

Request for Proposals: Partners for Student Success Pilot Initiative

Part I: GRANT INFORMATION

I. Summary

Partners for Student Success is seeking proposals from Boston Public Schools (see Section III for eligibility requirements) to participate in a pilot grant initiative that will provide a comprehensive package of supports aimed at improving the ability of selected schools to meet the academic, social, emotional and developmental needs of its most at-risk students. Grant awards will support greater integration and coordination of academic instruction, remedial tutoring, out-of-school time programming, family outreach and health and mental health services as well as the expansion of out-of-school time programming to serve more of the school's most at-risk students.

Partners for Student Success is an initiative of Mayor Thomas M. Menino, the Boston Public Schools, Boston After School & Beyond, and wide number of private funders and collaborators, including Massachusetts 2020 Foundation, The Boston Foundation, the Full-service Schools Roundtable and Harvard University's Program in Education, Afterschool and Resiliency (PEAR).

II. Goals of Partners for Student Success

Despite Boston's impressive progress in school reform over the past decade, a significant number of Boston's students still struggle academically and face substantial barriers to academic achievement. The Boston Public Schools, like many urban school districts throughout the country, serve a disproportionate number of poor and minority students. Studies show that students from poor families tend to be less prepared for school and participate in fewer enrichment activities. These students tend to suffer greater health and mental health challenges (strongly associated with lower academic performance), and generally receive fewer services for these problems¹.

For many of them the small percentage of time spent in school (only 20% of their waking hours) is not sufficient to overcome such barriers to learning. Students need a greater set of supports integrated into the school day but often extending beyond school hours, such as a comprehensive after-school program that provides both educational support and enrichment programming, specialized remedial tutoring to address specific skill gaps and learning needs, access to health and mental health services and a range of strategies focused on supporting and engaging families in their children's learning.

¹ "A Portrait of Boston's Youth," Massachusetts 2020. Document prepared for Community Forum May 16, 2005 ([www.mass2020.org/portraitofbostonyouth\(final\).ppt](http://www.mass2020.org/portraitofbostonyouth(final).ppt))

Through the Partners for Student Success Pilot Initiative, the Boston Public Schools, Boston After School & Beyond, and other private organizations and funders will work initially with five Boston Public Schools that have high percentages of students that are struggling academically. Specifically, the Pilot Initiative will target schools that are in “Corrective Action” or “Restructuring” according to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)². Selected schools will receive a package of supports aimed at enhancing, coordinating and augmenting key services for students.

Partners for Student Success pilot grants seek to achieve the following key goals at targeted schools over the next three years:

- Expand participation in quality out-of-school time programs by students who are academically at-risk
- Augment SES tutoring for targeted students with additional after-school programming that includes enrichment activities such as art, sports, apprenticeships and experiential learning.
- Create a system for identifying and engaging struggling students in needed support services (e.g. mental health services, tutoring, out-of-school programming)
- Improve coordination and communication between the school and a network of service providers outside of school.

The Pilot Initiative will initially target only a small number of schools in order to explore and demonstrate how this comprehensive system of supports can improve student outcomes at specific schools. In addition to the pilot grant, Partners for Student Success is focused on implementing a number of additional systemic initiatives aimed at strengthening and expanding out-of-school time programming in the Boston Public Schools overall. (For more information on the background of Partners for Student Success see Attachment A.)

III. Grant Eligibility

Boston Public Elementary and Middle Schools in “Corrective Action” or “Restructuring” as of September 2005 as designated through the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act are eligible for the pilot grant. The following schools are therefore eligible to apply: Chittick Elementary School, Cleveland Middle School, Condon Elementary School, Dever Elementary School, E. Greenwood Elementary School, Edwards Middle School, Eliot Elementary School, Irving Middle School, Marshall Elementary School, Mattahunt Elementary School, Perkins Elementary School, Lucy Stone Elementary School, Tobin K-8 School, and Trotter Elementary School.

IV. Grant Award

Selected schools will receive both financial and technical assistance through the pilot grant, as well as special support in identifying creative, cost effective solutions that

² According to the Federal No Child Left Behind Act a school identified for “Corrective Action” is a school that has not made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for four years. A school identified for “Restructuring” is a school that has not made AYP for five years.

address barriers to participation in out-of-school time programs such as transportation services.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance will be provided through a grant of **up to \$350,000 over three years** to fund a combination of supports tailored to each school's needs. Total grant awards may vary from school to school. **Financial assistance can be used for one, two or three of the following supports:**

1. **Manager of Extended Learning and Services (MELS):** Partners for Student Success recognizes that for schools to operate, or partner to offer, quality after-school programming and integrate a wide variety of supports into the school day, they need a strong manager. The grant could be used to hire a Manager of Extended Learning and Services (MELS) who would oversee out-of-school time programming, external partnerships and support services provided through outside organizations. A MELS would ensure that after-school programming is aligned with the school day and targeted to meet student needs; conduct outreach to make sure that students most at-risk of academic failure are participating in after-school programming; and forge partnerships with community organizations to supplement program offerings and services for students. The MELS would also work closely with outside partners or other school staff to do family outreach and help connect families to important services. MELS will be BPS employees, paid on the BPS payroll, and report directly to the Principal. They would also be part of the school leadership team, working closely with Principals and Assistant Principals to implement the whole school improvement plan. MELS would participate in a network including other MELS and receive training, support and technical assistance. (For more information see Attachment B: Job Description for Manager of Extended Learning and Services). The approximate cost of each MELS is **\$62,500** including benefits (with a base salary of \$50,000). In the first year, Partners for Student Success will cover the entire cost of the position (estimated at \$38,100 because the staff person would not be hired until the second half of the school year). In the second and third year of the initiative, schools would be asked to make a partial contribution to cover the cost of the position, and partners will work with each school and BPS leaders to develop a sustainable funding strategy for the position.

While applicants may request a mix of supports tailored to their school's specific needs, **if a school does not currently have a staff person playing the role of Manager of Extended Learning and Services** (e.g. identifying students in need of support, placing them in after-school programs in schools or in their neighborhoods, monitoring their progress, leveraging other resources as needed such as mental health and family outreach), **then that school must apply for a MELS**. Schools that already have a staff member filling this role may focus their funding requests on expanding after-school opportunities or providing mental health or family outreach services. **However, these schools must be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the selection committee that the staff person designated to fill this role has the skills and capacity required.** The designated MELS must work full-time, or close to full-time, in this capacity and

must be able to perform all the tasks outlined in the attached job description (Attachment B). A person in an existing position does not have to be a BPS employee during the first year of support, but must transition into a BPS position after one year.

2. **After-School Expansion:** One of Partners for Student Success' core goals is to help schools engage struggling students in quality out-of-school time programs that provide both remedial tutoring and enrichment activities. Therefore, as part of the three year grant, Partners for Student Success will provide funding for schools to expand out-of-school time programming to reach students who are:
- Struggling academically (e.g. scoring in level 1 and 2 on MCAS or showing low scores on other formative assessments such as DRA and SRI)
 - Demonstrating behavior problems that interfere with learning (e.g. experiencing a large number of suspensions or displaying documented social/emotional problems)
 - Displaying poor school attendance (e.g. significantly above average absenteeism)

Schools will need to explain how they will identify and target these students and how they will work to match them with out-of-school time programs. Funds can be used to place students in either school-based or community-based programs. (Selected schools will receive assistance from Boston After School & Beyond to identify community-based programs in students' neighborhoods. In cases where students are placed in programs off-site, the school's MELS will need to maintain close ties to that program and work with program partners to support each students' success.)

In particular, programs are encouraged to use the grants to augment programming provided through SES funding. Specifically, schools can use the funds to target students that are eligible for SES tutoring but are not currently participating either because they do not have transportation or they are not attracted to the program because it only involves remedial tutoring. Grants could be used to enroll these students in after-school programs currently in place, or expand programming around SES tutoring to provide additional enrichment activities. Grants can also be used for students who currently receive SES tutoring but are not enrolled in other after-school programming. In all cases, schools must show how the SES tutoring and other after-school programming will be integrated into a more comprehensive program. Again, grants are meant to support **expansion** (i.e. participation by students not currently enrolled in after-school programming), not on-going operations.

Expansion grants will be calculated based on a stipend of up to \$1,500 per student per year over three years. In the first year of expansion, because expansion will begin in the second semester, schools will receive up to \$750 per student and can apply for up to 30 students to receive additional programming. In the second year schools can apply for up to \$1,500 per student for expansion by up to 50 students and in the third year schools can apply for up to \$1,500 per student for expansion by up to 75 students. The initiative understands that the

grant award per student may not cover the full cost of an after-school program and Partners for Student Success expects schools and/or partner organizations to supplement these funds with either SES funding or other public or private grant money.

3. **Support Services:** For some students who face substantial non-academic barriers to learning, even a strong instructional program and a strong out-of-school time program are not enough. Schools will be able to apply for funding to augment key services aimed at addressing barriers to learning such as health and mental health services, social services and family engagement. Mental health services, for example, are an area where several schools have expressed the need for additional services. While many schools have partnerships with community organizations to provide mental health services or school staff that provide student counseling and student support, others struggle to provide these core services. To provide key services such as mental health, schools will be encouraged to develop partnerships with community organizations that can help meet their needs. Schools will receive assistance in identifying qualified partners. Grants will be for start up funding and would be awarded based on a clear sustainable funding strategy. Grantees can apply for up to **\$10,000 per year** in funding for additional support services. (Under certain circumstances where grantees make a strong case, the selection committee may consider requests over \$10,000.)

Because Partners for Student Success seeks to support participating schools in a comprehensive way to ensure the academic and social success of students, in the case where schools wish to augment mental health services, the purpose of funding is not only to provide traditional counseling and diagnostic services, but to help integrate mental health supports in ways that are non-traditional, non-stigmatizing, reduce barriers of service use and benefit the whole school community (rather than individual “cases”). There are strong examples in Boston that achieve these goals (e.g. RALLY Prevention Programs, mental health service providers associated with the Full-service Schools Roundtable, and others). Partners for Student Success will help schools learn from the experiences of these initiatives.

Schools might also use this funding to supplement family outreach and engagement or to provide specific family services. Schools that applied for a Family Outreach Coordinator this year but did not receive one may wish to request funding to support family outreach services.

Transportation Services

Partners for Student Success recognizes that the lack of transportation home is often one of the key barriers to participation in out-of-school time programs and is committed to helping schools resolve this challenge and serve more students. Partners for Student Success will work closely with each of the selected schools to develop a creative and cost-effective strategy for addressing transportation issues. This may involve identifying programs in students’ own neighborhoods and arranging transportation to these alternative sites, it may involve pairing schools that are located

near each other to establish a cost-effective late transportation strategy, or it may involve another creative solution. Once schools are selected and they have been able to identify the cohort of students they would like to target with additional services, they will receive support from Partners for Student Success to review transportation needs and consider possible solutions.

Technical Assistance

In addition to the above supports, schools will receive specialized training and technical assistance to:

- Plan for program expansion
- Hire a qualified MELS
- Create a strategy for integrating after-school programming, SES tutoring and other support services for students at their school
- Identify additional partners and establish partnerships to augment programming and services
- Raise private funds to support programming
- Identify student needs and target students for additional services

In particular, schools will receive coordinated assistance from BPS Principal on Assignment Catalina Montes (former principal of the Gardner Extended Services School), the BPS after-school team led by Dishon Mills, Boston After School & Beyond, PEAR of Harvard University and McLean Hospital, and the Full-service Schools Roundtable.

V. Selection Criteria

The selection committee will be looking for applicants that demonstrate the following criteria:

- a. **A strong vision** for aligning after-school programming and extended services into the school's goals, culture, and overall operations, including a specific strategy for including these programs in the whole school improvement plan. In particular, a thoughtful strategy for integrating after-school programming with SES tutoring and the school instructional program.
- b. **A strong whole school improvement plan** and capacity to implement that plan.
- c. **Demonstrated commitment** on the part of the Principal, teachers and other school staff to working closely with after-school providers both in the school and outside the school. (e.g. committing space for after-school use if applicable, creating formal and informal mechanisms to promote communication between school and after-school staff, including representatives of after-school program in-school leadership team.)
- d. A plan for and **commitment to integrating the Manager of Extended Learning and Services** into the school leadership team.
- e. **History of, or demonstrated interest in, establishing partnerships** with community-based organizations to provide key services and programming.
- f. **A strong commitment to monitoring outcomes and impact.**
- g. A **willingness to coordinate** Partners for Student Success pilot **funding** with other grants or initiative funding the school receives (e.g. Family Outreach

Coordinator, School Sites Initiative, Community Learning Center grants, Safe Schools, etc.) and create an all funds budgeting approach.

VI. Grant Requirements

- a. Reporting and data collection (grantees must participate in an evaluation process designed by funders and BPS)
- b. Agreement to work with a team to identify sustainable funding sources over the long- term
- c. Participation of the MELS in networking meetings, technical assistance, and school leadership team
- d. Involvement of Principal in key meetings, as necessary

VII. Project Timeline

RFP released	Monday, September 19, 2005
Bidders Conference	Friday, October 7, 2005 (<i>* to be held at the Orchard Gardens School from 8:30-10:30 am</i>)
Proposals due	November 1, 2005
Interviews with selection committee	November 9-18, 2005
Recipients selected and notified	Wednesday, November 30, 2005
Year 1 (Planning & start-up implementation)*	December 2005 to June 2006
Year 2 (Implementation)	September 2006 to June 2007
Year 3 (Implementation)	September 2007 to June 2008

* During the year 1 planning and start-up implementation phase, Partners for Student Success expects the following to take place:

- MELS hired (if not already in place)
- MELS trained and connected to network
- Goals and MOAs developed
- Plans developed for expansion of programming
- Students identified for participation in out-of-school time programming
- Where possible, students recruited and enrolled in programming
- Where applicable, new partnerships developed to augment out-of-school time programming, mental health or family outreach services

An individualized timeline and workplan for the above will be developed with each school.

See Part II: Grant Application for details on the application process and forms necessary.

Attachment A:

Background: Building on Boston's Strong History of Collaboration to Support Out-of-School Time Programming

Over the past decade Boston has made impressive progress in expanding and improving programs for children when they are not in school. Between 1998 and 2003, the number of children participating in after-school programs nearly doubled, and, today, our city likely leads the nation in the percentage of students participating in out-of-school time programs³. Over the past decade, the public and private sectors, as well as a vast array of community-based organizations, have worked together to expand and enhance the out-of-school time field in Boston. Partners for Student Success builds on this long history of collaboration.

Recognizing that school buildings provide a tremendous untapped resource during non-school hours, Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino and Boston Public Schools Superintendent Thomas Payzant made a seminal decision in 1998 to open school buildings free of charge to community-based organizations for providing after-school programming. The **Mayor's 2:00-to-6:00 After-School Initiative**, which was formed in 1998, supported, strengthened, and encouraged these partnerships between community-based organizations and public schools. Funding through the **Boston Community Learning Centers** grant program also played a significant role in infusing financial resources to the system and supporting the development of school-based programs.

In March 2001, Mayor Menino and a group of business and civic leaders launched the largest public/private partnership dedicated to serving children in Boston's history. Fifteen philanthropic, education, business, and government institutions formed **Boston's After-School for All Partnership**, committing over \$26 million in new funding over five years to expand, improve, and sustain after-school programming.

Most recently, Boston has taken a hallmark step towards building a true after-school system through the formation of **Boston After School & Beyond**. This entity, the successor of Boston's After-School for All Partnership and the Mayor's 2:00-to-6:00 After-School Initiative, is charged with the task of coordinating and supporting the full array of out-of-school time opportunities available to children. With a full-time staff of 12, annual budget of \$2 million, and a board made up of prominent city leaders, foundations and civic institutions, it stands poised to strengthen and expand a broad system of out-of-school time programming throughout the City.

A focus on schools and school-based after-school programs

Over the past five years a number of initiatives have been launched to expand and enhance after-school programs based in Boston Public Schools. These school-based programs represent a large and growing portion of Boston's after-school sector and have the unique ability to connect with and support learning and development that takes place during the school day. School-based programs often have strong academic components where students receive tutoring and assistance with homework and

³ Provide source – parent survey

participate in special activities aimed at boosting math or reading skills. School-based programs also offer students a range of enrichment activities such as art, sports, apprenticeships, and experiential learning that can build skills, confidence and engagement in learning. Financially, school-based programs can also be cost-effective to operate since programs have access to space in schools free of charge.

Convinced by the advantages of school-based programs, in the fall of 2002, eleven members of Boston's After-School for All Partnership joined forces to form the **School Sites Initiative (SSI)**. SSI sought to expand existing school-based programs by at least 600 more students. To date, the initiative has surpassed its goal with grantees serving over 700 additional students in its 17 funded programs, demonstrating that school-based programs can expand cost-effectively to serve more students.

To support school-based programs and the implementation of the Boston Community Learning Centers Initiative, an After-School Programs Coordinator was hired within BPS to serve as a liaison between community organizations and Boston Public Schools seeking to establish partnerships. Under the leadership of the After-School Programs Coordinator, Boston Public Schools operates **Bridging the Gap**, a training series for out-of-school-time professionals that helps them better support student learning and understand BPS curriculum and learning standards. Another effort, the **After-School Literacy Coaching Initiative (LCI)**, launched by Boston's After-School for All Partnership, has worked to enhance the quality of after-school programs by providing after-school staff with literacy training, on-site coaching from literacy experts, curriculum materials and book collections. Other initiatives, such as the **Full-service Schools Roundtable**, have recognized the importance of expanding programming and services for students within schools. The Full-service Schools Roundtable has been working extensively with Boston Public Schools to forge a range of partnerships to provide families and students with counseling, parent education, mentoring, recreation, extended learning opportunities, and health and social services before, during and after the school day as well as on weekends and during the summer. Still others developed replicable models of connecting school and after-school as well as academic learning and student in-school and community supports. These models include the Gardner Extended Services School as well as the RALLY program that was begun in Boston and is being replicated in different parts of the country. These models have shown the possibility and efficacy of in-depth collaborations between schools, universities, health care and youth serving organizations to increase student success and well-being.

BPS and private funders join forces to form Partners for Student Success

All of these initiatives have produced a wealth of information about the types of programs and interventions that work to enhance and support learning for Boston Public School students during non-school hours. In 2004, based on the learning and results that emerged from these efforts, and a deep belief in the potential of school-based after-school programs to support student learning and development, private funders and BPS leaders formed a working group

Working Group Members

- Boston Public Schools
- Massachusetts 2020
- Boston After School & Beyond
- Barr Foundation
- Full-service Schools Roundtable
- Harvard University
- L.G. Balfour Foundation, A Bank of America Company
- Nellie Mae Education Foundation
- The Boston Foundation
- United Way of Mass. Bay
- Boston Centers for Youth and Families

to further explore the possibilities for a stronger alignment between school and out-of-school time programs and a lasting infrastructure to develop, enhance and fund school-based programs over the long-term. While the long-term goal of the group was to forge a lasting public-private partnership aimed at building a strong system of school-based programs, Superintendent Payzant and other BPS leaders encouraged the group to focus their efforts in the near term on the 14 schools designated for “Corrective Action” or “Restructuring” according to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

To understand these schools’ specific needs, the working group organized a forum with the 14 school principals to gather information on common needs and then conducted follow-up phone interviews with most of the principals to better understand their individual needs and priorities. Principals emphasized the importance of connecting struggling students to after-school programs and other support services and stressed several key barriers they face to making these connections. Principals talked about the need for a coordinator to oversee out-of-school time programming, the need for late transportation home so more students can participate in available programs and the need to expand out-of-school programs to serve more students. A recurrent theme was also the need for increased access to mental health services for students in their building.

Based on these interviews and lessons from other initiatives, the working group has developed Partners for Student Success, a broad strategy to work intensively with a subset of schools to build their capacity to support student learning and development and then replicate the model.

Attachment B:
Sample Job Description⁴
Manager of Extended Learning & Services

Job Description:

The Manager of Extended Learning and Services will work closely with the Principal to create and sustain an integrated system of services, partnerships and programs to support the school in attaining the goal of helping all students reach proficiency. As a key member of the schools' leadership team, the Manager of Extended Learning and Services will be involved in the overall leadership of the school and work closely with teachers, administrators and other school staff to implement the whole school improvement plan. The Manager of Extended Learning Services will report directly to the Principal.

Lead Responsibilities:

Partnership Development

- Develop and maintain a wide range of partnerships with community-based organizations and other service providers to build and expand an integrated set of programs and services that remove barriers to learning and meet the needs of the school's students and their families.

After-School Programming

- Work with school staff and out-of-school staff to extend learning beyond the traditional school hours through creative hands-on activities that reinforce and enhance the Massachusetts State Frameworks and Boston Public Schools Citywide Learning Standards.
- Coordinate and provide oversight on behalf of the Principal for all school-based after-school programming (whether school or community run) to ensure that programming is high quality, aligned with the school day, and targeted to meet the specific needs of students. Where applicable, supervise after-school program coordinator.
- Work to connect and integrate SES programming with a broader set of enrichment activities available through other after-school programs.
- Develop relationships with out-of-school time programs not located at the school that are attended by a significant number of the school's students to communicate about student needs and build connections between school and after-school programming.

Communication & Coordination

- Serve on Instructional Leadership Team, Student Support Team and other leadership committees to identify and monitor student needs and facilitate communication between school and after-school staff.

⁴ Please note that the job description for each Extended Services Director may be somewhat different for each school. This sample job description is provided for reference purposes for applicants seeking to better understand the expected roles and responsibilities of the Extended Services Director.

- Support after-school staff in efforts to enhance student learning by facilitating communication with teachers and linking them to professional development opportunities (Bridging the Gap, After-School Literacy Coaching Initiative, staff meetings, classroom observations etc.).
- Work in full collaboration with school personnel including teachers, secretary, custodians, lunch monitors, bus drivers and parents, to build support for after-school programming and ensure a seamless transition between school and after-school.

Implementation of Partners for Student Success Initiative

- Serve as school's key liaison to Partners for Student Success, full-filling all reporting requirements including collection and analysis of student data.
- Participate in networking meetings with other Managers of Extended Learning and Services, training sessions and individual technical assistance provided as part of the initiative.

Support Responsibilities:

Parent and Student Outreach

- Work with school staff to identify students who are struggling academically and or emotionally and work to connect these students, where applicable, with remedial tutoring (SES), after-school programming (either at school or in their community), mental health services, and other required supports. Track and monitor student progress, communicating with key service providers about student needs.
- Work closely with Family Outreach Coordinator or Parent Coordinator (if applicable) to increase family/school connections and better engage parents in their children's learning.

Financial Management

- Work in full collaboration with school Principal to create an all funds seamless budget between the school and out-of-school time programs.
- Work with Principal and central support staff to actively fundraise and seek grants to sustain existing programs as well as develop new programs.

Requirements:

- Experience in a leadership position, including supervision, in the field of education, youth development, after-school, or social work
- Knowledge of Boston Public School curriculum and instructional approaches
- Experience working with diverse ethnic, cultural and socio-economic populations in an urban environment
- Excellent organizational skills
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Computer literacy including word processing, data management, publishing and email

Preferences

- Grant-writing and networking skills
- Advanced degree in Education, Social Work, Mental Health, Family Therapy, Public Administration or other related field