

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE BOSTON PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL
BOSTON'S WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

FY2014-FY2017



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Introduction

The Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) serves as Boston's Workforce Investment Board and its school-to-career intermediary organization. Our collaboration with the Boston Public Schools (BPS) dates back to the signing of the Boston Compact in 1982. Whether partnering with the Mayor's team to oversee the allocation and use of public funding for workforce development programs or brokering students into summer and school-year paid internships, the PIC works where business and community interests intersect, addressing the talent and diversity needs of employers while creating career pathways for Boston youth and adults.

The PIC uses its experiences as a practitioner as well as broader research to influence policy and systems change. The combination of these approaches results in a tight loop between policy and practice, where each informs the other and contributes to the continuous quality improvement of the PIC's work and the workforce development system in the region. The PIC has provided leadership to the business and civic community, framing issues and piloting unique initiatives to broker populations that have historically struggled in the workforce into successful, lasting careers.

Our work is grounded in the belief that meaningful employment changes lives, lifts people out of poverty, and strengthens the local economy. To make things happen, we depend on a community of collaborators willing to offer their time, their resources, and their affiliation. At the PIC, we succeed only when our partners succeed.

The PIC used this strategic planning process to reevaluate the 2011 high performance board strategic plan and update its priority initiatives. This new strategic plan is based on current projected labor market developments locally and statewide. It reflects progress made on the PIC's strategic priorities since 2011, including two new industry initiatives: the Skilled Careers in Life Sciences (SCILS) initiative and a convening of Greater Boston Hospitality sector's employers, labor groups, and training institutions. The PIC also received a planning grant in 2013 along with the Boston Opportunity Agenda to lead a collaborative to build pathways for opportunity youth to obtain postsecondary credentials and employment. The resulting fiscal year 2014-2017 plan builds on recent successes and challenges the PIC to strengthen its impact.

Overview of the PIC

Mission

The mission of the PIC is to strengthen Boston's communities and its workforce by connecting youth and adults with education and employment opportunities that prepare them to meet the skill demands of employers in a changing economy.

Vision

We envision a local education and workforce system that organizes a continuously expanding sequence of classroom and workplace experiences that support the progress of youth and adults from communities that have faced significant barriers historically.

We envision the pipeline as one that visibly advances those who are succeeding and recovers those who have fallen out. We envision strengthening this pipeline by grounding all activities in labor market intelligence, such as the clear need to support a steady increase in the number of Boston residents achieving academic credentials.

Ultimately, we seek to break the cycle of poverty in our communities and to develop a financially secure, diverse, skilled and motivated Boston workforce that contributes to economic growth in our region and prosperity in our communities.

The Boston PIC's Theory of Action

The PIC is relatively unique in its theory of action. Rather than choosing between policy development and practice in the field, the PIC strives to create a balance and an interaction between policy and practice in its activities, its staffing, and its committee membership.

Policy informs practice, and practice informs policy. For example, the PIC resolved to take on dropout reduction as a major priority and launched a broad collaboration with the school system and community organizations to develop a data-driven analysis of the dropout problem in Boston and a set of recommendations for reducing the number of dropouts. Then the organization immediately hired outreach workers to reenroll hundreds of dropouts, which moved the issue onto the front burner through the lives of these returning students. Similarly, the PIC developed a methodology for measuring college success rates for BPS graduates over time and then hired —transition coaches‖ to support a discrete cohort of students entering community college in order to learn what was necessary to pursue the Mayor's goal of doubling the college graduation rate, in the context of newly brokered partnerships with colleges the students attend.

In every case, the PIC uses the information it gathers in its intermediary role to pursue policy changes and initiatives. Successes have taken shape in the form of —graduation for all‖ surfacing at the top of the former BPS Superintendent's Acceleration Agenda, the opening of BPS' Re-Engagement Center (REC), as well as state legislation that created a commission to position dropout reduction within the Commonwealth's education reform agenda. The college completion goal finds its home within the Mayor's *Success Boston* initiative. Time and again, the PIC puts its own reputation and organizational capital in play alongside other organizations to make a measurable difference.

Organizational Functions

In its role as a workforce investment board and school-to-career intermediary, the PIC functions in four ways:

Convening: The PIC convenes business and labor leaders, government and school officials, higher education and community leaders. The workforce investment board and its committees provide important venues for integrating the education and workforce systems with the needs of employers and the aspirations of the community.

Brokering: The PIC actively brokers relationships across sectors - between employers and schools, between career centers and social service agencies, between city and state issues.

Connecting: The PIC, directly through the staff and indirectly through the career centers, connects individual students and job seekers with education and employment opportunities. Increasingly, the PIC reconnects those who left school or fell out of other public systems.

Measuring: The PIC develops baseline measures for each of its various initiatives and documents progress continuously. In partnership with the Center for Labor Market Studies, the PIC measures the impact of its initiatives on the lives of those it serves. We measure scale, quality, progress, outcomes and impact.

Unifying the PIC Strategy

In Boston's evolving knowledge-based economy, credentials matter. Therefore, we must strive to increase continuously the number of youth and adults who achieve academic milestones such as high school graduation, college enrollment, and postsecondary certification and degree attainment in areas of projected labor demand.

The PIC believes that paid work experience motivates and sustains progress, particularly within low income communities. Therefore, we must increase the integration of work and learning at all levels.

Finally, we believe that all our education and training activities and initiatives must be grounded in the labor market intelligence that a workforce board must strive to develop and apply. It is not enough to graduate. Our success must be measured in the labor market attachment and career success of those who go through Boston's education and workforce development systems.

Labor Market and Education Environment Analysis

Research and evaluation shape PIC program design and public policy priorities. In preparing this plan, the PIC reviewed recent labor market research prepared by the Center for Labor Market Studies (CLMS) at Northeastern University and also employment and job vacancy data for the Boston WIA region and statewide made available on the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's website. To inform youth and adult postsecondary initiatives, the PIC reviewed recent findings on the graduation and dropout rates of BPS students, and a recent CLMS study on the college enrollment, persistence, and graduation experiences of BPS graduates.

Adult Labor Market Conditions

Despite being in the fourth year of recovery since the massive economic recession of 2007-2009, labor market conditions in Massachusetts and Boston WIA region remain relatively weak. By the end of 2012, Massachusetts still had not yet matched the number of payroll jobs that existed during the first quarter of 2001, the previous high-water mark for employment. Unemployment rates at 6.7% in Boston (Jan-Aug.) and 7% statewide are high relative to the 2.7% rate that prevailed in 2000, near the height of the 1990's economic expansion.

Labor market conditions are particularly weak for less educated workers. A recent study on the 2013 labor market experiences of Massachusetts adults between the ages of 22 and 64 revealed large socioeconomic differences in unemployment and underutilization rates.¹ Unemployment rates of adults in Massachusetts are much higher for the less educated, ranging from 15% for high school dropouts to 9% for those with a diploma or some college, and to a low of 3% for adults with a Master's or higher degree (Table 1). Underutilization rates, which factor in unemployment, underemployment, and hidden unemployment, range from over 30% for those without a high school diploma to 18% for those with a diploma to lows of 9% and 6% for bachelor's degree and Master's or higher degree holders (Table 1, Column D). The better educated have fared much better in the labor market in recent years compared to their lesser educated peers.

The labor market plight of the less educated is particularly relevant to the Boston WIA region. During fiscal year 2013, over 11,000 job seekers with a high school diploma or less visited one of the region's three career centers. A substantial share of these job seekers has been out of work for more than 6 months. Many are from lower income families, which may limit their ability to finance further education and training, to prepare them for new careers. Through work on the Opportunity Youth Collaborative, we know that over 7,000 high school graduates between the ages of 16-24 are neither in school nor working. Their future labor market prospects in the Boston area are quite bleak unless they are reconnected to postsecondary school/training or full-time employment in the near future.

¹ See: (i) Andrew Sum, Ishwar Khatiwada, and Walter McHugh, [The Labor Market Problems of Massachusetts Workers in the Recovery from the Great Recession: The Great Socioeconomic Divergence](#), Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, October 2013; Edward Mason, —Knowledge Economy is Leaving Some Behind, [The Boston Globe](#), October 27, 2013.

Table 1: The Labor Force Participation Rates, Unemployment Rates, Employment Rates and Underutilization Rates of Massachusetts Adults, 22-64 Years Old by Educational Attainment at January – August 2013 (in %)

Educational Attainment	(A) L.F. Participation Rate	(B) Unemployment Rate	(C) E / P Ratio	(D) Underutilization Rate
No high school diploma or GED	49.5	14.9	42.1	30.3
H.S. Diploma or GED, no college	74.3	9.0	67.6	17.6
13-15 Years, no degree	76.4	9.4	69.2	18.7
Associate’s Degree	84.9	5.2	80.4	11.3
Bachelor’s Degree	87.2	4.2	83.5	8.5
Master’s or higher degree	89.9	2.9	87.2	5.6
All (22-64)	80.2	6.3	75.2	12.6

Source: Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, 2013

Youth Labor Market Environment

The 2000-2010 decade has been referred to as a —Lost Decade for youth by several prominent economists. A primary reason for this characterization of the decade is the steep declines in employment rates of youth during this time period. Unfortunately, conditions have not improved since 2010. In 2013, nationally and in Massachusetts, teens are working at historically low rates during the summer months, a traditional time for youth to be exposed to the world of work. Only 31% of the nation’s 16 to 19 year olds worked during the 2013 summer, the same employment rate as 2012, and down sharply from 52% in 2000.² Teen summer employment rates have been at or near post-World War II lows over the past five summers, with the lowest rate being recorded in 2011 (29.6%).

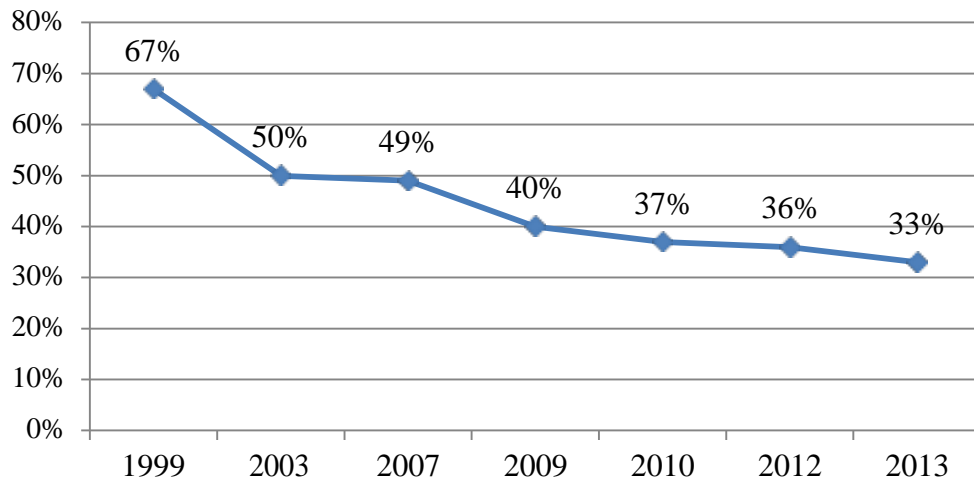
In Massachusetts, only 33% of teenagers worked during the 2013 summer, a massive 34 percentage points decline from 67% in 1999 or a halving of the 67% rate (Chart 1).³ This marked the lowest teen summer employment rate in our state over the past 45 years. Despite the abysmal labor market conditions for America’s youth, there is no longer a federally funded summer jobs program to provide low income youth with subsidized employment opportunities. As a result of a deep youth labor market depression and

² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Statistics From the Current Population Survey*, Accessed August 2013.

³ Andrew Sum et.al, *The Summer Employment Experiences and the Personal/ Social Behaviors of Youth Violence Prevention Employment Program Participants and Those of a Comparison Group*, Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, Prepared for the Youth Violence Prevention Funder Learning Collaborative, July 2013.

the lack of any comprehensive federal response, far too many teenagers are not able to obtain any type of paid work experience over the summer months.

Chart 1: Trends in the Teen (16-19) Summer Employment Rate in Massachusetts, 1999-2013



Source: PIC and Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, 2013

Unfortunately, the teen employment crisis is not limited to the summer. Year-round employment rates of teenagers in the nation and state also are at historic lows. In Massachusetts, the year-round employment rate of teenagers fell to 27% during 2012, the lowest rate recorded since Current Population Statistics (CPS) state data collection began in the late 1960s.⁴

Although all subgroups of teens are working less now than in previous years, large age, race-ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities in employment rates of teens still exist. In 2011, annual average employment rates of Massachusetts high school students ranged from lows of 9% among youth in families with household incomes below \$20,000 per year to 33% for those in families earning \$100,000-\$150,000 per year. The relative gap in teen high school employment rates between the highest and lowest income group was nearly 4 to 1 in Massachusetts during 2011.⁵

As the WIB and school-to-career intermediary in Boston, the PIC brokers a substantial number of summer jobs and school-year internships for Boston Public School students. Many of these employment opportunities go to low income, minority youth, who in the absence of these jobs programs, would have very bleak employment prospects. The collapse of the teen labor market make these brokering efforts a crucial workforce development investment to ensure that Boston's youth are developing employability skills and work experiences to prepare them for future careers.

⁴ Andrew Sum and Don Gillis, *The Continued Depression in Teen Labor Markets in Massachusetts and U.S: The Economic Case for Increased Funding for Youth Workforce Development Programs*, Center for Labor Market Studies, March 2013.

⁵ Ibid.

Employment Growth and Job Vacancies in the Boston WIA region

Following the massive economic recession of 2007-2009, the Boston WIA region's job picture slowly began to improve. Table 2 below displays private sector employment changes in the Boston WIA region by industry between 2010 and 2012, the most recent year for which a full annual data set is available.⁶ Over the 2010-2012 time period, the total number of private sector jobs in the Boston WIA increased by nearly 22,500, or 4.7%. During this same time period, the state's overall job based increased by 3.4%.

In terms of absolute job growth, professional and technical services (+7,134), accommodation and food services (+6,971), and health care and social assistance (+4,424) led the way. These industries are projected to continue to grow over the next 5 years. On a relative basis, construction employment grew at almost twice the rate of the overall Boston region (8.5%) as improving economic conditions helped this industry begin to recover. Educational services, a large industry in the Boston region, also exhibited strong growth (+6.5%). Finance and insurance employment continued to decline, with a loss of nearly 3,000 jobs or 4.3%. Despite this decline, the finance and insurance industry segment remained the second largest industry in the region behind health care and social assistance.

Table 2: Recent Private Employment Growth/ Decline By Major Industry, Boston WIA, 2010-2012

Industry	2010	2012	Change	% Change
All	476,800	499,296	22,496	4.7%
Construction	9,081	9,856	775	8.5%
Manufacturing	8,664	8,688	24	0.3%
Durable Goods Manufacturing	3,470	3,081	-389	-11.2%
Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	5,194	5,607	413	8.0%
Utilities	2,352	1,416	-936	-39.8%
Wholesale Trade	7,855	7,618	-237	-3.0%
Retail Trade	26,605	27,912	1,307	4.9%
Transportation and Warehousing	14,374	14,808	434	3.0%
Information	14,423	14,080	-343	-2.4%
Finance and Insurance	68,920	65,976	-2,944	-4.3%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	11,034	11,413	379	3.4%
Professional and Technical Services	55,489	62,623	7,134	12.9%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	6,082	7,029	947	15.6%
Administrative and Waste Services	26,963	27,427	464	1.7%
Educational Services	32,770	34,884	2,114	6.5%
Health Care and Social Assistance	114,674	119,098	4,424	3.9%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	7,995	8,349	354	4.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	47,595	54,566	6,971	14.6%
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	21,885	23,528	1,643	7.5%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development, ES-202 database

⁶ Due to a lag in reporting, only the 1st quarter 2013 employment data from the state's ES-202 database were available as of November 2013.

The Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development produces a semi-annual job vacancy survey. This survey provides information on the number and characteristics of the job vacancies across the state and regions by occupation. Combined with Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages employment data (ES-202), the job vacancy data can help identify industries and occupations that are both growing in employment and exhibiting higher than average vacancy rates. The most recent data available are from the 2nd quarter of 2012.

The overall job vacancy rate for the Greater Boston region during the 2nd quarter of 2012 was 2.9%, on par with the statewide vacancy rate of 2.8%. As was the case statewide, a substantial share of the job vacancies were part-time, although the Greater Boston region did have a higher share of full-time jobs. Of the 39,830 job vacancies in the Greater Boston region, 53% were full-time vacancies compared to a statewide average of only 43%.

Among the major occupational groups, several STEM related occupations had higher than average vacancy rates, including jobs within the computer and mathematical and life and physical science occupational categories. In terms of absolute vacancies, food preparation and serving related occupations had the highest number with over 6,000 vacancies, representing a 5% vacancy rate. However, the vast majority of these vacancies were part-time (82%). The construction and production occupational groups were characterized by very low vacancy rates (1.0% and 1.2%) during the 2nd quarter of 2012.

The PIC is involved in life sciences, healthcare, and hospitality industry projects. A summary of each of these initiatives appears in a latter section of this plan. Employment in these industry/ occupational areas has been growing, and is projected to grow over the coming years. Among the goals of each initiative, are to assist employers with filling projected job openings and in collaboration with employers, schools, and training providers, develop career pathways for Boston youth and adults to obtain the skills needed for employment in these industries and occupational areas.

Dropout Prevention and Reduction

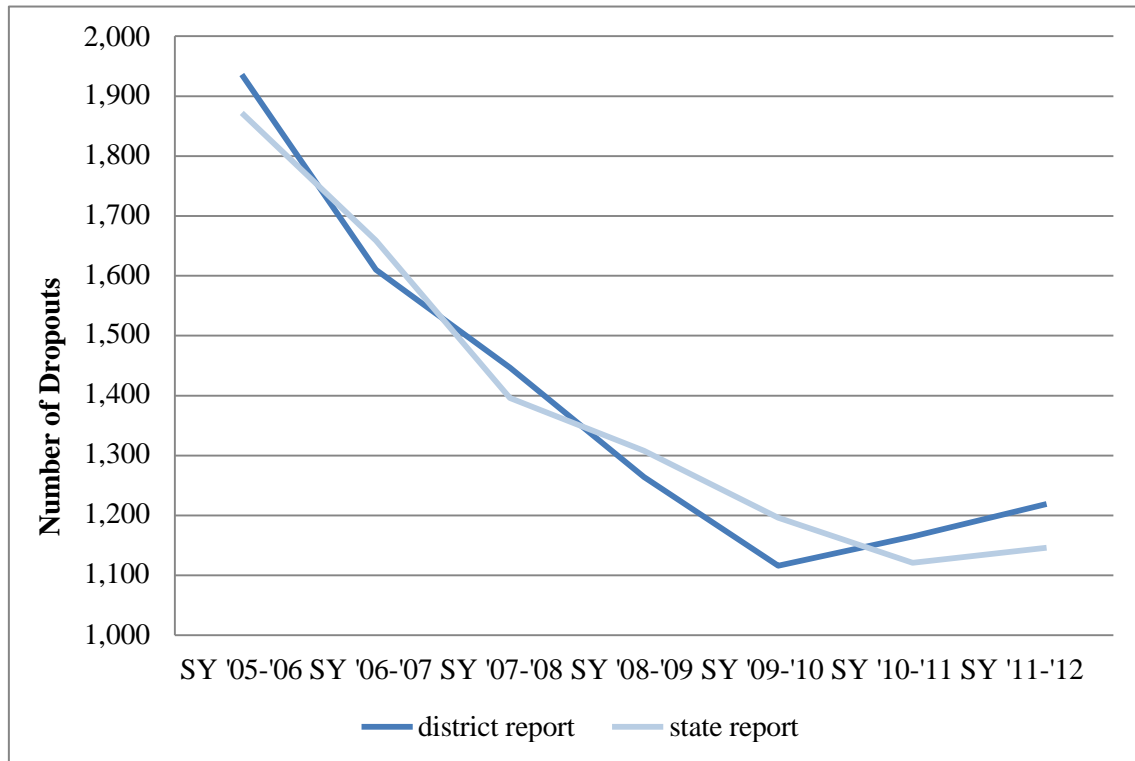
The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released its annual report on high school graduation and dropout rates earlier this year. State graduation rates continue to increase while dropout rates and counts continue to fall. The state's four-year high school graduation rate continued a five-year climb from 80.9% in 2007 to 84.7% in 2012, increasing 1.3 percentage points from 83.4% in 2011. The five-year graduation rate increased from 84% to 86.3% between 2007 and 2011. In another positive trend, the groups usually most behind made the greatest gains in the four-year graduation rates, including limited English-proficient students, Latino students and students with disabilities.

Even more dramatically, the annual dropout number decreased by 4,385, from a high of 11,436 in 2007 to a low of 7,051 in 2012, falling by 843 in the last year. The 2012 dropout rate of 2.5% represents the lowest overall rate in decades and a welcome downward trend from 3.8% in 2007. The state credits the dropout trends to major five-year decreases in the dropout rate in large cities such as Boston, Lawrence, Fall River, New Bedford and Lynn. Specifically, DESE attributes the recent improvements overall to new practices piloted since 2010 through the \$15 million High School Graduation Initiative, led by the ESE, and to the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Work Group, a seven-year effort to help high-dropout districts use data to inform dropout reduction strategies.

In Boston, the graduation rates continued to increase as well. The four-year graduation rate increased by 3.8 percentage points between 2007 and 2012, from 80.9% to 84.7%, while the five-year graduation rate increased by 2.3 percentage points during the same period, from 84% to 86.3%. However, the dropout

numbers and rates have leveled off after a period of sharp decline, even increasing slightly in the past couple of school years. During the 2006-2007 school year, based on BPS district reports, 1,936 students left BPS before earning a diploma. In 2011-2012, the number of dropouts was 1,219, a reduction of over 700 or 38% from the 2006-2007 school year, but up from a recent lows of 1,116 in 2009-10 and 1,165 in 2010-11. Dropout reports for the BPS district prepared by DESE show a similar pattern of a sharp decline in the number of BPS dropouts followed by recent plateauing in the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years (Chart 2).

Chart 2: Decline in the Number of BPS Dropouts, 2005-06 to 2011-12

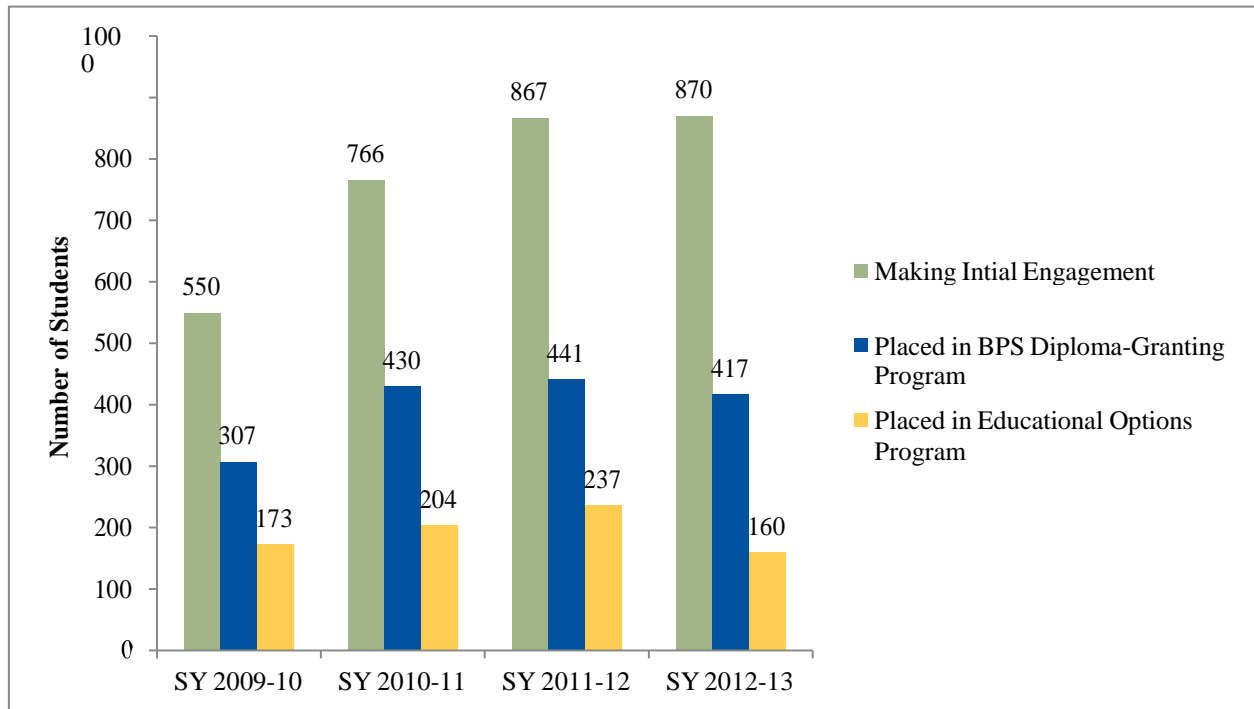


The substantial decline in the dropout population is largely due to the culmination of both local dropout prevention and recovery efforts over the past several years. To reduce the number of 12th grade dropouts, BPS developed an online Credit Recovery program to assist 12th graders with completing required courses in time for graduation. Credit Recovery currently serves about 300-400 seniors per school-year. According to BPS, Credit Recovery led to a 4.8 percentage point increase in the 4-year cohort graduation rate of the Class of 2012. On the dropout recovery front, BPS, through a partnership with the PIC, began in the 2006-2007 school year reaching out to recent dropouts and encouraging them to re-enroll in educational programs to earn a high school diploma or its equivalency. The early success of these re-engagement efforts coupled with BPS broader goal to serve enrolled off-track youth led to the creation of the Re-Engagement Center (REC), a BPS dropout recovery center staffed with both PIC and BPS employees.

The REC completed its fourth year of operation last year. During the 2012-2013 school year, 870 youth visited the REC, a clear indication of the desire among former dropouts or currently disengaged students

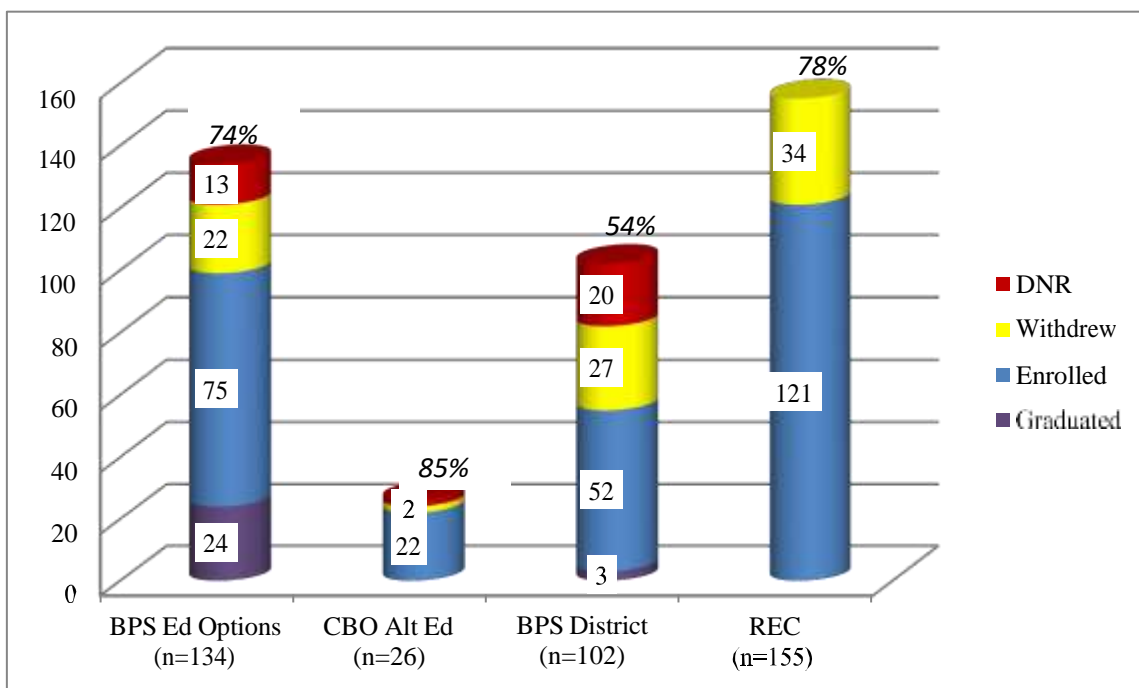
to continue their education or seek alternative education programs. Of the 870 youth making initial contact, 417 enrolled in a BPS program and 60 were connected with GED or other out-of-district programs (Chart 3). A total of 160 youth were placed in BPS Educational Options programs, or alternative high schools. Another 157 remained at the REC, most of whom desired an educational options placement, but could not obtain one immediately upon re-enrollment.

Chart 3: Re-Engagement Center (REC) Student Volume Since Opening: Number Making Initial Engagement, Number Placed in BPS, and Number Placed in Educational Options



To assess progress toward graduation, the PIC calculates a —stick rate¶ for re-enrolled students each year, defined as the percent of students remaining in school by the end of the year. The —stick rate¶ of the 417 students placed in a BPS diploma-granting program through the REC was the highest ever this year, with 71% of students completing the school year at their placement (compared with 69% in 2011-2012 and 67% in 2010-2011). The stick rate varied by type of program, as summarized in Chart 4 below. Almost three of every four students in BPS Educational Options programs completed the school year or graduated. The small CBO-operated alternative programs had the highest stick rate, but were able to accept only 26 students in total. The stick rate of BPS District schools—that is, the traditional, small, and comprehensive high schools—remained unchanged from the past two years at 54%.

Chart 4: Stick Rates of 2012-2013 Re-Enrolled Students at the End of the School Year By BPS Diploma Granting Program



There are 1,300 seats in the district portfolio of alternative education options, a combination of district alternative high schools and district-CBO partnership schools. These schools combine smaller class sizes, innovative instruction, wraparound supports and a more personal environment to address these students’ needs. However, even though dropouts and off-track students likely make up a quarter to a third of our high school population, only 8% of high school seats are provided by schools and programs designed to serve them. Now that dropouts are returning through the Re-Engagement Center, the impact of the gap is compounded each year, as fewer and fewer seats are available because they are filled with last year’s re-enrollees. Despite steady interest in alternative education placements, only 160 returning students were placed in alternative education during the 2012-13 school year, down from over 200 in the previous two years.

Our data and conversations with dropouts at the REC tell us that the most frequent reasons for leaving school are disconnection from adults and peers in the larger schools, falling too far behind to catch up, or personal problems. When they return, overwhelmingly, they choose the smaller, more personalized environments offered by alternative programs.

The PIC will continue to work with BPS, the Youth Transitions Task Force, and other partners to expand alternative education placements and improve the graduation rates of all BPS students, including those that re-enroll in school through the REC. The bleak labor market prospects for high school dropouts in the Boston economy make reducing the size of the dropout population a crucial workforce development and education policy priority.

Postsecondary Enrollment, Persistence, and Completion

In January 2013, the Center for Labor Market Studies and The Boston Foundation released: Getting Closer to the Finish Line, a longitudinal postsecondary tracking study of Boston Public Schools Graduates from the Classes of 2000 to 2010.⁷ The 2013 study is an update of the 2008 study titled Getting to the Finish Line. Among the key findings of the 2013 study were the following:

- College enrollment rates are up. First year enrollment has increased from 61% for the Class of 2005 to 70% for the Class of 2010. Cumulative college enrollment rates were above 75% for the classes of 2007, 2008, and 2009, indicating that 3 out of every 4 graduates will enroll in a postsecondary institution within a few years from high school graduation.
- College persistence rates of the Classes of 2007, 2008, and 2009 are higher than for the Class of 2001, but have remained consistent in recent years. Two-year persistence rates averaged 44% for two-year college attendees, and 78% for four-year college attendees from the Classes of 2007, 2008, and 2009. Boosting the persistence rates of two-year attendees is critical to achieving the graduation goals of the Success Boston Initiative.
- College completion is up. The six year completion rate for the Class of 2006 reached 49%, eight percentage points higher than that of the Class of 2000. However this completion rate is well short of the 70% goal for the Class of 2011 established through the Success Boston initiative.
- Gender and race-ethnic gaps permeate all measures. Females fare much better than males BPS graduates in college enrollment, persistence, and graduation. Over 70% of White and Asian BPS graduates from the class of 2005 who enrolled in college graduated by 2012, versus only 41% of Black and 38% of Hispanic enrollees from this class.
- The Success Boston coaching program is working, with regression adjusted persistence rates that are nearly 17 percentage points higher than a comparison group of BPS students who did not receive coaching.

The progress on enrollment and graduation and the positive findings on the impact of coaching are important achievements for Success Boston partners. However, far too many BPS graduates who start college fail to attain a degree. This is particularly true for those attending two year colleges and Black and Hispanic BPS graduates. The college graduation rates of two year attendees from recent classes range from 13-17 percent. The low graduation rates of boys of color represent a key education and workforce development challenge for the Boston region.

⁷ Center for Labor Market Studies with the assistance of the Boston PIC and BPS, Getting Closer to the Finish Line: the College Enrollment and Completion Experiences of Graduates of the Boston Public Schools, Prepared for The Boston Foundation, January 2013.

Strategic Priorities: FY2014-FY2017

The PIC has set seven strategic priorities to guide its activities over the next three fiscal years. The priorities are based on the multi-year strategic vision that the PIC developed in 2010. The strategic priorities have been updated to reflect progress made to date, current labor market conditions and developments, and the new Opportunity Youth initiative. The updated plan was shared with the Board and its Executive Committee in November 2013.

The first four priorities pertain to strengthening workforce development systems to enhance universally available services, support populations that have been disproportionately challenged and meet the workforce needs of the private sector. The fifth, sixth, and seventh priorities guide the PIC's strategic initiatives, namely better-preparing young people for the knowledge-based economy by improving high school graduation rates through keeping more students in school and reconnecting those who have left without a diploma, and by boosting college enrollment, persistence, and completion. With men of color feeling the greatest impact of the recent economic downturn and ensuing weak labor market recovery, the PIC brings explicit intention in each of its systems and initiatives to seeing boys and men of color make visible progress attaching to the workforce and educational institutions. All of these priorities are tied to the broader economic development goals of preparing all Boston residents, both youth and adults, for successful careers in Boston's knowledge-based economy.

The PIC's strategic priorities for FY14-FY17 are to:

- I. Manage a high-performing Workforce Investment Board, partnering closely with the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services (JCS), to ensure that public investments in Boston's workforce development systems are allocated and used responsibly, strategically and creatively.
- II. Ensure that Boston's Career Centers broker residents into pathways and programs that help them move towards the education, training and work experiences needed to progress in the workforce and achieve economic self-sufficiency.
- III. Collaborate with industries and higher education systems to better align education, training and certification pathways for particular occupations with significant projected hiring growth, and continue to convene employers in the health care, life sciences, and hospitality industries with colleges and training vendors that prepare workers for these industries in order to address workforce challenges and skill gaps in these key sectors of Boston's economy.
- IV. Serve as a premier School-to-Career intermediary for Boston Public School high school students by sustaining, enhancing, and increasing the quantity and quality of youth jobs, internships, and other career readiness activities so that students gain critical soft and hard employability and occupational skills and are exposed to potential career paths in the local and state economy.
- V. Innovate practices and influence policies to keep more high school students in school through graduation and to reconnect those who have already dropped out to educational programs that will allow them to earn a diploma or GED, thereby increasing their access to post-secondary education and training and, in turn, financial independence in the knowledge-based economy

- VI. Bridge the crucial transition to post-secondary education through coaching and mentoring students and driving institutional reforms that support students while in college, and increase the connection between postsecondary education and future careers.
- VII. Co-convene the new Opportunity Youth Collaborative by bringing together over 40 youth agencies and funder organizations to design a blueprint for educational and career pathways for Boston's disconnected high school dropouts and high school graduates between the ages of 16 and 24.

Highlights of Cross-Regional Initiatives

The PIC is currently engaged in four cross-regional, cross-sector planning activities to support its strategic priorities. They are the SCILS, Healthcare Career Consortium, Greater Boston Hospitality Sector, and Boston STEM initiatives. Each initiative seeks to strengthen collaboration among employers, workforce development agencies, including Boston's One Stop Career Centers, and educational institutions to enhance the alignment between education/ training pathways and future employment opportunities.

These initiatives are targeted to large industry sectors of the economy or in the case of life sciences, areas of high projected labor demand from employers. STEM is an initiative that cuts across multiple industry sectors of the economy. The current focus of the Boston STEM initiative is to build educational pathways for future STEM occupations. All of these workforce initiatives intersect with local, regional, and statewide economic development strategies. Below is a description of how we are mobilizing each initiative to address workforce challenges and skill gaps.

Skills for Careers in Life Sciences (SCILS)

In April 2012, JCS was awarded a four year, \$5 million U.S. Department of Labor grant to focus on meeting the workforce needs in healthcare and life sciences in Metro Boston, two sectors that rely on H1B visas to bring employees with critical skills to the United States. This grant project is funded with the fees that employers pay for these visas and targets non-entry level workers in these sectors. More specifically, the initiative targets occupations including Biological Technicians, Medical Lab Technicians and Medical Lab Technologists. SCILS-funded programs support occupational training, contextualized learning, customized training, program development and the recruitment, case management and placement of eligible participants.

The newly-created SCILS Employer Advisory Group has met three times in 2013 – on March 6th, May 15th, and September 26th. Since the May meeting, the group has expanded to 60 people to incorporate additional life sciences employers and community colleges that operate biotechnology programs outside of the grant-funded programs. The meeting on September 26th featured a special presentation by the MA Bio Ed Foundation about entry level employment demand in the life sciences industry. The meeting also included a brainstorming session to determine the content of future meetings.

Additional agenda items included the roll-out of the Life Science Credential Achievement Fund which provides the SCILS initiative an opportunity to target and support unemployed or under-employed workers who would benefit from new credentials to re-enter the life sciences workforce or advance within their career. A process is in place to approve training vendors and qualified individuals are being encouraged to apply for SCILS financial assistance. Recruitment of unemployed and under-employed workers occurs at one-stop career centers throughout the region. The PIC employs a health sciences and career center project manager to lead this new initiative and educate career center staff on training opportunities.

Boston Healthcare Careers Consortium

The Boston Healthcare Careers Consortium (BHCCC), convened by the PIC, is a network of over 40 different organizations, representing 21 different healthcare providers or employer associations, 9 colleges and universities plus the state Department of Higher Education, and 12 workforce development

partners. In November 2011, the Consortium released the report: *Critical Collaboration: Improving Education & Training Pathways to Careers in Health Care*.

The report contained 16 recommendations for better aligning employers, education and the workforce system to train Boston's healthcare workforce. BHCCC published this document in an effort to articulate the challenges students face in our current system and create a blueprint for moving forward collectively to bring about change. Following the report's publication, the consortium is now focused on moving forward on three recommendations made in the report: moving toward consistent and transferable developmental education classes, encouraging employers to publish information about hiring preferences, and encouraging community colleges to publish job placement statistics.

BHCCC successfully launched a Request for Proposals to fund forward-thinking employers and educational institutions to research and publish employer hiring preferences and student employment outcomes. With support from SkillWorks and the SCILS grant, the RFP was released on October 30, 2012. After committee deliberation, the group decided to fund two employers and three educational institutions for the one-year project. The work is currently underway and expected to conclude by February 2014. We are learning a great deal from this project and anticipate holding a large public event in spring 2014 to share outcomes and lessons learned from this project with the broader Massachusetts community.

In addition to the occupational hiring and program completion research projected funded by the SCILS grant, BHCCC continues to structure on-going conversations about occupations that are changing or are especially in demand. Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital and Network raised issues around the lack of higher skilled CNAs at our February meeting. This has since led to a more comprehensive survey on varied employer needs in CNA-type roles, in partnership with the Healthcare Partnership of Western Massachusetts. We also recently conducted a more limited survey on Chinese-speaking medical interpreters in the greater Boston area. The consortium is working on strategies to integrate immigrants with credentials earned abroad into the healthcare sector. PIC staff is part of MIRA's ongoing New Americans Integration Institute and the director of this institute is now a regularly participating member in the Consortium, ensuring consistent representation for the immigrant community in our dialogues on healthcare and workforce development. Lastly, PIC staff members are working with Jewish Vocational Services and JCS to develop specialized one stop career center services for the healthcare industry at The Work Place.

STEM Network

The Boston STEM Network is one of seven regional collaborative bodies which advise the Governor's STEM Council. Co-chaired by the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, the Boston Public Schools, and the PIC, the network is comprised of representatives from the public education system, STEM businesses, afterschool programs, labor organizations, philanthropic partners, and others from the community. Through this collaboration, the network analyzes effective instruction and partnership in order to increase student interest and achievement in STEM subjects. The group also builds the STEM Network in Boston, inventories partnerships and programs, and submits a plan that develops local initiatives.

The STEM Network meets on a quarterly basis, bringing community members together to discuss ongoing initiatives and opportunities in the Boston area. Recent projects include organizing a green energy conference (Get Energized! Powering the Future with Green STEM Education) with the Boston Youth Environmental Network, the use of social media to keep network members and the greater

community apprised of STEM news, and a pilot study – in collaboration with the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership and Harvard University and McLean Hospital’s Program in Education, Afterschool & Resiliency – to investigate the quality of summer STEM programming available to middle school students.

Greater Boston Hospitality Sector Initiative

In October 2013, the PIC and Community Work Services, Inc. (CWC) held the first convening of employers and education and training providers in the Greater Boston Hospitality sector. The two organizations are coming together as a result of a Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund grant that CWS recently received to provide skill training and to map industry pathways. Recognizing that the hospitality sector already has a substantial footprint in Boston and is forecasted to grow, the PIC views this as an opportune moment to catalogue the existing pathway opportunities, identify gaps, and communicate the findings from this work to the residents of Greater Boston.

The goals for the initial convening meeting are 1) to explore developing a community of practice and 2) to identify the pathways into the industry through training and degree programs. This convening also will facilitate a renewed emphasis on winning Workforce Training Fund grants for Boston employers to advance the skills of their current employees.

Performance Measurement

The PIC assesses its impact on the community and its Board members through quantitative measures of the organization's and its partners' accomplishments as well as qualitative feedback. The PIC and its partners have created performance reports to track progress made and measure the effectiveness of individual programs and activities. These performance reports are shared on a regular basis with board subcommittees and program staff. Table 3 summarizes the primary performance reports used to establish benchmarks and track outcomes for the activities undertaken to achieve progress on the PIC's seven strategic priorities.

In addition to these performance reports, the PIC conducts more thorough internal evaluations of certain programs and initiatives and partners with the CLMS and the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy to undertake external evaluations. Recent evaluation efforts have focused on the REC, the Youth Violence Prevention Funder Collaborative's Meaningful Employment Initiative, and the efficacy of Success Boston coaching services. Each of these external studies generated positive media coverage, raised the profile of these initiatives, and drew interest from public policy leaders and practitioners. The findings from these studies inform future practices.

Table 3:
Key Performance Reports for Tracking Progress on Strategic Priorities and Managing Services

Performance Reports	Description	Frequency
Career Center Dashboards	A career center performance dashboard	Quarterly
WIA ITA Quarterly Report	Provides employment and wage outcomes by training program	Quarterly
WIA Youth Performance Quarterly Report	Provides employment and credential attainment outcomes by vendor	Quarterly
Healthcare Career Consortium Memorandums SCILS Reports	Provides information on employer involvement, training providers participating, number of adults served, and general updates on activities and initiatives	Quarterly
School-Year and Summer Jobs Reports	Provide number of jobs, wages paid, a listing of top employers and characteristics of those served and their jobs.	Quarterly
Job Shadow Day Report	Provides number of participating students, employers, and key lessons learned	Annual
Classroom at the Workplace	Summer and school-year reports on participation, # of classes by subject, employment outcomes, and retake passing rates by subject	Twice Per Year
Tech Apprentice	Provides job placement and employer participation information	Annual
Academic Persistence Through Employment	Provides update on students served,	Twice Per

	persistence rates, and job placements	Year
Dropout Outreach and Recovery Reports	Comprehensive analysis of reconnected students with historical comparisons	Quarterly
Success Boston Initiative Reports	Comprehensive analysis of each cohort and their persistence and graduation outcomes	Quarterly
BPS Longitudinal Study	Comprehensive analysis of the college enrollment and completion outcomes of all BPS graduates	Every 2 years
College Navigator Report	Provides information on students served and persistence outcomes	Quarterly
Opportunity Youth Collaborative Progress Reports	Memorandums on the progress of the initiative and preparation of detailed baseline data and characteristics of the size of the population and an analysis of currently available programming to serve these youth	Quarterly
Corporate and Foundation Support Reports	Provides status reports on corporate and foundation fundraising campaigns	Quarterly

A few years ago, PIC staff developed a higher-level scorecard to monitor progress on its strategic priorities. The scorecard identifies key objectives for each priority and the primary measures that are used to assess progress on each objective. The measures include educational and training enrollment and completion, job placement, and earnings outcomes. The scorecard also tracks key policy goals, such as the creation and passage of state legislation to expand or support PIC priorities and increased appropriations for current public funding streams relied on by the PIC and its partners. To evaluate the PIC's convening and connecting functions, measures of industry collaborations and employer participation were included. A copy of the FY14 scorecard has been included with this strategic plan.