

**Building great teachers.
Closing the achievement gap.**

March 1, 2011

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Edward W. Brooke Charter School Approved to Open More Schools; Responds to BTU Criticisms

March 1, 2011 – Roslindale, Mass. – The Edward W. Brooke Charter School is thrilled with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s decision to approve our request to open two more schools. Given the incredible results at our current school –we’re the #1 district in MA in both 7th and 8th grade in both English and Math – we’re delighted to extend our great teaching to nearly 1,000 more Boston youth.

We’re disappointed, however, in recent criticism from the Boston Teachers Union – criticism which is not based in research. The Boston Teachers Union asserted today that we force students out of our program, citing the fact that class sizes drop from grade to grade. Here are the facts.

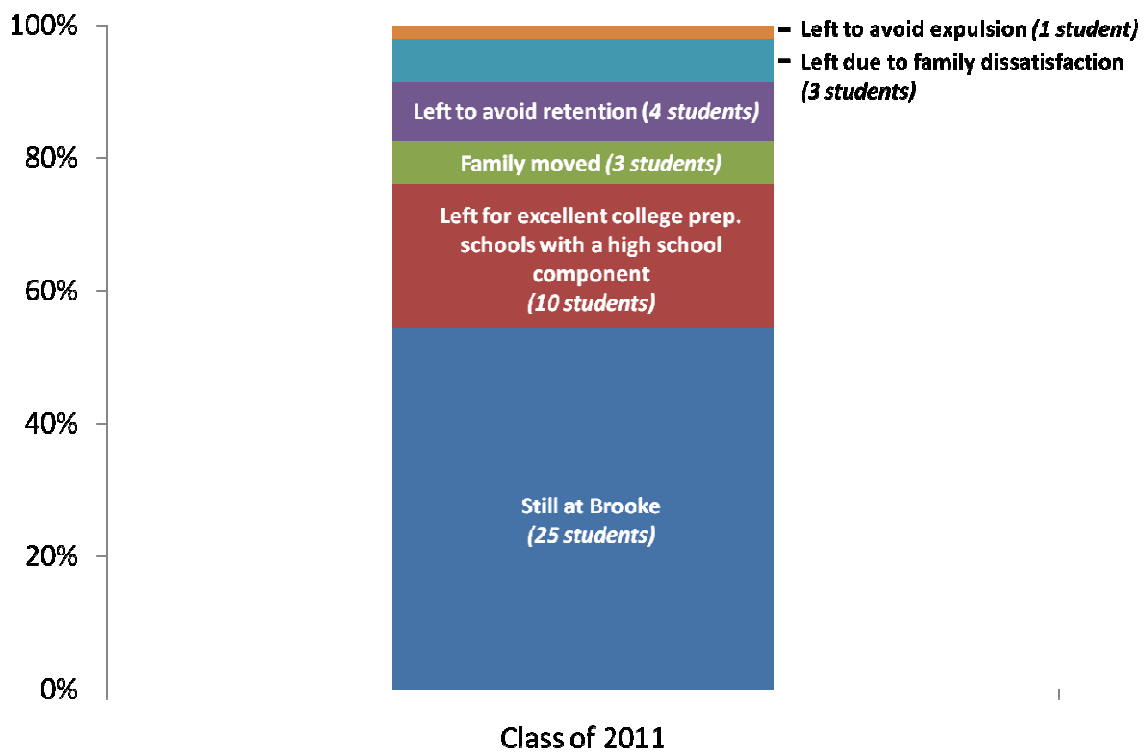
- **Brooke’s school-wide annual attrition rate (8%) is lower than the average of public schools in Boston (18%).** All schools, whether charter or traditional, experience attrition for a number of reasons: family mobility, dissatisfaction with the current program, or attraction to a new program. Students are *less likely to leave Brooke* than to leave another public school in Boston.
- **Most students who leave Brooke do so to attend excellent schools that go through grade 12 – not because they are forced out.** Because Brooke ends in the 8th grade, we are delighted to send roughly 20% of our 5th grade cohort each year to excellent schools that begin *before* 9th grade. If a student gets into Boston Latin in 7th grade, for example, we encourage them to take the spot then, rather than risking losing their seat at that excellent high school by staying at Brooke all the way through 8th grade.
- **More than 80% of the original cohort either stay at Brooke, enroll in excellent schools that go through grade 12, or move from Boston.** In light of this data, the BTU’s assertion that we push out most of our students is absurd. The majority of our students are excelling, either at Brooke or at other excellent college preparatory schools with a K-12 component. Below, you’ll see a chart detailing the status of the original cohort of

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2011. We've also attached a detailed list of the status of every single student in the class of 2011 cohort, with student names redacted for privacy.

- **Our younger grades are bigger than our older grades because of our enrollment policy – not because we force kids out as they age.** The BTU cites the fact that we currently have fewer students in 6th grade than in 3rd grade as evidence that we force kids out. But there were *never* as many kids in the current 6th grade cohort as there are in the current 3rd grade cohort. Our elementary school has been open just four years, so our current middle schoolers did not attend the elementary school. Instead, the middle schoolers started out in 5th grade as part of smaller cohorts (~45 students), whereas our elementary school students started out in Kindergarten as part of larger cohorts (~60 students). Our younger grades are currently bigger than our older grades because those younger grades *started out* bigger – not because kids leave as they get older.

Current Status of the Brooke Class of 2011 Cohort



Those seriously interested in whether or not Brooke closes the achievement gap should take a look at a recent Harvard University study (see attached). This research shows that ALL Brooke students significantly outperform their peers in traditional schools – regardless of how long they stay with us. We also suggest they take a look at our outstanding 6th grade MCAS results. These excellent 6th grade results clearly indicate that our students are shattering the achievement gap, regardless of whether those students leave in 7th and 8th grade.

We look forward to further dialogue about how we can work together to ensure that *all* Boston area youth succeed.

About Edward W. Brooke Charter School

The Edward W. Brooke Charter School is an open-enrollment public school in Roslindale, MA. Brooke serves 460 Boston students in grades K-8. Brooke scholars are 98% black and Latino; 78% qualify for free and reduced lunch. The current Brooke School was founded in 2002 under the guiding belief that great teaching is the solution to the achievement gap. The school is named for Senator Edward W. Brooke, the first popularly elected African American to the United States Senate, whose example proves to Brooke scholars that their destiny is in their hands.

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