

A nighttime photograph of the Boston waterfront. In the foreground, a dark wooden building with several windows is visible. Above the windows, a sign reads "BOSTON TEA PARTY * SHIPS & MUSEUM". In the background, modern skyscrapers are lit up against a dark blue sky. The water in the foreground is dark, reflecting the lights from the buildings and the sky. A bridge is visible in the distance.

Building a Foundation for Success: Boston's Progress Toward Universal High-Quality Pre-K

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Acknowledgements

Context

Boston's Path to High-Quality Pre-K

Boston's UPK Strategy



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Context: A Slow March Toward Pre-K Investment

- **While pre-K seems to be a ubiquitous subject in education policy circles, the truth is that few states and localities make deep investments in it.**
 - As of 2015, 40 states were investing in pre-K programs, but only nine were ensuring access for more than half of four-year olds.
 - Oklahoma, Florida and Georgia were the only states offering truly universal programs.

Context: Cities Are Leading the Way in Pre-K



- **Several locales have instituted or made great progress toward Universal Pre-K.**

- Early movement focused primarily on expanding access.

- Most locales focus on improving pre-K quality, are free or sliding scale programs and are funded mostly through either state line items or city taxes.



Context: Boston is Ahead of the Curve, MA is Increasing Focus on UPK

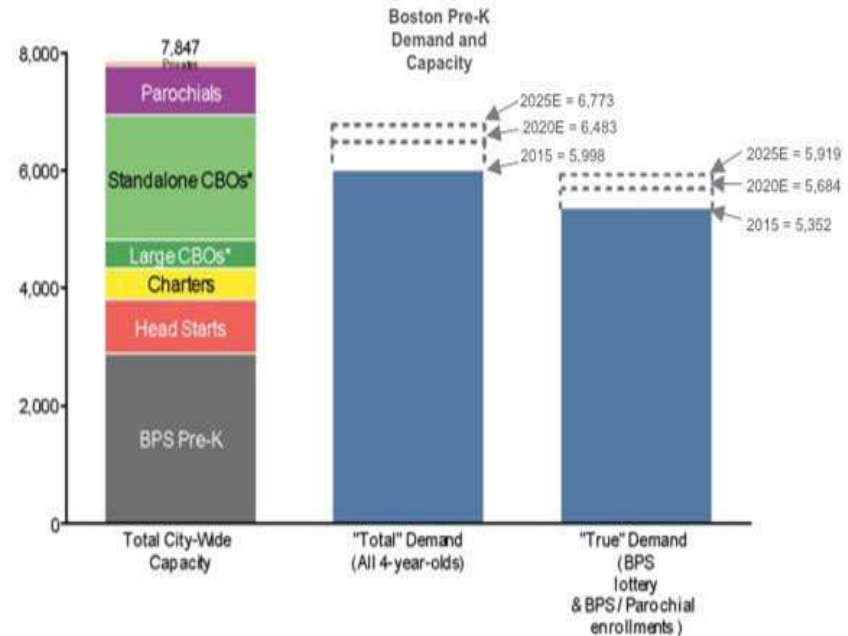
- **Boston Public Schools' K1 programming is regarded as the highest quality pre-K programming in America**
- **MA was one of 13 states awarded renewable pre-K expansion grants through the federal government in 2014.**
 - MA work focuses on our gateway cities and underserved populations in those places.
 - Built on what we've learned about the elements of pre-K, many of which were validated through the evaluation of Boston's K1 work.



**Boston's Path to High-Quality
Early Learning**

Children + Early Learning in Boston

- **Birth to 5 child population:**
38,089
- **Number of four-year olds:**
Approx. 6,000
- **Four-year olds enrolled in formal Pre-K:**
Approx. 90%
- **Pre-K enrollment by provider-type:**
55% Boston Public Schools
45% Community-Based Settings



Boston's Path to High-Quality Early Learning

2005

*Boston Mayor Thomas Menino
Calls for BPS Pre-K (K1)
Expansion and Quality
Improvement*

SY 2009-10

*National evaluation concludes
that BPS K1 features highest
level of instructional quality of
any evaluated large-scale
prekindergarten in the U.S.*

2008

*United Way of Mass Bay +
Merrimac Valley, City of Boston
launch Thrive in 5*

Jan. 2013

*BPS, Thrive in 5, MA EEC, UW
and the Barr Foundation
launch Boston K1DS*

BPS K1 + Boston K1DS: *Expanding Pre-K Quality Across Boston*



What Boston's Preschools Get Right

After a relentless focus on quality in the early years, the city is even bringing lessons learned to later grades.

Boston K1DS: *K1 Initiative for Diverse Students*

- Demonstration project to evaluate the effectiveness of the Boston Public School's community-based pre-K/K1 model
- Replicates 4 key elements of traditional BPS K1 classroom in a community-based preschool program
- Partnership established between BPS, Thrive in 5, MA Dept. of Early Education and Care, United Way and Barr Foundation to support project
- 14 CBO K1 classrooms launched in January 2013, primarily in low income neighborhoods of color in Boston

Boston K1DS Classrooms Receive:

- **Professional development**
- Integrated **curriculum** (Opening the World of Learning and Building Blocks) and **assessment**
- **Salary enhancement** for classroom teacher
- Regular one-on-one **coaching** to transfer knowledge into practice



Boston's Path to High-Quality Early Learning

Jan. 2014

Mayor Martin J. Walsh inaugurated, pledges to develop a Universal Pre-K (UPK) system in Boston

June 2015

Birth - 8 Collective Impact Initiative launches


Dec. 2014

MA awarded \$15M federal Pre-K Expansion Grant, Boston among five participating cities

Jan. 2016

Official launch of the Boston Basics 0-3 caregiver campaign

PEG: Moving Toward a Citywide High-Quality Pre-K System



The screenshot shows the official website of the Executive Office of Education in Massachusetts. The page features a navigation menu with categories like 'Students & Families', 'Educators & Teachers', 'Licenses', 'Data & Research', 'Login', 'Government', and 'Contact Us'. A news article is highlighted, dated November 30, 2016, with the headline: 'Massachusetts Awarded \$15 Million in Third Year of Funding from Federal Preschool Expansion Grant'. The article text states that the state received a \$16 million award from the federal Preschool Expansion Grant program, which will provide a year of free preschool in the 2017-2018 school year to 650 children in five communities: Boston, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, and Springfield. The grant program provides a year of free, high-quality preschool to four-year-old children from low-income families who otherwise would not have access to preschool before entering Kindergarten. Through the grant, 46 new preschool classrooms were opened in fall 2015 that enroll approximately 850 children in each year of the program.

- Boston receiving approx. \$3M/year over three years.
- Building partnerships among BPS and designated community-based providers to 1) provide free 4-year old pre-K in targeted neighborhoods; 2) provide educator TA and curricular coaching; and increase teacher compensation.
- Modeling the architecture for coordinated service payment, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation that Universal Pre-K will build upon.

Boston's Path to High-Quality Early Learning

Apr. 2016

Mayor Walsh's UPK Advisory Committee issues Phase 1 report calling for free school day/year, mixed delivery system emphasizing investment in elements of quality

Spring 2017

The Birth-8 Collective Impact Initiative develops metrics to guide collaborative action and systems building

June 2016

Thrive in 5 sunsets

April 2017

First phase of UPK implementation begins - communications, governance and staffing, advocacy/fundraising



Universal Pre-K (UPK) in Boston

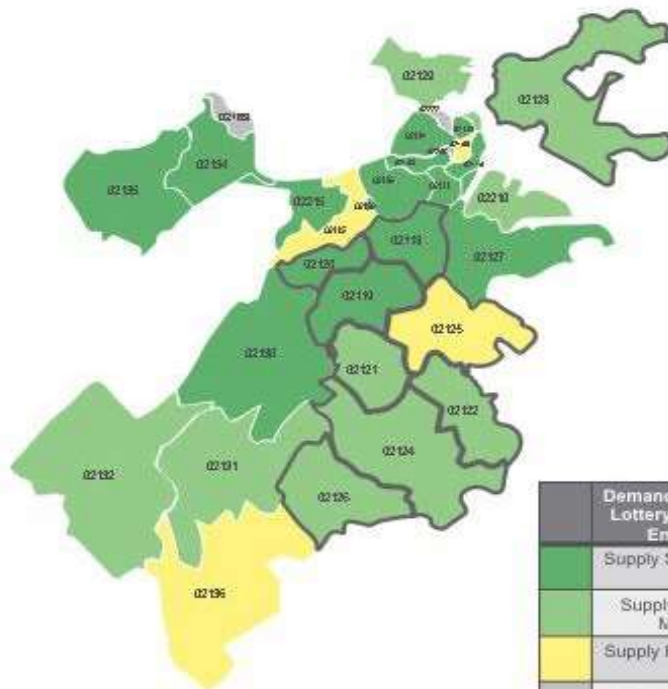
Mayor Walsh's Charge



Create a city-wide, mixed delivery system with school-based programs and community-based centers that guarantees every four-year-old in Boston a high-quality Pre-K experience in a broad range of the settings that their families desire and that meet their children's developmental needs.

UPK: Boston Is Not Solving for Access...

Neighborhood Alignment	Zip	Demand (BPS & Parochial Data)	Capacity	% of Demand Met
ALLSTON	02134	75	154	205%
ALLSTON	02163	-	16	No Demand
BRIGHTON	02135	234	379	162%
BOSTON	02116	47	153	326%
BOSTON	02215	19	123	647%
BOSTON	02108	12	101	842%
BOSTON	02111	49	140	286%
BOSTON	02113	43	137	319%
BOSTON	02114	17	63	371%
BOSTON	02203	-	14	No Demand
BOSTON	02201	-	11	No Demand
BOSTON	02110	5	7	140%
BOSTON	02222	-	9	No Demand
BOSTON	02199	3	9	300%
BOSTON	02115	32	5	16%
BOSTON	02109	10	-	0%
CHARLESTOWN	02129	165	239	144%
DORCHESTER	02124	570	647	113%
DORCHESTER	02121	456	614	135%
DORCHESTER	02125	364	350	96%
DORCHESTER	02122	298	335	112%
EAST BOSTON	02128	578	642	111%
HYDE PARK	02136	357	336	94%
JAMAICA PLAIN	02130	255	562	220%
MATTAPAN	02126	296	438	148%
ROSLINDALE	02131	310	364	117%
ROXBURY	02119	354	630	172%
ROXBURY	02118	171	328	192%
ROXBURY	02120	187	245	228%
SOUTH BOSTON	02127	171	295	172%
SOUTH BOSTON	02210	4	26	650%
WEST ROXBURY	02132	347	495	147%
Overall	-	5352	7847	147%



Demand (based on BPS K2 Lottery & BPS / Parochial Enrollment Data)	
Dark Green	Supply Significantly Exceeds Demand
Light Green	Supply Slightly Exceeds/Meets Demand
Yellow	Supply Falls Slightly Short of Demand
Grey	No Demand (By Residence)

Most Programs above 100% of demand are classified as "Supply Significantly Exceeds Demand" programs between 100-150% of demand are classified as "Supply Slightly Exceeds/Meets Demand" programs below 100% of demand are classified as "Supply Falls Slightly Short of Demand"
 Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, K-2 ES, Program Waivers, BPS Data, Parochial enrollment data

UPK: ... *Boston Is Solving for Quality!*

- **Highly-trained and well-compensated teachers** who hold early childhood degrees.
- Use of **evidence-based curriculum** with a focus on literacy and math as well as supports for students with additional needs (English Language, Special Education, etc)
- **Environments that are safe and age-appropriate** to promote learning
- Maximum **teacher-child ratios** of 2:22 for BPS and 2:20 for community-based centers
- **Accreditation** by National Association for the Education of Young Children and/or assessment as Level 3 or higher in MA's Quality Rating Improvement System
- Ongoing **coaching and professional development** for teaching staff
- Strong communication and support to **engage families**
- Ongoing **assessment and evaluation** of the program to promote continuous improvement

UPK: Quality in Boston Varies by Neighborhood

Relative Size of Quality Seat Gap	
Large Gap	(Current quality seats <50% of demand)
Medium Gap	(Current quality seats 50% - 75% of demand)
Small Gap	(Current quality seats 75% - 100% of demand)
No Gap	(Current surplus of quality seats)

Neighborhood	Demand	Quality Seat Shortage	Quality Seats as % of Demand
Allston	75	(19)	125%
Brighton	235	21	91%
D.T. Boston	237	(93)	139%
Charlestown	165	12	93%
Dorchester	1688	565	67%
East Boston	578	173	70%
Hyde Park	357	235	34%
Jamaica Plain	255	(66)	126%
Mattapan	296	18	94%
Roslindale	311	121	61%
Roxbury	633	176	72%
South Boston	175	28	84%
West Roxbury	347	179	48%
Net Total*	5352	1350	75%
Absolute Total*	5352	1528	71%

() implies a surplus

The highest concentration of young children are in Dorchester, Roxbury, and East Boston (bold outline)



★ Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG) Classroom(s)

UPK: *Primary Program + System Elements*

- **Free** school day, school year programming
- **Delivery through a mix of providers**, including school-based programs and community-based centers, to meet the range of family needs, including home language, special needs, feeder systems (or more succinctly, access to quality elementary seats)
- **Quality elevated across all providers** so that there is no “wrong door” for families
- **Optimizing existing resources and finding new sources**, to pay for high-quality programming
- **Family engagement** to understand their needs and promote program quality and child learning

UPK: Next Steps

- Establish a UPK [governance and staffing model](#)
- Advance [Professional Development](#) for early childhood teachers
- Increase access by community-based early childhood centers at a program level to [BPS curriculum and instructional practice](#)
- Build [system supports](#) to ensure UPK works for all Boston's children and families
- Work with MA Department of Early Care and Education (EEC), BPS and community partners to address [out of school time and summer programming needs](#) for Pre-K children

Panel Discussion

