

Education

OVERVIEW

The City of Boston is the birthplace of public education in America, and nearly four centuries later, Boston remains a national leader. This spring, the School Committee approved a \$1.032 billion budget for the Boston Public Schools. This brings total education spending (including district and charter schools) to 40% of the city budget. The FY17 BPS budget represents a \$15.4 million increase over the previous fiscal year, an amount that could go up when the next round of collective bargaining agreements are negotiated. This budget makes critical investments in 200 new K1 seats, a pilot of Excellence for All program at 13 schools, professional development at approximately 40 schools as part of Extended Learning Time planning, and the design of fiscally viable dual language programs, high levels of translation service in multiple languages for BPS families, and a transportation tap card system, which will help them achieve operational savings in this budget. Additionally, BPS will make investments in special education with support teams, a new data system to give parents access to special education plans, and transition services for students as they prepare to move on from BPS. The FY17 budget also includes additional funding to maintain district commitments to expanded learning time, professional development and other school based supports as federal and state grants expire. Additionally investments in BPS's central office aim to improve items that their schools have struggled with for years and require reform such as a revamped enrollment projection process this fall and a major push in student safety.

BPS also made a series of reductions, most focused in central office departments, to cover rising costs and make limited investments. While the School Committee approved a balanced budget for FY17, the District still has underlying structural challenges that require structural changes to allow Boston to effectively invest in its students.

BPS's Structural Challenges

The City's investment in the Boston Public Schools is more robust than ever. According to a report by the US Census Bureau, the Boston Public Schools invest more money per student than any of the 100 largest school districts in the nation. But with BPS costs far outpacing City revenues, and the expected decline in net State and Federal resources, BPS faces recurring budget challenges.

Net State Education Revenue

Over the past ten years, Boston's net education aid has dramatically declined, while education costs have rapidly climbed. While Boston now spends 40% of its budget on education, state education aid now constitutes just 7.3% of total revenue.

Chapter 70 Education Aid, the city's main source of state education aid, does not work for Boston. Despite the Commonwealth adding over \$850 million to Chapter 70 Aid since FY08, Boston's Chapter 70 Aid has declined by \$1.9 million during this period.

Charter school tuition reimbursement was an important part of the 2010 Achievement Gap Law that was meant to assist communities with the transition years as their Commonwealth charter school costs increased. This is a critical source of revenue for Boston because Boston's charter school tuition costs have grown more rapidly to a greater percentage of the City's net school spending than any other community in the state. The charter school tuition reimbursement is subject to legislative appropriation, and over the past two years, the Commonwealth has underfunded it, leading Boston to lose \$29 million in revenue from the state in those two years combined.

While Boston's state education revenue has been stagnant, its charter school tuition assessment has grown dramatically. Over the past ten years, Boston's charter school tuition assessment has increased by 183%, or \$101 million. Boston is

assessed by the Commonwealth to fund charter schools on a per pupil basis. The assessment rises each year as charter school seats open and students move to those schools. In addition, because the charter school tuition rate reflects the City's spending in support of public education, if spending on Boston Public Schools increases, the City's per pupil assessment increases as well.

Boston's charter school tuition assessment threatens to balloon if voters approve of the proposed charter school cap ballot initiative. The new state cap would allow an additional 12 schools per year and would nullify community caps in practice. Instead, Mayor Walsh is advocating for a legislative compromise that would allow for a moderate charter cap lift, paired with a reform of how charters are financed.

As BPS and charter school costs rise each year and state education aid remains stagnant, the City's contribution (net state education funding) to education in Boston has increased by an average annual growth rate of 7.6% a year for the past five years (FY12-FY16). More simply put, due to the absence of growth in state aid and the growing costs of BPS and charter school tuition, Boston has been contributing a greater portion of its general revenue to education every year at an unsustainable pace.

BPS Spending Pressures

Reports commissioned by the City and BPS have shown that the district's facilities, operations, transportation, and staffing systems are outdated and inefficient.

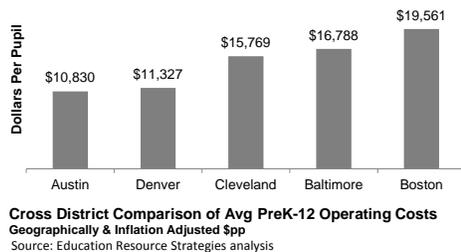


Figure 1

(In Figure 1 per pupil dollars are adjusted for geography using the National Center for Education Statistics 2005 School District Comparative Wage Index and adjusted to 2015-16 inflation using the Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI calculator.)

To better understand their spending pressures and benchmark BPS spending against other districts, BPS worked with Educational Resource Strategy (ERS). According to their report, BPS spends 45% more per pupil compared to peer districts across the country, when adjusted for cost of living. While certain aspects of these costs, such as competitive teacher salaries, are helpful in allowing BPS to compete with other school systems to recruit exceptional teachers, they also create budgetary pressure on the district as well. The report also shows that the largest drivers of the spending differences between BPS and peer districts are transportation, high-need students, school-based administrative positions, and teachers – all drivers of the structural imbalance BPS faces. The major spending differences outlined in the report include the following:

- BPS spends almost twice as much on student transportation as comparison districts on a per pupil basis.
- The cost of special education student transportation is three times as high comparison districts (not including outplaced) per pupil.
- Compared to peer districts, BPS has more small schools, which results in higher spending on positions allocated on a per school basis, such as principals. BPS spends 35% more per pupil on school-based administration.
- BPS spends a quarter of its budget on special education services, which is 53% greater than the comparison average due to richer staffing of non-teaching SPED positions and SPED transportation.
- A fifth of BPS students receive special education services, which is nearly 50% more than that of peers.
- BPS spends more on teachers as a percent of total budget than national benchmark districts. Per pupil, BPS spends 54% more than the comparison average.
- BPS also pays teachers more than comparison districts on average (adjusted for geography). BPS average compensation of \$108,600 is 29% higher than the comparison average.

Various studies, including those conducted by the Boston Municipal Research Bureau and McKinsey

& Company, have also cited excess capacity in Boston Public School buildings. The BPS student population, excluding in district charter schools, had decreased to 54,000 students in 2016. This marks a drop from nearly 100,000 students in the early 1970's. Due to decades of decline in student enrollment, BPS is carrying a number of underutilized classrooms. While some schools are filled to the brim, others have challenges filling their classrooms. Because BPS uses a weighted student funding methodology to fund schools on a per pupil basis, schools that have partially filled classrooms often struggle to balance their budgets. Build BPS, the district's ongoing facility master plan, is gathering data to better inform the community and BPS about the state of their buildings, capacity, projected future enrollment, and capital financing options.

BPS's external funding is critical to the success of the district, but has decreased to 12% of total funding in FY17, down from 17% in FY12. External funds are provided directly to BPS through formulaic and competitive grants, reimbursement accounts, and other grants, primarily from state and federal sources. These external funding challenges increase BPS' reliance on the growing City appropriation to assist in absorbing the decreases.

In response to these inherited challenges, Superintendent Chang and Mayor Walsh have created a multi-pronged approach to improve the picture for future years. First, the team is working to collect data on BPS's buildings and engaging with the BPS community to create the Build BPS, a facility master plan to improve Boston schools and to create a sustainable school building portfolio. BPS has deployed a long-term financial planning committee with a wide variety of voices to evaluate cost trends, recommend solutions and create a long-term financial plan. BPS is also working to address some of their cost drivers through collective bargaining. Finally, Boston is advocating at the State House for a fix to charter school financing, to prevent an unaffordable charter school cap lift, and to gain legislative tools to address district cost drivers.

BPS Operating Budget

This year's budget appropriation of \$1.032 billion represents the largest appropriation by the City in the history of BPS, and it is a number that will

likely go up once the next round of collective bargaining agreements are agreed to.

To develop their budget, BPS was guided by their values of equity, coherence and innovation in making recommendations to the School Committee. Their budget proposes to raise the overall weighted student funding allocation to schools by \$6 million, including the addition of 200 new prekindergarten seats and the opening 33 new classrooms at 18 schools.

Superintendent Chang's 100-Day Plan identifies core values that will guide the work of the district based on input from students, families, staff, community members and partners. Additionally, the district will also make a series of additional strategic investments to support this plan. These investments include several of the Superintendent's initiatives in his 100-Day Plan such as piloting the Excellence for All program, creating new school-based ELL Coordinator roles, preparing for ELT expansion in FY18, and implementing a transportation data system.

- \$1.2 million for an Excellence for All pilot offering every 4th grader in 13 schools a rigorous and enriched experience.
- \$1 million for approximately 40 schools to participate in planning and professional development to extend their school day in 2017-2018 school year.
- \$1 million in a data system to improve parent access to children's special education plans.
- \$1 million for additional special education classroom supports.
- \$1 million for transition services for special education students ages 14-22.
- \$1 million in SIG transition funding for English High and Mattahunt.
- \$600 thousand to maintain the districts commitments for extended school hours at the Edwards and the Clap schools.
- \$400 thousand for translation services.
- \$300 thousand for a reserve for EI and Autism Programs for start of year.
- \$300 thousand for a transportation data system.

In FY17, BPS is faced with a variety of rising costs that would total \$30 million in the absence of budgetary solutions and an increased

appropriation. BPS projects a \$7.1 million increase for health insurance costs and a \$1.3 million increase in utility costs. Additionally, two costs surpassed FY16 budgeted levels in FY16, custodial services and suitable professional capacity, which is part of the district's Early Hiring Initiative. In FY17, the budget for those will increase to better reflect actual costs. While there are no across the board salary increases negotiated for FY17 or reflected in BPS's budget, BPS will have an 0.75% increase in average teacher salaries largely due to increases for educational attainment and years of experience.

Like most City departments, Boston Public Schools has not yet negotiated their collective bargaining agreements effective in FY17. Consequently this budget does not include general wage increase for FY17. This is a key reason that the appropriation increase is smaller than BPS has seen in recent years. The BPS appropriation will likely go up when the next round of collective bargaining agreements is negotiated.

As BPS looked to achieve efficiencies to fund strategic investments and approve a balanced budget, they were able to focus the majority of their savings initiatives on central office departments. Their budget pushes for \$10 million in transportation efficiencies, reduces centrally funded supports, and puts guardrails on the early hiring initiative. BPS also adjusted the SPED weights to reflect slightly increased class sizes for students with autism and emotional impairments. In most cases, this means that schools with these programs are able to offer the same programs next year, but with one additional student in the classroom. The weighted student funding formula also adjusts the weight for students in inclusive settings with unknown disability to reflect an average disability weight. These changes were partially offset by an investment in Special Education supports to schools to help improve the quality of service across the district.

BPS Enrollment

Student enrollment is the foundation of the BPS budget. The preliminary stage of the budget process involves enrollment projections for each program, grade, and school, which are based on historic trends and current data. The projected enrollment at each school for the upcoming school

year then determines the allocation of resources at the school level. Further adjustments are made once enrollment is finalized. In FY17, BPS will manage a reconciliation of enrollment projections by adjusting school funding based on actual enrollment at schools, ensuring that dollars truly follow the students. In FY17, the BPS projected budgeted enrollment is approximately 57,300, including an additional 200 prekindergarten students.

Weighted Student Funding

Weighted Student Funding (WSF) ensures resource equity for all students no matter the school they attend. The weighted student funding model creates a baseline per-student funding amount and then adjusts the amount depending on individual student need. For example, students whose family income is at or below the poverty level will receive additional funding. Other need-based weights include students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELL), off track 9th and 10th grade students and vocational education students. A school's budget is calculated by adding the individual funding amounts for every student projected to attend that school in the fall. Additionally, each school also receives a foundation budget to support essential staff. In FY17, the district increased the total direct appropriations to schools by approximately \$6 million to \$480.2 million through WSF.

General Education	70.1%
Bilingual/SEI	10.0%
Full Inclusion	9.3%
Partial Inclusion	3.0%
Substantially Separate	6.6%
Public Day School (Special Education)	0.9%

BPS Students by Program
2015-2016 School Year

Figure 2

For FY17, the sixth year using the WSF formula, BPS continues to refine this need-based method of funding. BPS adjusted the assumptions underlying the FY17 funding of special education students for autism, emotional impairment, and students to be served in inclusive settings with unknown disabilities.

FY17 still presents a challenge for many school-based budgets. Because dollars follow the student at BPS, certain schools will experience budget decreases due to declining projected enrollment

based on annual shifts in enrollment between schools. Changes in school enrollment resulted in many schools making adjustments to right-size classrooms, staffing models, and budgets for FY17.

In FY17, BPS will continue to provide rules-based subsidies known as “soft landings” and “sustainability allocations” for schools that could not meet their contractual, legal, and/or academic requirements. The purpose of these additional supports is to provide funds for a modification period, which allows schools to adjust their programmatic models and/or increase their enrollment for the following year.

Early Childhood Education

Analysis indicates prekindergarten has a positive impact on student achievement in the Boston Public Schools. BPS currently serves approximately 2,500 children in pre-kindergarten classrooms, and demand increases every year. Those students are part of the 90% of Boston’s 6,000 four-year-olds who are enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program, in either a school- or community-based setting. BPS early education programs have been recognized as among the most effective in the nation at closing achievement gaps. They are content-rich in science, literacy, arts and math. Data shows BPS prekindergarten attendees outperform their peers in third and fifth grade MCAS, both in ELA and in Math.

It is Mayor Walsh and Superintendent’s goal for all programs to eventually guarantee well-trained and well-compensated teachers, a high-quality curriculum, a safe and supportive environment, and opportunities for family engagement.

Mayor Walsh wants to make sure that every pre-kindergarten option in Boston is high-quality and that all four-year olds in the city are able to participate in the best early learning programming in America. To achieve this goal:

- Mayor Walsh established a Universal Pre-K (UPK) Advisory Committee to develop initial recommendations for the development of a comprehensive mixed delivery UPK system modeled after BPS’s rigorously tested K1 system. As a result, the City is currently exploring ways to initiate quality-improving investments in both school classrooms and community-provider settings;
- Boston Public Schools has added 200 new K1 seats in BPS schools over the last two years.

In FY17, the Boston will invest \$3 million to expand BPS K1 programming by another 200 seats; and

- The Mayor’s Education Cabinet collaborated with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care and counterparts from Lowell, Holyoke, Lawrence and Springfield to secure a \$15 million federal Preschool Expansion Grant to improve quality in, and expand access to, community-based programs. \$3.5 million of the grant supported the efforts of Boston-based providers in the current school year. The federal government announced a second year of funding for Boston and its partner cities this past fall.

BPS will continue to strengthen and expand programs, particularly full-day K1 classrooms for four-year-olds. More than half of BPS early childhood classrooms have earned accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), affirming that these programs offer high-quality, state-of-the-art education to help to get children off to successful starts.

School Improvement Grants

Twelve BPS schools received \$25.7 million over three years from the U.S. Department of Education for School Improvement Grants. This funding allowed the lowest performing schools in BPS, also known as turnaround schools, to extend the instructional day by at least 30 minutes, hold an additional 100 professional development hours for teachers, and provide other school based support, such as after school tutors and literacy coaches. Although School Improvement Grants have expired, the district has shifted these activities to the operating budget to continue the work of turning around low performing schools. The FY17 budget includes an additional \$1 million in funding to transition the English and the Mattahunt schools where School Improvement Grants have ended.

Special Education

The special education budget totals \$228.8 million in FY17, an increase of \$7.7 million or 3.5% from FY16 levels. The special education budget accounts for approximately 22% of the total BPS budget and supports the almost 12 thousand students with disabilities, or 20% of the BPS population.

This year, the district will make targeted investments in special education supports to schools to help improve the quality of service across the district, including \$1 million for an updated special education data management system, \$1 million for additional special education personnel to support reductions in weights and \$1 million for transition services for special education students ages 14-22.

In addition to mainstream or substantially separate placements in the district, BPS is responsible for the educational services of approximately 470 students in out-of-district placements. Students receive out-of-district placements when their needs cannot be met in a public school setting, and instead a private day school or private residential school is required to meet their educational requirements. BPS is fully or partly responsible for paying for services for most of these students at an average cost of \$77,000 per year in FY16. Tuition rates are established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Rate Setting Commission.

Bilingual Education

The Bilingual/SEI budget totals \$74.8 million in FY17, an increase of \$3.4 million or 4.8% from FY16 levels. Approximately 30% of the BPS population has an ELL designation. In FY17, ELL students will receive added resources, including additional ELL teachers, to ensure schools have budgeted appropriately to meet the needs of ELL students.

Additionally, based on recent DOJ guidance, schools will be receiving more resources for their English Language Learner population on top of WSF. BPS continues to make investments to expand ELL academic programs and teacher training. The number of Sheltered English Immersion programs in the district will be increased, as will the number of teachers with English as a Second Language (ESL) licenses.

Early Hiring Initiative

The City of Boston employs over 4,400 teachers and supports the growth and development of every educator, from recruitment to retirement. BPS must compete with other cities and school systems to recruit, hire, and retain the very best teachers. The district recognized that in order to attract a diverse and talented work force, they needed to

make changes to the hiring timeline. Previously, positions were filled too close to the start of the school year, which was relatively late compared to other districts. In the second year of the new hiring reform, 83% of new teachers were hired by July 2015 for the 2015-2016 school year, a huge improvement over the previous hiring process.

However, as a result of the hiring reform, some permanent teachers were left without permanent teaching positions. Many of these teachers retired or resigned, while others were placed by the district in positions as either long-term substitutes or in classrooms as co-teachers. In an effort to continue to move the district's hiring practices forward, the district is committed to hiring teachers as early as possible. In FY17, the district will again be faced with placing permanent teachers who have not found positions by September.

The FY17 budget includes an increase of over \$4 million to fund the full cost of teachers in a suitable professional capacity. The initiative is running over-budget in the current fiscal year, so the department chose to increase the budget for this initiative by \$4 million while committing to other strategies to manage the cost of this initiative.

Extended School Day

In a historic agreement in 2015, Mayor Walsh, the Boston Public Schools, the Boston Teachers Union, and the Boston School Committee approved the extension of the school day by 40 minutes in about 60 Boston public schools, impacting nearly 23,000 elementary and middle school students. Currently, students in traditional BPS elementary schools are in class for six hours a day, while middle school students attend for six hours and ten minutes. Many schools in Boston already have a lengthened school day that allows for increased enrichment opportunities in areas such as art, music, drama and foreign languages. The additional time is the equivalent to adding one month of instruction for elementary students.

FY16 was the first year of the Extended Learning Time program, which was piloted with a cohort of 16 schools. The investment includes the \$4,464 per teacher stipend for the expanded schedule, approximately \$3,000 stipends to paraprofessionals, as well as supplies, contracts,

and personnel to support implementation. In FY17, all 16 schools in the first phase will maintain the expanded day schedule. However, the challenges emerging from the implementation of the first cohort, including appropriate start and end times for elementary students and the significant impact of changing start and end times on transportation costs, have led the district to postpone implementation of the second phase of ELT program in FY17. Going forward, the district will focus on gathering local and national research on best practices for expanded learning time so the district can create conditions for successful implementation in BPS.

External Funds

External funds are provided directly to BPS through formula grants (called entitlements), competitive grants, reimbursement accounts, and other grants, primarily from state and federal sources. These external funds are critical to the success of the district, but have decreased to 12% of total funding in FY17 from 17% in FY12 (Figure 3). In recent years, the BPS budget has relied on the increased City appropriation to help absorb these decreases. However, for the first time in FY17 BPS expects to receive a year over year increase of \$6.8 million or \$142.2 million in external funds in FY17, largely due to an increase in Title I funding.

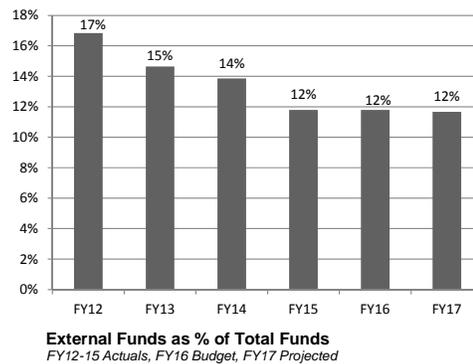


Figure 3

One of the largest sources of federal revenue for BPS is the Title I entitlement grant. BPS is projecting \$38.1 million in Title I revenue in FY17. The grant provides direct funds to schools with higher levels of poverty to counter the impact of poverty on learning.

BPS receives two external revenue sources to fund the district’s comprehensive special education

program. Through the Circuit Breaker reimbursements, the Commonwealth shares the cost of educating students with disabilities once the cost to educate those students exceeds a threshold amount. BPS is projected to receive level funding of approximately \$15 million in Circuit Breaker revenue in FY17. Additionally, funds provided through the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grant enable the district to provide special education in the least restrictive environment possible for children with disabilities ages 3 through 21, and to provide early intervention services for children from birth through age two. BPS is projecting to receive \$17 million, or a 2% decrease in IDEA funds in FY17. The City has remained committed to special education and has consistently provided funds to support this work as grant levels have dropped.

Performance

Graduation Rates

BPS has been evaluating its progress towards academic goals using measurable outcomes for several years. BPS has seen positive gains in several performance metrics including increases in graduation rates. The overall four-year graduation rate for the BPS class of 2015 stands at 70.7%, representing a 4 percentage-point gain from the 2014 rate of 66.7% and continuing an upward trend since 2006, when the figure was just over 59%. The graduation rate is the highest ever recorded by BPS.

Among BPS high schools, the Jeremiah E. Burke – the first high school in Massachusetts to exit turnaround status – achieved significant improvements in its graduation rate, rising by 27.6% in the last 10 years, from 43.5% to 71.7%. Additionally, eight Boston high schools achieved graduation rates of 85% or above, meeting the state’s accountability target. They include: Boston Latin School; New Mission High School; John D. O’Bryant School of Mathematics and Science; Boston Latin Academy; Another Course to College; Fenway High School; Boston Community Leadership Academy; and Quincy Upper School.

Dropout Rate

BPS’s annual dropout rate for students in grades 9-12 increased from 3.8% to 4.4% in 2014-15.

Previously, BPS had two consecutive years that it achieved its lowest dropout rate on record.

In 2014, Boston's dropout rate, a significant indicator of a school's effectiveness, dropped below 4% for the first time in history. According to state guidelines, students in grades 6-12 are counted as dropouts if they leave school during the year for any reason other than transfer, graduation, death or expulsion with an option to return.

Accountability Results

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) classifies all Massachusetts districts and schools into one of five accountability and assistance levels, with the highest performing in Level 1 and lowest performing in Level 5. Boston has a track record of leading struggling schools to success. Of the 12 BPS schools designated by DESE as Level 4 in 2010, half have been improved, increasing to at least Level 3 and as high as Level 1. As mentioned previously, the Jeremiah E. Burke High School became the only high school in the state to exit Level 4 underperforming status in 2014. Burke High School received more than \$1.7 million in federal School Improvement Grant funds during the three years it was placed in underperforming status. Those funds helped the Burke develop a turnaround plan that included extending the school day to provide additional learning time for students, greatly expanding professional development for educators to better meet the needs of diverse learners, and redesigning instruction to maximize student progress. The City will continue to work with state and community partners to see more improvements in our schools across the board.

Capital Plan

The capital plan funds projects that support education and youth achievement in all neighborhoods across the City. With capital dollars, Boston works to ensure that Boston's educational facilities are equipped to meet the needs of the City's families and to support the academic agenda of the district. In FY17, BPS capital expenditures are projected to be \$65.7 million.

In September, Mayor Walsh launched Build BPS, a 10-year educational and facilities master plan for BPS that will provide a strategic framework for facilities investments going forward. This multi-year process will take a closer look at student population trends and expectations for the future, develop a vision for instruction and learning, and complete a facility conditions assessment of all BPS school buildings to maximize potential uses. The data collected through the facilities master plan will be critical to inform smart long-term decisions for Boston. In the meantime, the City is preserving capacity in its capital plan toward supporting this plan when it is complete. Boston is also investing in the following multi-year capital projects:

- Construction will continue for a new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) school for grades 6 through 12 on the site of the current Dearborn School. The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) will partner with the City in the development and funding of this new school.
- Renovation will continue on the North Bennet Street buildings to provide additional classrooms to support the Eliot School's expansion as a K to 8 school.
- In September 2016, the Another Course to College high school program will relocate into a renovated former elementary school facility.
- The City will conduct a feasibility study and develop schematic design plans in conjunction with the MSBA for the construction or renovation of a facility that supports the requirements of the Boston Arts Academy.
- Upgrades will be completed to the Madison Park High School welding shop to accommodate classroom welding with adequate ventilation and safety equipment.
- BPS will continue the 5 year plan to upgrade technology infrastructure across the district in support of 21st century learning.

Charter School Tuition

Commonwealth charter schools, which are granted charters by the State Board of Education, are publicly funded schools administered independently from local school committee and

district bargaining rules and regulations. Commonwealth charter schools are primarily financed by the home districts of their students through a per pupil based charge.

Commonwealth charter schools are projected to educate 10,000 Boston students in FY17. Boston is assessed by the Commonwealth to fund charter schools on a per pupil basis, and Boston's charter school tuition assessment is projected to increase by \$9.9 million over the FY16 budget. Boston has seen its charter school costs rise dramatically since the enactment of the 2010 Achievement Gap Legislation, by 130% or \$88.5 million since 2011. In total, the City of Boston will spend \$1.188 billion to support education-related programs– from prekindergarten to high school in the Boston Public School system as well as Commonwealth Charter Schools.

As Boston looks to the future, voter approval of the proposed charter school cap ballot initiative could have a shocking effect on the City's finances, as the new state cap allowing an additional 12 schools a year would nullify community caps in practice. In 2015, Mayor Walsh proposed a moderate cap lift growing at 0.5% a year, paired with charter financing reforms that would create a reliable transition funding mechanism for Boston. This fiscally responsible approach would protect Boston taxpayers and would not pit district public schools against public charter schools.

