

## **Brooke East Boston Charter School Title I Schoolwide Plan, 2013-2014**

### **BASIS FOR ELIGIBILITY**

As of October 1, 2012, 79.0% of students at Brooke East Boston Charter School qualified for free or reduced price school lunch, according to strictly enforced Federal guidelines.

### **PLAN REVIEW**

Following the release of 2013 MCAS data, the school principal led a review of the Schoolwide Plan.

### **OBJECTIVE**

The mission of Brooke East Boston Charter School is to provide an academically rigorous education to students from the city of Boston and Chelsea which will prepare them to succeed in college. As such, the goal of the Brooke East Boston Schoolwide Plan is to help students make significant and measurable gains in academic achievement.

### **CONSOLIDATION OF FUNDS**

As an independent L.E.A. operating its own schoolwide plan, Brooke East Boston Charter School consolidates funds from federal entitlement grants into a schoolwide pool so that those funds can be allocated to meet the objectives of each schoolwide plan respectively. The schoolwide pool is synonymous with the school's annual budget and draws on state tuition, federal entitlement grants, and private fundraising as its sources of income. All other revenues outlined in the budget have dictated corresponding expenditures (i.e. federal school nutrition revenues and expenditures, student fees, etc.). Brooke East Boston Charter School will allocate the full allocated FY12 grant amounts for Title I and Title IIA to the schoolwide pool.

### **COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT (Means for Measuring Outcomes)**

In order to measure gains in student achievement, we have identified two primary assessment components:

The first and most central assessment mechanisms are the MCAS exams administered annually in grades 3-8. As the only assessments available which are completely aligned with the state curriculum frameworks, MCAS results serve a central function, and are therefore featured prominently in the school's accountability plan.

In addition, we rely heavily on the STEP assessment to assess reading achievement in all grades, K-8, but particularly in the early elementary grades.

Finally, we will administer six network-wide assessments in grades K-8 throughout the year. The assessments are based on Brooke standards and are structured similarly to the MCAS.

### **ANTICIPATED MEASURABLE OUTCOMES**

The success of the implementation of the Brooke Schoolwide Plan will be measured by the extent to which the school has met the annual academic achievement goals identified in its Accountability Plan.

### **PLAN COMPONENTS**

#### **A) Increased Time Devoted to Learning**

Results from the first baseline administration of the Stanford 9 exams at Brooke Roslindale demonstrated that students, on average, entered Brooke Roslindale significantly below grade level in both mathematics and reading. Baseline MCAS data for incoming 5<sup>th</sup> graders at Brooke East Boston show that trend continues at Brooke East Boston. Bringing students up to grade level and beyond will require several measures, but all of those will depend on a commitment by students, teachers, and parents alike to work hard.

Consequently, all schools have instituted calendars with a longer school year than required by state law and a daily schedule which includes significantly more academic instructional time. The daily schedule runs from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Brooke East Boston each day, except for Wednesdays, when students are dismissed at 12:30 p.m. in order to provide a weekly professional development block for teachers.

#### **B) Focus on Data**

We rely heavily on the administration of regular internal benchmark tests, aligned with Brooke standards, Massachusetts state standards, and featuring previously released MCAS items in order to track student progress.

Reading and math teachers meet in small teams regularly to analyze those assessment results and to create detailed tutoring plans for all students on the basis of those results.

Teachers in all grades track standard mastery through customized spreadsheets delineating the school's "power standards" in every subject at every grade level. Report cards and progress reports are in turn based on the rubric scores in these spreadsheets.

### **C) Identifying and Supporting Struggling Students**

In order to ensure that students are learning to their full potential, we believe that teachers must employ a two-front approach. The first front involves providing masterful whole class instruction by developing a standards-based course of study and thoughtful and detailed lessons which serve that course of study. The second front is the act of following up that masterful instruction with targeted individual student support, based on detailed understanding of what each student knows and does not know.

"Second front" instruction takes place during the independent work segments of class time and during designated tutoring blocks. Whether it be during class time, or in the course of working with small tutoring groups, teachers provide individualized "second front" instruction by using formative and summative assessment data to make lists of areas of weaknesses for each individual student. Those lists are in turn used to provide an outline and agenda for providing targeted one-on-one assistance to each student.

Our ability to address the diverse learning needs of our student population rests on the skill, ability, and insight of our teachers. Brooke teachers structure their lessons to allow access by students with a variety of ability levels and skills. Regular class visits and consultations from the principals throughout the school year include a focus on meeting the varied learning needs of our students.

In order to monitor the effectiveness of this instruction, our teachers meet every Wednesday afternoon in order to discuss concerns about students and to reflect on instructional strategies that may or may not be working across academic disciplines. During these regular support-team meetings, time is reserved for teachers to present case studies of students who are currently struggling to make adequate progress with the current instruction. Teachers then provide suggestions and recommended strategies to their colleagues on how to better meet the specific learning style or needs of that child. The teacher implements some of these interventions and then reports back to the grade level team on their success.

Each student in grades 5-8 is required to use a school planner for the duration of the year. Each day, students are required to write their nightly assignments in their planner. Each evening, they are required to have their planners signed by their parent or guardian, indicating that the parent or guardian has seen the assignments and has determined that they have been completed. In the primary grades, students are provided with homework folders that have clearly labeled pockets telling them what to leave at home and what to return to school, and teachers provide explicit coaching in keeping HW folders organized.

Students who exhibit chronic difficulty completing their homework assignments in satisfactory fashion are required to attend homework sessions after school until those students are able to improve their homework performance. During this after-school time, students who are struggling the most to meet the school's homework standard are monitored closely by the supervising teacher, are instructed in how to manage their workload, are provided with tutoring as necessary, and are required to complete all assignments before being dismissed.

Students who exhibit chronic difficulty organizing materials are given organization check-in. During these brief weekly meetings, teachers provide students with assistance with organizing materials, color coding by subject, cleaning out backpacks, etc.

Students identified as homeless (either self-reporting or through case management), will receive transportation support in cooperation with the sending district (if outside of Boston), as well as counseling support as necessary, uniform support, and/or free or reduced afterschool programming if requested by the family. Brooke staff will work cooperatively with case managers and/or social workers supporting the student and family.

### **D) Challenging Advanced Students**

Because we do not track our classes on the basis of academic ability, it is important that we pay particular attention to challenging our most advanced students. In both the middle school and the elementary school, teachers monitor

the reading level of every student and ensure that at all times, students are reading books at the appropriate reading level, and that all students are being challenged to the appropriate extent. In math classes, teachers provide “challenge-work” to our most advanced students (work that is related to the concepts/skills being learned by the class as a whole but which further extends the relevant concept or an application.)

### **E) Attracting and retaining high-quality and highly-qualified teachers**

In order to ensure that all of our teachers are highly qualified in accordance with NCLB legislation, the school has instituted the following policy:

In order to ensure that all of our teachers are highly qualified by the close of the 2013-14 school year, any teacher who is not highly qualified in their subject area will take and pass the relevant MTEL test by the end of the current school year.

In order to ensure that the school is able to attract and retain teachers of the highest possible quality, the school is currently carrying out all of the following measures:

- Pay annual raises based on student achievement metrics and teacher performance. Teachers are provided with extensive administrative support, particularly in the area of classroom and school-wide discipline, such that teachers are able to focus more on teaching and less on managing individual classroom behavior-management systems.
- Provide an extensive professional development program (details below).

### **F) Professional Development**

Because each school is its own district, all of professional development activities are both building-based and district-based. The schools schedule early release days on Wednesdays in order to schedule regular meetings and supplementary professional development activities.

*The schools conduct 4 regular professional development modules, all school-based, and all taking place on early-release Wednesdays.*

- *Video Analysis – each week teachers meet in small groups to view and discuss a teaching video of a colleague.*
- *Lesson Study – our subject area departments engage in two cycles of Japanese “lesson study” each year, meeting to research, plan, teach, and critique a lesson on a pivotal standard within the curriculum.*
- *Peer Observation – our teachers conduct two cycles of peer observations and follow-up discussions in the first half of each school-year.*
- *Benchmark Data Analysis and Standards Mastery Analysis – our teachers engage in a set of procedures surrounding benchmark data and standards mastery analysis and reflection (5-6 times per year).*

### **G) Plan for Parent Involvement**

School policies to facilitate parental involvement and delineating parental rights and responsibilities were developed by school founders in conjunction with school administrators and teachers. These policies are made available to parents in each school’s student and family handbook, which is issued to all families at the beginning of each school year. The Brooke Schoolwide Plan will also be posted on the school’s website.

Parents are able to make recommendations for improving these through each school’s Parent Involvement Council, School Council, Wellness Advisory Committee or alternately by a direct request to the school principal. The Brooke Schoolwide Plan is presented each year for review to each school’s Parent Involvement Council and School Council.

Those policies requiring the greatest contributions from parents are also delineated in each school’s Contract of Mutual Responsibilities which all families are required to sign in conjunction with a representative of the school. The contract is reviewed and discussed in depth with parents at each school’s summer orientation sessions which are held prior to the start of each school year. Parents are able to recommend changes to the contract through each school’s Parent Involvement Council, School Council, and Wellness Advisory Committee.

Among other things the contract delineates parents’ responsibilities for:

- Providing a quiet place for their child to complete nightly homework assignments

- Checking their child's homework planner nightly (where students are required to record their nightly assignments) and signing the planner to indicate that their child has completed those assignments
- Reading with their child regularly
- Attending parent conferences regularly
- Maintaining regular communication with their child's teacher or advisor
- Signing weekly progress reports

Parent conferences are held at the close of each of the first two marking terms and are available to all parents. Parents of students who failed one or more of their major academic classes in any given term are notified individually that their attendance is requested at the conference session. For the last several conferences, we have worked to generate 100% parent attendance at these conferences.

The only objective measure of the effectiveness of parent involvement is a measure of student achievement. However, because many other factors also impact student achievement, each school conducts annual year-end surveys to parents asking them to gauge the extent and effectiveness of their own involvement over the previous year. The School Principal, in conjunction with teachers, administrators, and the Parent Involvement Council conducts a year-end review of the extent and effectiveness of current parent involvement policies.

#### **H) Coordination with other federal programs**

**Federal Nutrition** - Brooke Charter Schools provide free and reduced price lunch to students with federal support and under federal guidelines, as well as a school breakfast and afternoon snack program.

**Teacher Quality** – In addition to our other efforts to ensure teacher quality (described in Part II – Required Program Information), we continue to operate our “master teacher program”, which was funded in part last year by federal support through the Federal Teacher Quality Entitlement Grant (Title II: Fund Code 140).

**Safe and Drug Free Schools** – Brooke does not receive funds under Safe and Drug Free Schools.

**Special Education** – Brooke Charter Schools provide extensive special education services, with federal support through the special education entitlement grants made available through the Massachusetts DESE.

**Charter School Start-Up Assistance Program** - New public charters schools, including Brooke East Boston, are eligible for start-up funding assistance through the Federal DOE. Administered through MA DESE, the program has supported Brooke East Boston in start-up-related professional development, instructional materials, and equipment expenses.

**E-rate** - Funded through the Federal Communications Commission, Erate funding supports Brooke East Boston's telecommunication and internet access.