. For the 07-08 school year, no

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funds were allotted to the libraries. Subscriptions and databases bought by the district have expired, but we are fortunate to have a thriving partnership with the BPL which allows our students to utilize the BPL purchased databases during school time. With the leadership of Boston Mayor Menino, we have expanded community learning opportunities by creating SAT/ACT online prep programs accessible beyond the school day.

While the funding in the system has been equitable to the staffed schools, by comparison to other districts, we sorely underfund our libraries. In recent years the libraries have been approved for funding around \$350,000 for 140+ schools. As a comparison, the Taunton schools in the 06-07 had a library budget of \$391,000 for 16 schools.

Thus, the BPS media program is comprised of troubling inequities which include: substandard numbers of books per students, consideration to staffing (professional/non-professional or staff at all), hours open, lack of cohesive K-12 plan for instruction in the libraries and availability to reference collection size or special collections.

To address the teaching and learning inequities, the K-8 staff plan a scope and sequence project for the 08-09 school year to make the instruction at those levels more equitable. Additionally, the intention is to ensure students entering high school will have similar skill sets for research and library utilization. The high school library staff plan to develop a policy manual for the libraries, and also assess the libraries and make recommendations for a plan to create equity in the BPS libraries.

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User Needs

In September 2007, the BPS started the school year with a new Superintendent. After her first one hundred days, Dr. Carol Johnson identified the needs of the students from input from students, community members, and school staff. The identified needs by the community include: the achievement gap, the dropout crisis, special education as a regular education issue, a need for a broader array of exemplary schools and programs of choice, a need for a wider range of programs for ELL, coordination with partners [parks, community centers, libraries, rec. depts., cultural training for staff and students, family-friendly customer service, promoting high school graduation and college, mobilizing student voice, and providing for a district wide Pre-K-12 literacy curriculum, and enrichment opportunities.

During the first planning meeting discussion to develop this long range plan, the library committee discussed these identified needs from the Superintendent's community forums, and more specifically how these needs relate to the libraries. Additional needs identified were after school programming, educating classroom teachers what a fully functioning library can do for them, educating users of libraries the value of libraries, providing additional access to technology at the PreK-8 levels, integrating information literacy into the library curriculum, and adhering to standards for the libraries (books per student, levels of access, staffing). Some final discussions involved the student needs such as being identified on an individual level, where learning or interests will be met to enable students not be a drop out and rather to be successful and productive in his or her life.

At this point only a small percentage of the Boston Public School libraries are able to completely address many of the community and library identified needs. The depth of our ability to address these needs will require focused attention, revamping our internal structures, partnerships, and resources available. Our success as a school community rests with our ability to develop a culture that understand that access to information is a critical 21st century skill fostered by a quality library and media program.

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Goals 2009-2012

I. Program Administration Goals

GOAL 1: Ensure equity in all libraries across the district.

- Objective: Assess library space, staffing and collections in all 144 schools.
- Objective: Propose new collection development plans catered to the needs of the students in each school.
- Objective: Propose annual plan and budget based on assessment of all libraries (staffing, collection analysis, available space).
- Objective: Ensure all students have access to BPL databases.
- Objective: Ensure all students and staff have access to a fully functioning library with AASL/MSLA standards.

Action Plan 2009:

Submit each library collection to Follett annually for analysis for all automated schools.

Compare each school collection to Wilson's recommended list to determine whether collections have at least 25% of the recommended titles.

Propose a budget based on needs and Wilson to increase each collection to 35% or greater of the Wilson Recommended List.

Use state recommended standards for the number of titles for each of the schools with a library.

Meet with at least 4 principals/headmasters of schools without libraries to plan space, staffing and collections as necessary by April 2009.

Prepare report for accreditation staff verifying that all High School collections meet NEASC standards in staffing, collection and teaching and learning standards by June 2009.

Provide IP ranges to the BPL for authentication purposes by December 2009.

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Prepare a policy and procedure manual to include selection, deselection and challenges to materials.

GOAL 2: Establish levels of staffing consistent with ALA standards based on school size.

- Objective: Propose staffing solutions for schools without library staff.
- Objective: Maintain certified media specialists at all schools that currently have one.
- Objective: Staff all libraries with a professional.
- Objective: Provide a career ladder for paraprofessionals.

Action Plan 2009:

Compare and contrast current staffing by student numbers and present to school administrators in writing by June 2010.

Make annual staffing proposals to maintain or increase staffing.

Meet with four principals of schools with libraries and no staffing by June 2010.

Meet with Simmons College and URI to propose programming for paraprofessionals by spring 2009.

Disseminate information for career information in monthly newsletters.

II Teaching and Learning Goals

GOAL 1: Develop a media literacy program for students and staff.

- Objective: Provide staff in-service opportunities to learn about various media literacy topics.
- Objective: Develop a scope and sequence with/for K-8 library staff.
- Objective: Adopt a research method to be utilized by the district.

Action Plan 2009:

Submit four media literacy programs to MyLearningPlan to be run by the end of the 2009-2010 school year.

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By June 2010, provide a link to the scope and sequence project on MyBPS website. (include information on students becoming critical consumers of information, using technology as a research tool, involve classroom teachers in collaborations to create lessons to increase student achievement)

Propose a library curriculum to be implemented 2011-2012.

By August 2010, each library staff member will have attended at least one media literacy program.

III Information Access and Delivery Goals

GOAL 1: Support the needs of the district curriculum and the state curriculum frameworks.

Objective: Provide classroom teachers opportunities to use state databases in relation to the curriculum.

Objective: Provide classroom teachers supplemental resources that support the state curriculum.

Action Plan 2009:

Develop a written plan including layout, budget and staffing recommendations to revitalize the administrative library at Campbell Resource Center.

Recommend at least 20 new titles to schools in each subject area that are related to state standards.

Provide at least 2 professional development sessions for K-12 teachers utilizing the state databases by June 2010.

GOAL 2 : Provide up-to date, relevant resources in a variety of formats and technologies to meet the diverse needs of the learners.

Objective: Make purchase recommendations for materials that support the needs of all learners.

Objective: Increase use of the administrative library use of space and materials by 20%.

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Action Plan 2009:

Develop a monthly newsletter for library staff promoting the administrative library and library activities for the district.

Create survey to be implemented in April 2009 for evaluating current databases and trial databases to make recommendations for the upcoming year.

Develop an end of the year survey to be implemented in June 2009 assessing the materials and resources available to school libraries.

Utilize end of the year staff survey to evaluate and purchase requests July 2009.

Make a 5% increase in the use of ILL district wide as determined by reports.

GOAL 3: Improve the resource sharing and networking capabilities of the library media centers.

Objective Maintain regional and state memberships allowing for resource sharing in all high schools.

Objective: Assess the varied automation systems in the libraries.

Action Plan 2009:

Meet the requirements for meeting regional and state library memberships throughout the 2009-2010 year.

Create a database of library automation information (barcodes, key codes, versions...) by June 2010.

Propose a central integrated library system for the K-8 libraries and plan to migrate at least 3 schools for the 2009-2010 school year.

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Methodology

In April 2008, the Director of Library and Media Centers invited a group of librarians to serve on the planning committee. Each librarian invited another stakeholder to participate.

The planning committee was made up of a parent, a principal, a library volunteer, a student, a library science professor, five school librarians, the program director, a community representative, and the regional administrator.

Prior to the first meeting, the program director asked each school library to complete an evaluation of its current status (see Appendix). The program director researched those schools that did not respond (primarily those without library staff or without libraries), and completed their information.

The committee had its first meeting on May 14, 2008. Discussion, led by an outside facilitator, covered the role of the school libraries, who uses the libraries, user needs, and what an ideal BPS library looks like. Notes from this discussion were compiled and put on a wiki for comment and editing by the committee. Also on the wiki was a draft of the current status of the libraries, condensed from data collected.

At its second meeting on June 10, the committee discussed the drafts of the vision, mission, community profile, user needs, and current status. A librarian reported on a written survey she had given to a small number of students. To develop goals, the committee responded to this question: How do we bridge the gap between where we stand today (current status) and where we want to go (our vision and the user needs assessment)? Ideas generated, and edits to the other plan elements, were posted on the wiki for further refinement.

The third meeting on June 26, the committee voted on the draft version of all components and finalized recommendations.

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Outside resources for the committee included the superintendent's acceleration agenda, English High School Library's planning document, and AASL standards.

The final plan developed by the committee was reviewed and updated by BPS Office of Instructional & Information Technology to be submitted as the district's Long Range Library Plan for 2009 to 2012.

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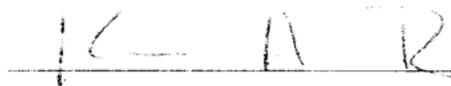
Approval & Signature Page

I have reviewed and approve the district library plan for 2009-2012.



Dr. Carol Johnson, Superintendent of Boston Schools

10/1/09
Date



Kimberly A. Rice, BPS Chief Information Officer

10/1/09
Date