School Quality Framework Policy: June 2019

While no single measurement can ever capture the full range of characteristics that make a school "high quality" to each student or family, the School Quality Working Group (SQWG) worked to develop a comprehensive School Quality Framework ("the Framework") that looks at the broad range of measures of school quality. Initially conceived in 2014, the Framework reflects both the quantitative and qualitative conceptions of quality in a series of measures designed to understand the factors impacting school choice for families and students. This updated policy is inclusive of the recommendation voted on unanimously by the SQWG on Wednesday, September 3, 2014, and is updated to reflect improvements in the calculation process and lessons learned from its implementation.

History and Context

Throughout the process of examining and improving school choice in 2012-2013, the Mayor's External Advisory Committee on Student Assignment (EAC) heard from families across the city about the importance of school quality. From their comments and testimony, it became clear that school quality encompasses a wide range of measures. As part of its recommendation for a new system of school choice, the EAC proposed a four-tiered system to rank schools based on students' performance and growth on MCAS exams. However, recognizing that this was a temporary and insufficient way to measure school quality, the EAC also included several other recommendations related to school quality, including the creation of a separate task force to develop a more expansive way to look at quality.

Based on this recommendation, the School Quality Working Group (SQWG) was established by the School Committee in May 2013 to continue the efforts to identify the core indicators of quality. While no single measurement can ever capture the full range of characteristics that make a school "high quality" to each student or family, the SQWG worked to develop a comprehensive School Quality Framework that looks at a broad range of measures of school quality. The Framework reflects both quantitative and qualitative conceptions of quality.

The quantitative component, based on five core domains of school quality that are associated in research with student achievement, aggregates various measurements of school performance. Meanwhile, the qualitative component describes features or attributes of a school that may play a role in school quality for some families and students (such as school hours, after-school programs, or athletics opportunities).

Purpose and Goals of the Quality Framework

The School Quality Framework has several purposes. First, the Framework informs school choice. The Framework gives students and families a brief overview of key school characteristics, as well as easy access to more comprehensive information about a wide range of characteristics that they can use as a reference

as they investigate their school choices. In addition, the domain scores are integrated into the assignment process by helping to determine the potential school choices available to students. The overall measurement that schools receive on the five core domains are used to place each school into an assignment tier. Students have access to the closest two schools from the top-quality assignment tier, the closest four schools from assignment tiers 1 or 2, and the closest six schools from assignment tiers 1, 2, or 3. Because of its role in determining these assignment tiers, the Framework not only provides information to families, it also plays a fundamental role in determining school choices available to students.

Second, in addition to informing the school choice process, the Framework also ensures that there is transparency around school quality in order to promote greater public accountability. Using the range of qualitative and quantitative components of the Framework, all stakeholders have the information they need to evaluate for themselves, based on their own values, the quality of any one school. By making clear where there are assets or gaps in student performance and student opportunities, the Framework allows the community and Boston Public Schools to engage in more informed and focused conversations about school quality. In this way, the Framework serves as a powerful tool not only for students and families, but also for a variety of other stakeholders: teachers, school leaders, other school and district staff, community-based organizations, potential funders and supporters, officials of the Commonwealth, and all members of the public who wish to monitor the performance of the city's schools.

Beyond these two primary purposes, the Framework also serves to educate stakeholders about the many aspects of school quality. By engaging in a year-long discussion and incorporating the feedback of students, parents, and community members, the SQWG developed a broad-based description of quality that goes well beyond test scores. We hope that the Framework will help to broaden stakeholders' thinking about the many factors that others view as important to school quality. Furthermore, the Framework is an important tool to inform school and district-level decision-making regarding actions to improve or sustain school quality.

Relation to State Accountability System

While the Framework serves a number of important purposes, it is not the sole accountability measure that applies to schools in BPS. Schools will continue to receive a state-designated "accountability and assistance designation." The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education determines a school's accountability category by examining the school's performance against targets for All Students and the Lowest Performing 25% of Students. The vast majority of these targets are set based on the state MCAS exams in English language arts, mathematics, and science. Achievement and growth on MCAS factor into a school's accountability designation with achievement weighted three times as much as growth.

Although state accountability and assistance designations may offer less information about schools than the Framework—which is based on several years of community conversations about quality and looks at many more measures than the state's accountability system—we recognize that state accountability and assistance levels must and will continue to impact district decision-making.

Developing the Framework

The development of the Framework was guided by previous conversations and existing documents related to school quality. In particular, the SQWG examined the recommendations of the External Advisory Committee on Student Assignment, the BPS Policy on Eliminating the Achievement Gap, the work of the 2004-2005 Quality Work Group appointed by the Boston School Committee, the Seven Essentials of Whole-School Improvement, and the Five Core Elements of Family and Student Engagement in BPS. The SQWG also learned about the district's recent work to develop both a school performance index and student opportunity index and reviewed the efforts of other large urban districts to do the same. In the

fall of 2013, BPS also engaged nearly 200 community members in a community engagement pilot to review potential measures of school quality and seek input on what might be missing.

While using these sources to generate a list of quality measures, the SQWG organized into three subcommittees focused on different tasks. The charge of each subcommittee is outlined below.

Metrics	Policy & Implementation	Community Engagement
Make recommendations on design of the quality measure (priorities, indicators, metrics, etc.) Determine how to weigh and quantify the various components of the quality measure	Recommend policies for an overall reporting system for schools based on the quality measures recommended by the Metrics Subcommittee as well as other school quality preferences as identified by the Community Engagement Subcommittee Make recommendations on other policy issues regarding use and implementation	Engage in a collaborative process with students, families, teachers, school leaders, and community stakeholders to: Foster opportunities for input and feedback throughout the development of school quality measurements and policies for an overall accountability system Understand the mission of the SQWG and share information and on-going progress

To develop the quantitative component of the Framework, based on five core domains of school quality, the SQWG developed the following structure and common vocabulary to use in thinking and communicating about each component of a quality measure. Each domain is made up outcomes, and each outcome is measured by a set of metrics in order to assess different components of the outcome based on available data:
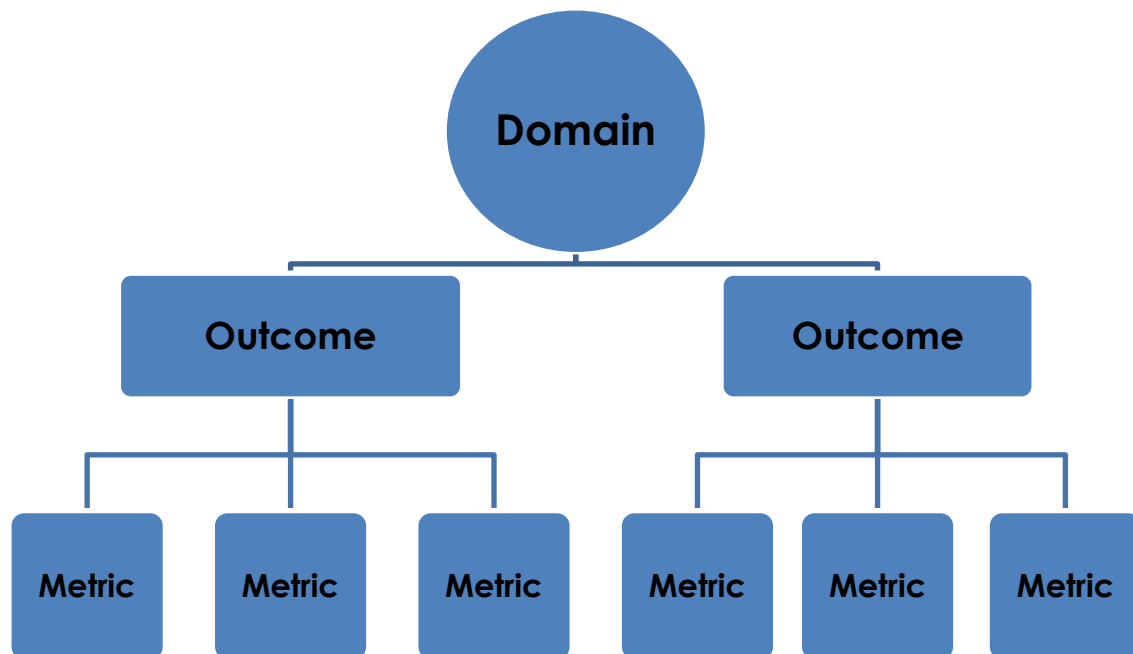
Most outcomes also have one or more metrics, which are the specific data points that are available to measure schools' progress toward outcomes. To develop this list of metrics, Boston Public Schools researched how other districts around the country measure school quality and compiled these into a list of nearly 150 potential metrics. Staff then assigned each metric a score by assessing three factors:

- Reliability
- Relevance
- Replicability

Using these scores, BPS staff created a refined list of top-rated metrics, and members matched these with the appropriate outcomes to generate a draft of the Framework. Each metric was also examined to ensure that it met the following criteria for success:

- Exposes meaningful differences between schools
- Measures the quality of the school rather than the characteristics of the school's population
- Correlates with student success
- Measures something substantially different from any other metrics
- Stays relatively stable from year to year

While the internal analysis of metrics was progressing, in the first few months of 2014, the SQWG went back to the community to gather feedback on the draft set of domains and outcomes they had developed. At a series of community meetings, members of the SQWG talked to more than 150 attendees to explain the process of developing the Framework and gather feedback on what could be changed or adapted. Three of these meetings were with student groups so that their experiences and ideas inform the final Framework.

Having assembled an updated version of the Framework, the district launched another round of community engagement meetings. In this round, BPS sought to learn which components of a quality school are most important to families in order to help develop recommendations for how to assign weights to the various categories. BPS developed an online survey to collect input on this question in multiple languages. In addition, SQWG members, BPS staff, and student volunteers talked to families at Parent University and encouraged attendees to complete the online survey. In all, the survey yielded 418 responses, including many responses in languages besides English.

While the Framework was being developed and shared with the community, SQWG members were also working to define the purposes of the Framework and to develop a set of recommendations on how it should be implemented and updated. These recommendations are built upon below in the section on "Implementing the Framework."

School Quality Framework Calculation

The Framework holds each school[1] accountable for the following five domains:

- Student Performance
- Teaching and Learning

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[1] Schools will only receive a quality tier if they have state assessment metrics available

- Family, Community and Culture
- Leadership and Collaboration
- Student Access and Opportunities

The five domains are made up of 21 outcomes, and each outcome is measured by one or more metrics. The Office of Data and Accountability determined appropriate cut-offs for each metric based on defined targets. Targets come from various sources, including state guidelines and historical data. Using these cut-offs, each metric score was converted to an index score of 0, 25, 50, 75, or 100, as shown below. By combining the index score for each metric, a single score may be assigned to each school which can be used to determine a school tier.

In cases where there are currently no available metrics that are sufficiently reliable, relevant, and replicable to measure outcomes, the SQWG offered recommendations on seeking and developing additional metrics.

Each domain is weighted as follows:

DOMAIN	WEIGHT
Student Performance	75%
Teaching and Learning	7.5%
Family, Community and Culture	10%
Leadership and Collaboration	7.5%
Student Access and Opportunities	*

No weight will be attributed to the Student Access and Opportunities domain until more reliable and replicable metrics can be developed. We have begun to collect data on opportunities and access centrally. Reliable school data the SQWG believed promoted access and opportunity will be available for parents to view on the DiscoverBPS website. In addition to making data visible, we will continue work with Opportunity Gaps Office to develop the domain, outcomes, and metrics. Domain weighting will have to be revisited once quality metrics for the Student Access and Opportunities domain are available.

The District will also continue to perform ongoing analysis on metrics to ensure the achievement and growth of students with disabilities, English language learners and low income students are appropriately represented throughout the Framework. The full list of outcomes associated with each of the five domains are described below in the section titled "School Quality Domains and Outcomes."

Growth and Proficiency

Many metrics in the Student Performance domain either measure student growth or student proficiency. Based on research from other large urban districts, community feedback, and SQWG values, there was a determination that metrics measuring student growth be weighted twice as much as proficiency metrics.

Tier Cut Offs

The Framework includes a method for determining school tiers based on absolute quality rather than quality relative to other schools.

QUALITY SCORE RANGE	TIER
65+	1
55-65	2

45-55	3
0-45	4

<u>Updating Metric Calculations</u>
The framework will continue to be calculated based on the four fully developed SQF Domains and associated outcomes. While the SQF provides families more comprehensive and meaningful information about school quality than the state accountability system, it is being continuously monitored to identify potential improvements. As part of those continuous improvement efforts, the district shall have the flexibility to adjust metrics based on data source changes and new opportunities to refine metrics. This will provide the ability to continue to improve the SQF. Examples of adjustments that would be attributable to this change in approach for fall 2019 include:
- Calculate Student Performance growth metrics based on a school's mean SGP rather than median SGP in accordance with shifts to the state accountability system
- Revise the attendance metric to focus on improving chronic absenteeism in order to differentiate by grade band, reward growth, and align with the state transition to chronic absenteeism as an accountability indicator

Implementing the Framework
At its inception, the SQWG was charged with determining a better measure of school quality for implementation starting in the fall of 2014. The Framework has now been calculated three times and implemented for student assignment during registration.

<u>Updating School Tiers and Student Assignment</u>
School-level Framework data has been calculated three times utilizing six years of data. Tiers have been updated in November of each of the previous two years, including in November 2018 utilizing Spring 2018 performance data.

    2015 Tiers: 2013 & 2014 Data - Not Implemented for student assignment
    2017 Tiers: 2015 & 2016 Data - Implemented for student assignment
    2018 Tiers: 2017 & 2018 Data - Implemented for student assignment

Moving forward data will be calculated every year in order to provide up-to-date information for families (next calculation in Fall 2019 utilizing data from 2018 and 2019) and inform the assignment process, thereby removing the need for 'snapshot tiers'. In order to increase stability, families will receive all schools on their home-based list from the two most recent tier calculations (i.e., over a two-year period). The most current tiers will be displayed in DiscoverBPS. The district will monitor this approach to generating school choice lists for overall effectiveness, including cost.

<u>DiscoverBPS</u>
Recognizing the importance of sharing data transparently and the need to avoid overwhelming parents with too much information, the following considerations will continue to guide implementation of the Framework, depending on district resources and capacity:

- As much information as possible should be made publicly available to parents
- Terminology used in the data reports should be clearly defined
- The DiscoverBPS website should include a page of school-specific information on quality attributes and links to other relevant information

- Families should be able to sort schools based on a variety of characteristics
- The District should explore ways to make quality improvement plans more transparent
- BPS will work to ensure all families have access to information

Ongoing Engagement

Boston Public Schools will continue community engagement with school leaders, teachers, parents, and other community members in order to ensure all stakeholders understand the Framework, as well as the process, recommendations, changes, and impacts of the Framework. The SQWG will continue to meet quarterly to advise and provide input to the district team until this body is deemed no longer necessary.

Domains and Outcomes

The quantitative component of the full Framework is attached, broken down into the following five domains:

- Student Performance
- Teaching and Learning
- Family, Community, and Culture
- Student Access and Opportunities
- Leadership and Collaboration

Each of these domains is further divided into outcomes, which are associated with a number of sample indicators and example metrics.

School Quality Domains and Outcomes

Domain	Outcome	Sample Indicators	Example Metrics
Student Performance	1. All students[1] show progress in skills critical to school, college, and career success, including critical thinking, peer and adult relationships, and perseverance.	● Decrease in drop-out rate ● Increase in graduation rate ● Increase in college enrollment ● Increase in college persistence ● Students set goals and strive to reach them	● Subgroup graduation rate ● 5 year graduation rate ● 4 year graduation rate ● Drop-out rate - reflects numb 12th graders who drop out ea ● Change in adjusted average l between 10th and 11th grade ● Percent of student enrolled i months of graduation ● Student Climate Survey ques setting and perseverance ● Percent of students enrolled i taking remedial courses
	2. Students across all subgroups[2] demonstrate mastery of grade level content over the course of the school year.	● Proficiency or better in reading and math on state assessments ● Students perform at benchmark levels on district assessments (DIBELS)	● % of students at or above pro (reading/writing) and/or Mat ● % of students well below or l who move to benchmark on l ● Achievement gap metric

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[1] The following students are included in any Student Performance metric(s) labeled "**All Students**":

- Students enrolled on or before October 1 of the academic year:
  - General education students
  - Students with disabilities in resource rooms (R1, R2, or R3). This group represents roughly 50% of all SWDs who take the MCAS tests. Students with Autism, multiple disabilities, etc. are not included.
  - ELL students with an English Language Development (ELD) level of 4 or 5 only. This group represents roughly 75% of all ELLs who take the MCAS tests. (SIFE students are not included in the analysis.)
- Students not included in the "All Students" metric(s) are represented in other Student Performance metrics

[2] **Accounting for student subgroups:** Excellent schools provide an excellent education to all students. The outcomes of this framework measure opportunity and performance across **all subgroups**, including racial and ethnic groups, socio-economic classes, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities. The framework takes into account absolute achievement and growth of these subgroups as well as access to the opportunities and resources that will enable continued achievement.

Domain	Outcome	Sample Indicators	Example Metrics
	3. Students across all subgroups demonstrate academic growth towards mastery of grade level content.	● Growth on state assessments (MCAS) for all students ● Growth on state assessments (ACCESS) for ELL students	● School's median SGP ● Math and ELA median SGP ● Percent of students in 75th g subgroup ● Median growth percentile fo Proficient on MCAS ● Median growth percentile fo Warning/Failing on MCAS ● Schoolwide change in CPI (f students) ● % of ELL students at ELD L progress on ACCESS test ● Achievement gap metric
Teaching and Learning	4. All students are taught by highly effective, caring, and committed teachers.	● Teachers are highly engaged ● Teachers provide constructive feedback to students and parents ● Teachers use a variety of assessments and modes of teaching ● Teachers challenge students	‒ Student Climate Survey ques effectiveness ● Teacher Climate Survey que skills and knowledge ● Parent Climate Survey questi commitment to student learn ● Number of National Board C
	5. The school is led by effective instructional leader(s).	● School leader sets clear expectations for staff ● School leader has high standards for teaching	● Teacher Climate Survey que leaders' standards and expect
	6. All students are exposed to engaging and rigorous standards-based curriculum designed to keep them on track for college and prepare them for careers.	● Students feel the school has prepared them for further education, careers, and personal life ● Students are exposed to challenging courses, including core academic, elective, and advanced courses, as well as experiential learning opportunities ● The school uses lessons based on Common Core State Standards and the MA curriculum frameworks	● Percentage of students that f prepared them for further ed employment, and personal lif (from Senior Exit Survey) ● Student Climate Survey ques for the next grade (or college ● Parent Climate Survey questi for the next grade (or college ●

Domain	Outcome	Sample Indicators	Example Metrics
	7. Teachers focus on the development of skills critical to college and career success alongside mastery of academic subject matter.	● Teachers adopt skills based lessons for students	
Family, Community, and Culture	8. The school is safe, well-organized, and conducive to meeting educational goals.	● The school is a healthy and well maintained environment ● The school has low number of disruptive incidents. ● School prevents bullying ● Students, staff, and families feel safe on school grounds and at school events	● Student Climate Survey ques consequences, and bullying p ● Teacher Climate Survey ques management and organizatio ● Parent Climate Survey questi safety at school ● Suspension/expulsion rate
	9. All students are engaged and enthusiastic about their classes and see relevant connections between academic lessons and their own lives.	● School decreases percent of chronic absenteeism ● School decreases percent of students with low attendance rates ● Students have a sense of pride in their school ● Students work hard to make good grades and pay attention in class	● Change in chronic absenteeis students missing 10% of sch reason ● Average daily attendance ● Student Climate Survey ques engagement and enthusiasm ● Teacher Climate Survey que effort
	10. Schools ensure all families feel welcomed and are involved in activities that support their child's academic and social growth.	● Families are encouraged to and do visit and participate at the school ● Teachers work with families to help them support student learning ● Families are involved in school decision-making ● School staff develop productive relationships with families	● Teacher Climate Survey que engagement in learning ● Parent Climate Survey questi communication, accessibility making ● Family Engagement Index (S Councils, School Parent Cou plans, etc.)

Domain	Outcome	Sample Indicators	Example Metrics
	11. The school promotes inclusion of all students, families and community stakeholders so the school community learns to acknowledge, respect, and build on social and cultural differences.	● Students and families of all backgrounds feel included, welcomed, and respected at the school ● The school engages students and families of all backgrounds ● School communicates effectively with families and students from diverse backgrounds ● School environment and culture reflect the diversity of students and families	● Parent Climate Survey quest thriving, inclusive schools, c communities ● Staff diversity: % of teachers
	12. School demonstrates a culture of high achievement.	● School community has shared expectations for student success ● Teachers believe all students can learn	● Student Climate Survey ques expectations ● Teacher Climate Survey que standards among school staff
Student Access and Opportunities	13. All students have equal access to high- quality activities that reinforce classroom learning and promote skill building and positive youth development.	● Students are receiving arts instruction throughout the year ● Students participate in PE at school ● School offers a variety of learning experiences throughout the day beyond the core academic subjects	● % of students receiving arts i instruction for students in gra meeting Mass Core requirem high school) ● School meets guidelines for l
	14. Students have access to health and social services.	● School has a nurse on staff ● School has approved health plan ● School provides support for students with learning and behavior challenges	● # of health care FTEs per 10 ● # of guidance counselor FTE ● School has a Wellness Coun completed a wellness action ● Parent Climate Survey quest learning and behavior proble

Domain	Outcome	Sample Indicators	Example Metrics
	15. Students have access to high-quality out-of - school -time programs and partners that provide students with a choice of opportunities that reinforce academics, build skills, and pursue their interests.	● Type of school partners and quality of partner programs ● School incorporates partners into annual planning processes (including Quality School Plans and budgeting process)	
Leadership and Collaboration	16. School leadership sets a vision for the school that actively engages teachers, staff, students, families, and the wider community to be a part of the school's success	● Students and parents feel supported by school leader ● Teachers take responsibility for school improvement	● Student Climate Survey ques effectiveness and outreach to ● Teacher Climate Survey que engagement around school su ● Parent Climate Survey quest relationship with students
	17. School leadership creates a culture of collaboration among all staff members.	● All staff exhibit a collective responsibility for the success of all students in the building ● Staff members trust their peers and school leader ● Staff have time for collaborative learning and planning	● Teacher Climate Survey que collaboration
	18. School leadership develops clear and effective structures for communication with families and within the school community.	● Leadership fosters two-way communication with families	● Parent Climate Survey quest effective communication

Domain	Outcome	Sample Indicators	Example M

	19. School leadership builds community partnerships including with local stakeholders that expand learning opportunities, promote student well-being and enable the school to achieve its overarching mission.	● School leadership identifies community partnerships for school ● School leadership makes programs available for students before and after school	● Student Climate S opportunities to p school ● Parent Climate Su partnerships
	20. School leadership retains and leverages effective teachers.	● School retains proficient and exemplary teachers ● School leader sets clear expectations and high standards for staff ● School leader involves staff in decision-making ● Staff feel supported at school ● School has low chronic staff absenteeism	● Teacher retention exemplary teacher ● Chronic staff abse ● Teacher Climate S encouragement, a
	21. School leadership appropriately manages and leverages resources.	● School leadership effectively oversees resources of time, space, and money ● School leadership chooses to invest in programs and initiatives that drive student success	