

**How Are Boston Pilot School Students Faring?**  
*Student Demographics, Engagement, and Performance*  
**1998-2003**

**Rosann Tung, Monique Ouimette, and Jay Feldman**  
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**Center for Collaborative Education**  
**1135 Tremont Street, Suite 490**  
**Boston, MA 02120**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<b>STUDENT ENGAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>STUDENT ATTENDANCE .....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>STUDENT WAIT LIST .....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>STUDENT MOBILITY.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>STUDENT DISCIPLINE .....</i>	<i>21</i>
<b>STUDENT PERFORMANCE .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<i>COMPARISON ON BPS AND PILOT SCHOOLS ON MCAS SCORES .....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>GRADE RETENTION .....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>GRADUATES' FUTURE PLANS .....</i>	<i>34</i>
<b>DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>APPENDIX A .....</b>	<b>40</b>

# How Are Boston Pilot School Students Faring? *Student Demographics, Engagement, and Performance, 1998-2003*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the efficacy of the Boston Pilot Schools, an model of urban schools created in 1994 to promote innovation and increased choice options within the Boston Public Schools (BPS). Unlike most urban public schools, the Boston Pilot Schools have control over budget, staffing, curriculum, governance, and time, all critical conditions to building a unified learning community in which teaching and learning are personalized and of high quality. They represent a new vision of public schools and districts in which schools are provided flexibility to create challenging learning environments in exchange for increased accountability.

Today, there are nineteen Boston Pilot Schools spanning grades K-12. This report examines student demographics, achievement, and engagement at the thirteen Pilot Schools that have been in operation for more than one year. These thirteen schools are serving approximately 3400 students, or 5.5% of the total Boston Public Schools (BPS) enrollment. The student assignment process is the same for Pilot elementary and middle schools as for all schools within BPS. Pilot high schools have special admissions processes that screen for fit and commitment to the school's philosophy; prior academic achievement is not a factor.

For urban, mostly low-income students and students of color, there is an urgency to develop models of schooling that provide greater access to high quality education. How are students in the Pilot Schools faring, especially as compared to their counterparts in regular BPS schools? Do the Pilot Schools' conditions of smallness and autonomy over resources improve student engagement and performance?

This report examines quantitative indicators of Pilot Schools on three levels: 1) student demographics, 2) student engagement, and 3) student performance. Data in this report were received from the Boston Public Schools and individual Pilot Schools<sup>1</sup>. The report's primary finding is this:

*While the Pilot Schools serve a student population generally representative of the Boston Public Schools, Pilot School students perform well on all available measures of student engagement and performance, and are among the top performing of all Boston Public Schools.*

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<sup>1</sup> The views, findings, and opinions of the authors in this article do not necessarily reflect those held by the City of Boston or the Boston Public Schools.

## ***Student Demographics***

- The Boston Pilot Schools K-12 student population is generally representative of the larger BPS student population, with some variation by school level. While serving a similar percentage of African American and Asian American students, Pilot Schools serve a slightly higher percentage of White students and a smaller percentage of Hispanic students than the BPS district average. With the addition of eight new Pilot Schools, Pilot demographics will even more closely resemble those of the district.
- Pilot high schools serve significantly more African-American students and fewer Asian-American students than the non-Pilot high schools in the district.
- Pilot elementary schools serve a larger percentage of White students and a lower percentage of African-American and Asian-American students than the non-Pilot high schools in the district.
- Pilot middle schools serve a higher percentage of Asian-American students and a lower percentage of Hispanic students than the non-Pilot high schools in the district.
- Pilot middle and high schools serve a percentage of low-income students that is similar to the district average, while Pilot elementary schools serve a significantly lower percentage of low-income students than the district average. Pilot Schools serve similar percentages of special education mainstream students, and a lower percentage of bilingual students.
- Pilot Schools enroll a smaller percentage of students classified as substantially separate, but have begun enrolling substantially separate students at higher rates in the 2003-2004 school year.

## ***Student Engagement***

- Pilot Schools rank among the BPS schools with the highest student attendance rates, reflecting high levels of student engagement.
- Pilot Schools have among the highest student wait lists of any BPS schools. This desirability has remained stable or increased over time, signaling the attraction of Boston families and students to small, personalized schools.
- Pilot middle and high schools have a significantly lower percentage of students who transfer out of school than does the BPS district, signaling higher “holding power” than regular BPS schools.
- Pilot Schools have among the lowest suspension rates of all BPS schools, reflecting their relatively safe and personalized cultures.

## ***Student Performance***

### **MCAS**

- All three Pilot elementary schools perform at or above the system average in English Language Arts and Math, with one school one of the top performing schools in the district.
- Three of the five Pilot schools that serve middle schools students performed at or above the system average in 2002-03.

- Three of the six Pilot high schools had MCAS scores ranked in the top of Boston high schools, placing just behind the exam schools in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Two high schools serve students that have previously been unsuccessful at other BPS high schools.

### **Retention, Graduation, and Post Graduation Plans**

- Pilot Schools have significantly low grade retention rates. Grade retention is a key predictor of dropping out of school. Pilot Schools' favorable scores on the MCAS suggest that these low retention rates are more due to students meeting the requirements for promotion to the next grade, rather than an indication of social promotion.
- Pilot high schools have both high rates of graduation and high rates of students planning to attend college. The rate of Pilot high school graduates planning to attend college, and in particular four-year colleges, is dramatically greater than the BPS district average.

### ***Conclusions***

The findings in this report suggest that the Boston Pilot Schools continue to serve their students commendably. With an enrollment roughly mirroring the district's student population, the Pilot Schools are creating communities of learning which meet students' academic and emotional needs. Across indicators of student engagement, Pilot Schools have among the highest attendance and longest wait lists, and among the lowest suspensions and transfers out, in the district. Pilot Schools' students score at or above the district average in both English and Math. These schools have low grade retention rates, high rates of graduation, and send significantly more of their students on to post-graduate education than does the district.

How do Pilot Schools achieve the degrees of success they have had with their students? Their status as Pilot Schools, with autonomy from the district over budget, staffing, scheduling, governance, and curriculum, allows them to create unified learning communities. Their smallness allows staff and students to know each other well, and structures such as smaller learning communities and advisories allow relationships among school community members to build over time. The curriculum in Pilot Schools is competency-based, and all students experience a challenging core academic curriculum. In order to graduate, students must demonstrate, through portfolios and exhibitions, that they have mastered the curriculum.

The Boston Pilot Schools have begun to demonstrate that when urban public schools are provided increased autonomy and flexibility to adopt innovative practices, and are held accountable for their results, student outcomes across a range of indicators improve. These findings have significant implications for the future of urban public education and suggest a movement toward creating small schools and providing these schools with greater autonomy over their resources as key vehicles for improving urban student engagement and performance.

# **How Are Boston Pilot School Students Faring?**

## ***Student Demographics, Engagement, and Performance, 1998-2003***

### **INTRODUCTION**

Accumulating evidence indicates that many of today's urban public schools are not providing students, particularly low-income students and students of color, with an equitable, high quality education. Progress in raising student achievement has been slow and incremental (U.S. Department of Education, 2002; Sadowski, 2001). A stubborn gap persists in access to educational opportunities and in academic expectations of White students and Black, Hispanic, and low-income students (e.g., Oakes, 1985; Rolon, 2002). With the nation's population growing increasingly diverse, our schools are leaving many of our students behind. As a result, there is a declining level of confidence and support in our nation's public schools, particularly for urban schools, and a corresponding increase in the use of charter schools, school choice, and voucher programs as policy solutions (e.g., Finn et al, 2000; Nappi, 1999).

The Boston Pilot Schools are a unique innovation in public schooling. The result of a partnership among the Mayor, School Committee, Superintendent, and Teachers Union, Boston Pilot Schools were created in 1994 to promote increased choice options within the school district, largely in response to 1994 state legislation creating first-time charter schools and the anticipated loss of Boston students to area charter schools. The Pilot Schools were intended to be models of educational innovation and to serve as research and development sites for effective urban public schools. "The purpose of establishing Pilot Schools is to provide models of educational excellence that help to foster widespread educational reform in all Boston public schools" (Boston Public Schools, 1995).

Pilot Schools represent a new vision of public schools and districts in which schools are provided maximum flexibility to create challenging learning environments, and the role of the school district is recast to provide these schools with increased support. Pilot Schools are given charter-like autonomy over budget, staffing, curriculum, governance, and time. In 1997, the Pilot Schools and the Center for Collaborative Education, a nonprofit organization dedicated to school reform, formed the Boston Pilot Schools Network for the purpose of supporting and coordinating the Network's needs.

A unique feature of Pilot Schools is that they operate within the Boston Public Schools (BPS), unlike charter schools. All Pilot School teachers are members of the Boston Teachers Union, receive union salaries and benefits, and accrue seniority. This attachment with the district provides the opportunity for Pilot School practices and conditions to influence the larger BPS system, while providing Pilot Schools with the economy of scale advantages of facilities, payroll, and transportation, among others.

Pilot schools will operate with an average school-based per pupil budget, plus a start-up supplement, and will have greatly increased decision-making authority, including exemptions from all Union and School Committee work rules...Employees in Pilot schools will be required to work the full work day/work year as prescribed by the terms of the individual Pilot school proposal. Further, they shall be required to perform and work in accordance with the terms of the individual Pilot school proposal. (Boston Teachers Union Contract, 1994)

Today, there are nineteen Boston Pilot Schools spanning grades K-12 and serving approximately 6,100 students, or 9.5% of the total Boston Public Schools enrollment. For urban districts that serve predominantly low-income students and students of color, there is an urgency to develop models of schooling that provide greater access to quality education. We wondered: To what degree are Pilot Schools responding to that desire? How are students in Pilot Schools faring? To what extent do the Pilot Schools' conditions of smallness and autonomy over budget, staffing, curriculum, governance, and time improve student engagement and achievement?

## **FINDINGS**

We believe that improvement in student outcomes should be examined through multiple lenses. This report examines quantitative indicators about the Boston Pilot Schools on three levels: (1) student demographics, (2) student engagement, and (3) student achievement. Data used in this report were received from the Boston Public Schools and individual Pilot Schools<sup>2</sup>.

Of the nineteen current Pilot Schools in the Network, thirteen operated with Pilot School status in 2002-03. This report examines student demographics, achievement, and engagement at these thirteen Pilot Schools that have been in operation for more than one year.

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<sup>2</sup> The views, findings, and opinions of the authors in this article do not necessarily reflect those held by the City of Boston or Boston Public Schools.

Table 1: List of Pilot Schools

	<b>Grades served</b>	<b>Year Opened (Year Pilot Status if different)</b>
<b>Pilot Schools included in this report</b>		
Boston Arts Academy	9-12	1998
Boston Evening Academy	9-12	1998
Fenway High School	9-12	1983 (1995)
Greater Egleston Community High School	9-12	1992 (1996)
Health Careers Academy	9-12	1998
New Mission High School	9-12	1997
Harbor School	6-8	1997
Quincy Upper School	6-9 (adding one grade per year to grade 12)	1999
Lyndon School	K-8	1995
Mission Hill School	K-8	1997
Young Achievers Science and Math School	K-8	1995
Boston Community Leadership Academy <sup>3</sup>	9-12	(2002)
Tech Boston Academy	9-12 (opened with 9 <sup>th</sup> grade in 2002; adding one grade per year)	2002
<b>Newly opened Pilot Schools</b>		
Orchard Gardens	K-8	2003
New Boston Middle School	6-8	2003
<b>Conversion Pilot Schools</b>		
Another Course to College	9, 11-12 (adding grade 10 in 2004)	(2003)
Mason Elementary	K-6	(2003)
Lee Elementary	K-6	(2003)
North Zone Early Childhood Center	K0-grade 1	(2003)

<sup>3</sup> Formerly Boston High School.



## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

***Finding: Pilot Schools enroll a K-12 student population that is generally representative of the Boston Public Schools' student enrollment, although the percentage of low-income students and White students at the elementary level is lower than the BPS district average.***

As Pilot Schools are a special subset of schools within a larger urban district, it is important to study their enrollment patterns to ensure that the Pilot Schools serve a population that is representative of the entire district.

Student assignment/choice in elementary and middle schools is the same process for Pilot Schools as for all Boston Public Schools. Most schools serve students in their geographic zone, of which there are three in Boston. A few elementary and middle schools serve students citywide, across all three zones. Parents/students may list their first, second, and third choice schools based on their residence zone or based on preference of citywide schools. Citywide schools reserve a percentage of slots for neighborhood children and then open up the remaining slots for the citywide lottery. Two Pilot Schools are citywide schools: Mission Hill School and Young Achievers Science and Math School, both serving grades K-8.

All Boston high schools serve students citywide. Pilot high school admissions are determined by an application, and in some cases, by interviews. However, whereas BPS examination high schools base their admissions on entrance exam scores and grade point averages, Pilot high schools do not use their admissions process to screen students based on prior academic achievement, but rather to ensure fit and commitment to the school's philosophy.

### ***Racial Demographics***

***Finding: The Boston Pilot Schools K-12 student population is generally representative of the larger BPS student population, with some variation by school level<sup>4</sup>. While serving a similar percentage of Asian American students, Pilot Schools serve a slightly higher percentage of African American and White students and a smaller percentage of Hispanic students than the BPS district average.***

The Boston Public Schools<sup>5</sup> serve approximately 60,744 students in 130 K-12 schools, with approximately 47% Black, 30% Latino, 9% Asian, and 14% White students. Twenty percent of the district's students are designated as special needs, and 16% are students whose first language is not English and are enrolled in English Language Learner programs.

As a whole, the thirteen Pilot Schools described in this report served approximately 5.5% of the BPS population (approximately 3400 students)<sup>6</sup> in the 2002-03 school year. Pilot Schools student enrollment is representative of BPS, serving similar percentages of Asian and African-American Students, fewer Hispanic students, and more White students. Pilots serve slightly

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<sup>4</sup> Throughout this paper, when we compare Pilot Schools to BPS schools, we include all schools listed in Appendix A. At the high school level, exam schools are included in all analyses.

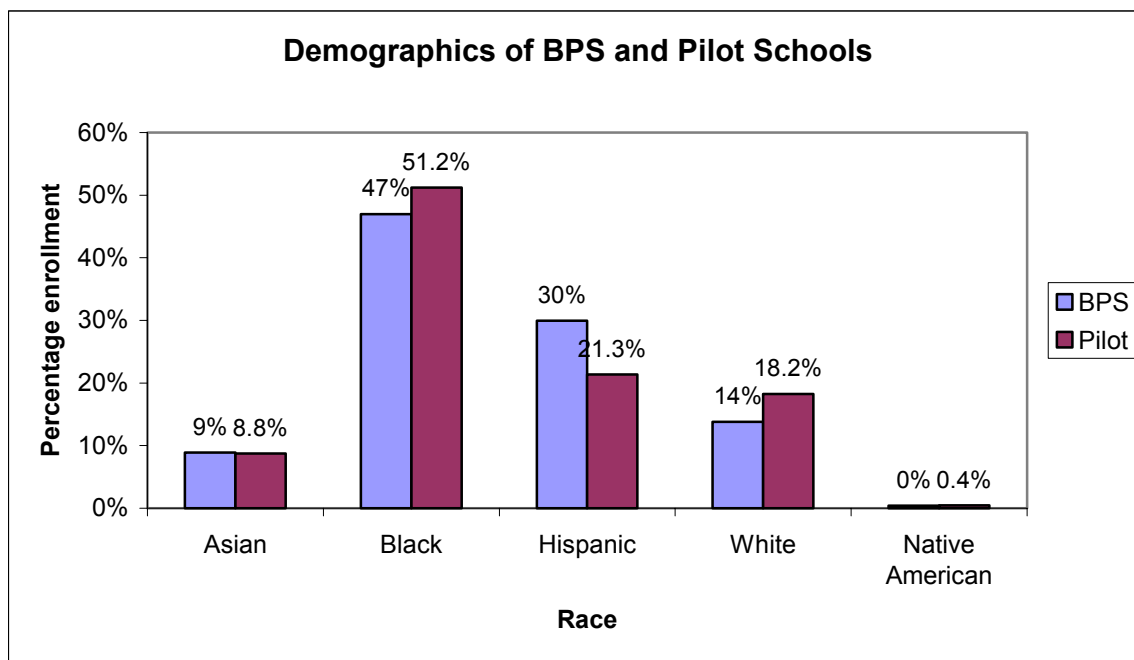
<sup>5</sup> Data taken from [www.boston.k12.ma.us](http://www.boston.k12.ma.us) revised October 2003.

<sup>6</sup> When all nineteen Pilot Schools are in operation in 2003-2004, they will enroll approximately 10% of the BPS student population.

lower percentages of free/reduced lunch students and a slightly higher percentage of special education mainstream students. It should be noted that there are so few Pilot Schools compared to the district that any one school may alter the racial, ethnic, or low-income composition across the Pilot Schools, and that differences from the district population vary by school level. Therefore, caution should be used in making generalizations across schools.

In averaging the racial breakdown of Pilot Schools by level (in Figures 2-4), Pilot elementary schools serve a significantly greater percentage of White students than the district average<sup>7</sup>, and a lower percentage of Hispanic and Asian American students (this is due primarily to the demographics of two of the three schools). Pilot middle schools serve a similar percentage of African American and White students, while serving a significantly higher percentage of Asian American students and lower percentage of Hispanic students. Pilot high schools serve a representative population of students when compared with non-Pilot BPS high schools. With the addition of the six new Pilot Schools, Pilot demographics will even more closely resemble that of the district.

Figure 1. Racial breakdown of BPS and Pilot Schools

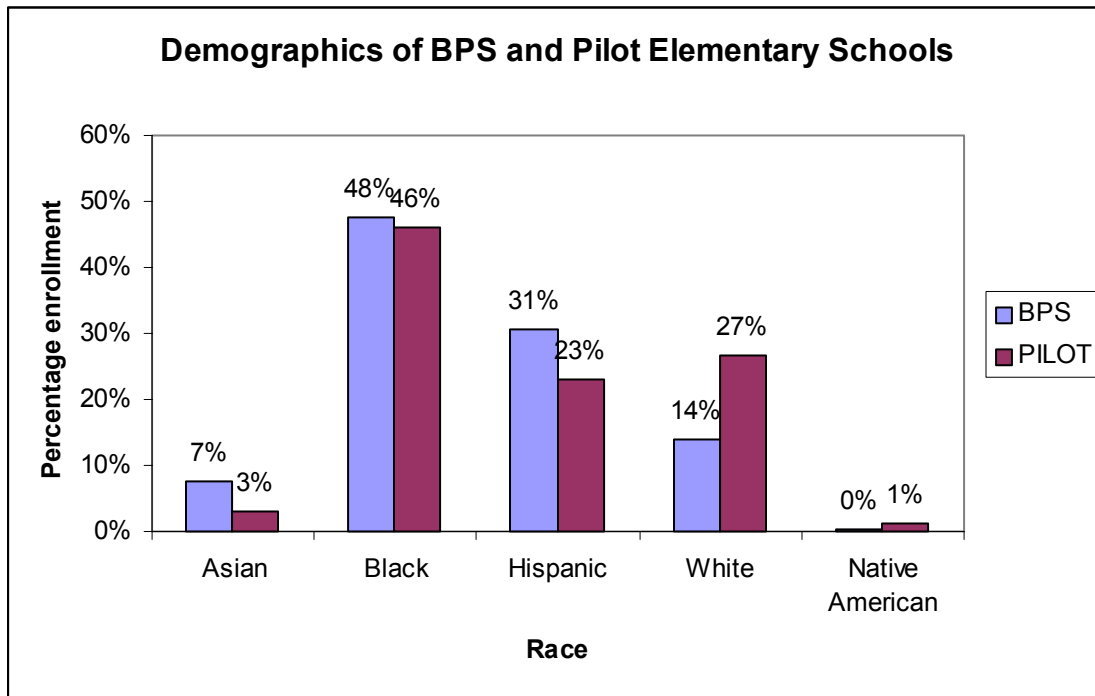


Separated by school, the percentages of White students in the three K-8 Pilot Schools are: Young Achievers 10%, Mission Hill 22%, and Lyndon 47%. The percentages of African American students are: Young Achievers 66.1%, Mission Hill 57.9%, and Lyndon 14.3%. That two of the three Pilot elementary schools serve a significantly higher percentage of White students may be due to several factors. One Pilot School, the Lyndon School, is located in a predominantly White neighborhood, and draws heavily from this neighborhood. The other two elementary schools are citywide schools. When a school draws from a citywide pool of applicants, while

<sup>7</sup> A number of Boston schools enroll student K-8 or 7-12. Because their numbers are so small, for the purposes of this paper, all K-8 whole school demographic and engagement data are included in the comparison of elementary schools, and all 7-12 schools are included in high schools. Achievement data is separated by grade level.

that school may be located in a racially diverse neighborhood, it may draw families from other neighborhoods for reasons such as curricular philosophy or reputation of leaders. A preliminary study of the pool of accepted applicants in 2001 from Mission Hill School, with 24% White students, showed that many non-neighborhood families came from predominantly White areas of the city.

Figure 2. Racial breakdown of BPS and Pilot Schools: Elementary schools



Pilot middle schools serve comparable percentages of African American and White students, while they differ considerably from BPS schools in the numbers of Hispanic and Asian students. Quincy Upper School is a Zone school located in Chinatown, and serves high numbers of Asian students.

Figure 3. Racial breakdown of BPS and Pilot Schools: Middle schools

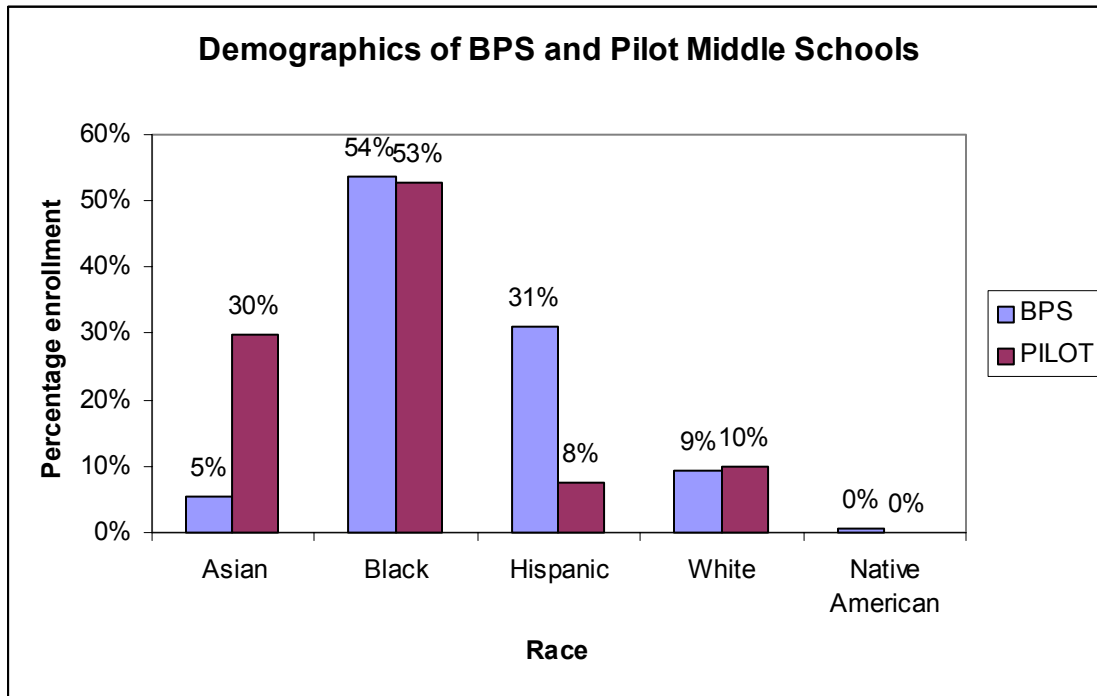
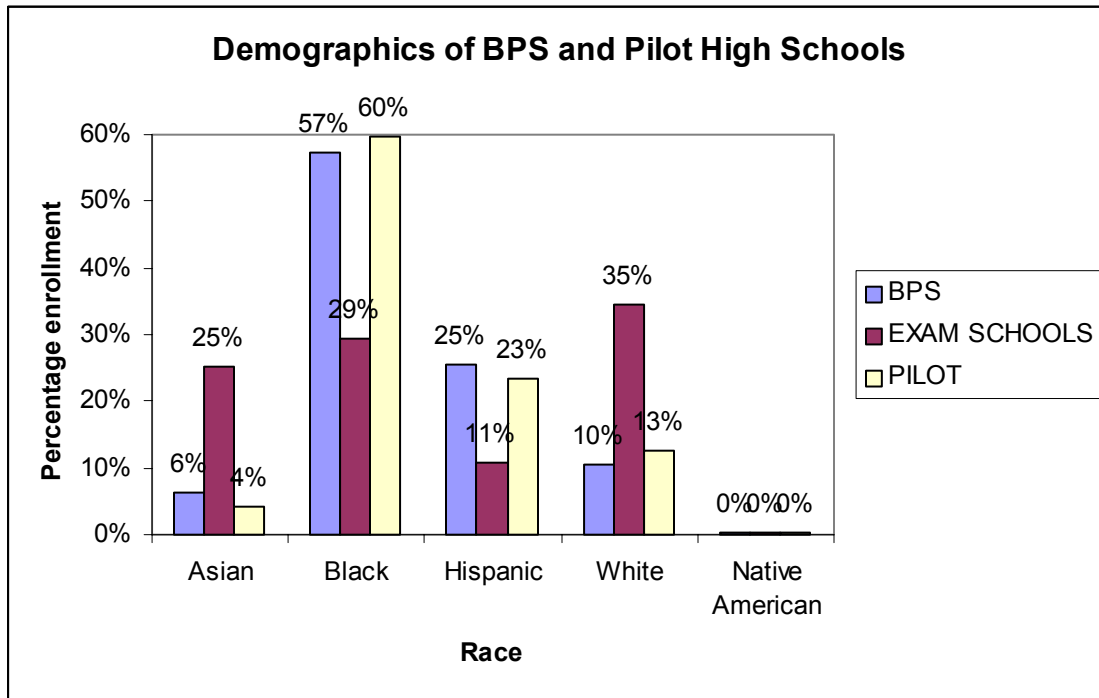


Figure 4 shows the breakdown by ethnicity of Boston Public high schools. BPS has three examination high schools that admit students on a competitive basis. They are: Boston Latin Academy, Boston Latin School, O'Bryant School of Mathematics & Science. Students are admitted to the exam schools based on results of an entrance test and grade point average.

Pilot high schools serve a population highly representative of the district's non-Pilot, non-exam high schools. Examination schools serve significantly more White and Asian students and a significantly lower percentage of African American and Hispanic students than does the district.

Figure 4. Racial breakdown of BPS and Pilot Schools: High schools

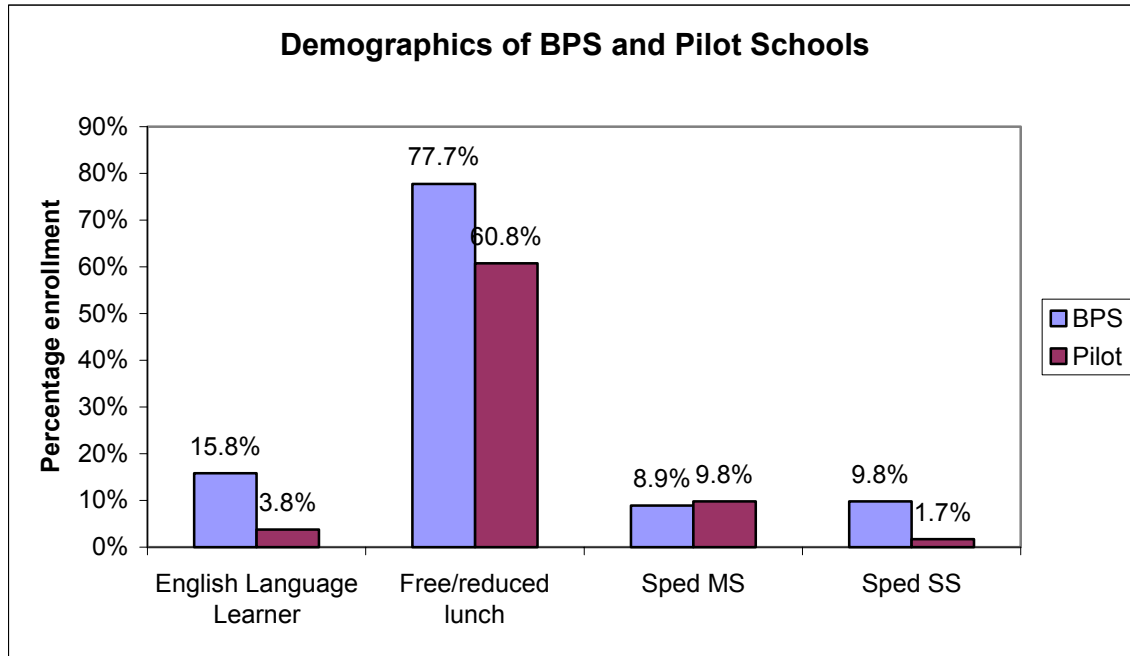


***Other demographic information***

***Finding: Pilot middle and high schools serve a percentage of low-income students that is similar to the district average, while Pilot elementary schools serve a significantly lower percentage of schools than the district average. Pilot Schools serve a slightly higher percentage of special education mainstream students, and a lower percentage of English Language Learner students and substantially separate special education students.***

Figure 5 shows demographic breakdowns of Pilot Schools' enrollments, based on percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch (a measure of socio-economic status) and percentage of students classified as special education mainstream (Special Education MS) or substantially separate (Special Education SS).

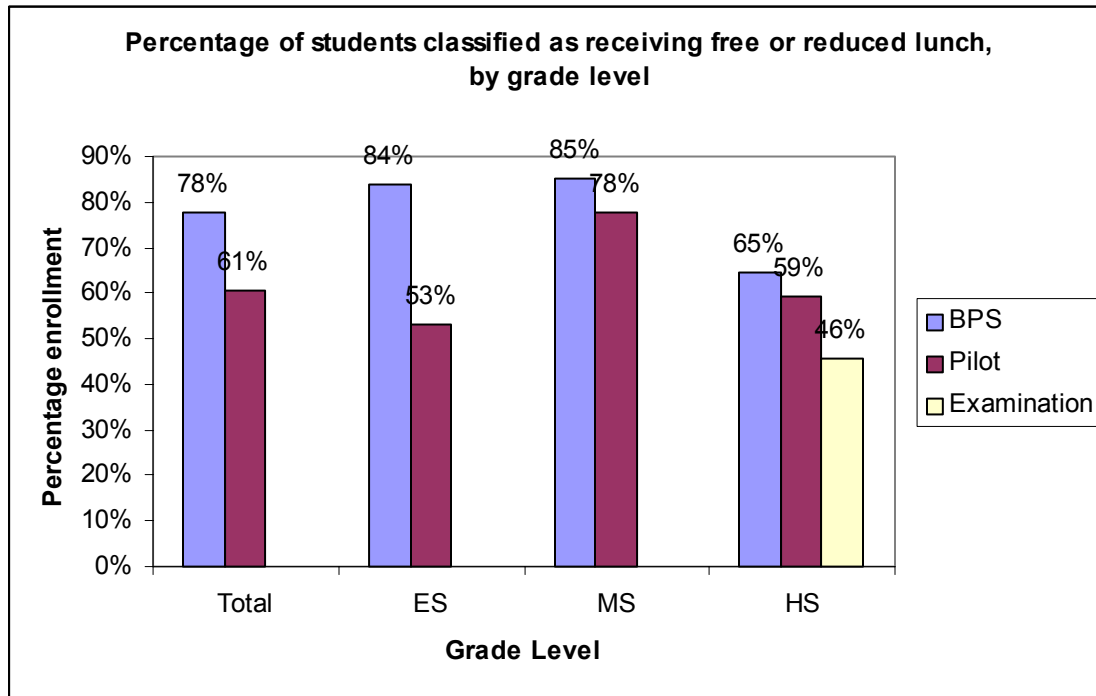
Figure 5. Percent of students by status in Pilot Schools and BPS



Pilot Schools enroll a smaller percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch than does the district. Pilot elementary schools (Figure 6) serve significantly less than the district average of free/reduced lunch status students, while Pilot middle and high schools serve similar or slightly lower percentages of free/reduced lunch status students.

Again, it should be noted that there are so few Pilot Schools compared to the district that any one school may alter the racial, ethnic, or low-income composition across the Pilot Schools, and that differences from the district population vary by school level. Therefore, caution should be used in making generalizations across schools. Separated by school, the percentages of students receiving free/reduced lunch in the three K-8 Pilot Schools are: Young Achievers 64.1%, Mission Hill 46.8%, and Lyndon 48.9%. That two of the three Pilot elementary schools serve a significantly lower percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch may be due to several factors, including location and citywide status.

**Figure 6. Percentage of students classified as receiving free/reduced lunch, by school level**



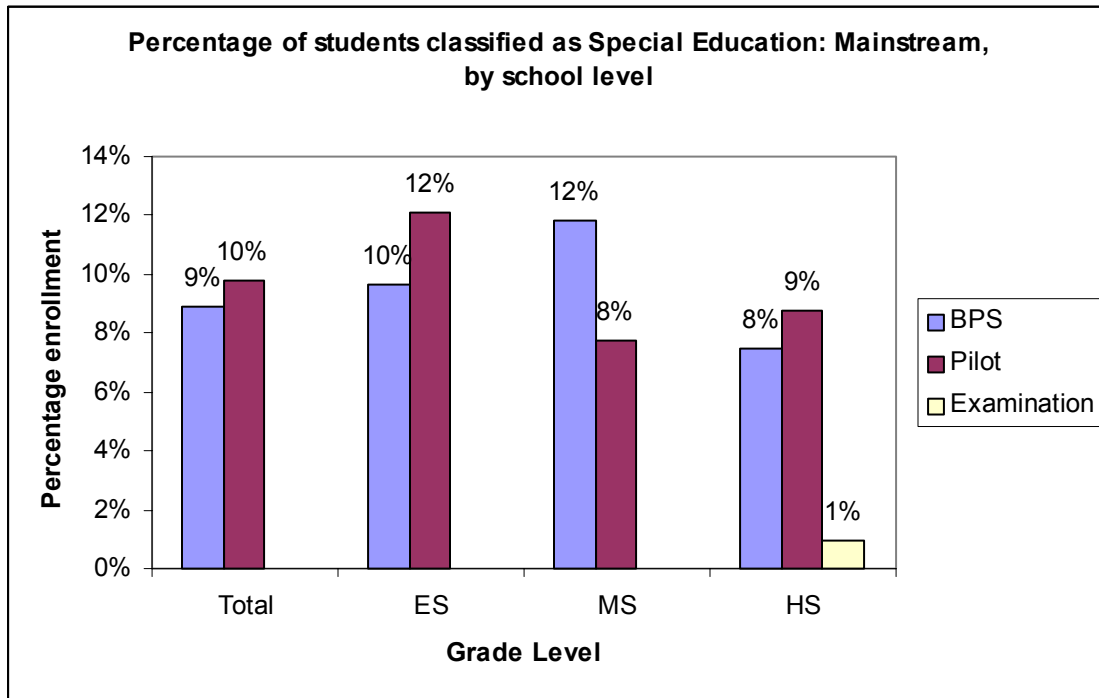
Pilot Schools enroll a slightly greater percentage of students classified as special education mainstream as does the district. Figure 7 separates the percentages of students classified as special education mainstream by school level. It does not include percentages of students classified as special education substantially separate. As shown in Figure 7, Pilot elementary and high schools serve slightly higher percentages of these mainstreamed students, while the middle schools serve slightly lower percentages<sup>8</sup>.

Pilot Schools believe that the very nature of their smallness - which includes lower class size, teachers knowing their students well, multi-year student-teacher relationships (looping, multi-age classrooms), multiple adults in the classroom, individual learning plans, and multiple assessments - is an integral aspect in providing students with a continuum of services. These aspects of small schools represent conditions that are often provided solely to special education students. This preventive model of schooling minimizes the over-identification of students with special needs. (Pilot Schools Network Special Education Principles, 2000)

Further, Pilot Schools have begun enrolling substantially separate students at higher rates in the 2003-04 school year. All five conversion schools have programs for substantially separate students, as do three new Pilots. Two of the eleven older Pilot Schools have gained inclusion status from the district while two others have begun programs for substantially separate students. All Pilot high schools are on schedule to serve substantially separate special education students beginning in the 2004-05 school year. We anticipate that the percent of substantially separate special education students will more closely mirror the district rate in future years.

<sup>8</sup> BPS and the Pilot Schools reached an agreement in 2002 to serve substantially separate students in an inclusive setting. Two Pilot Schools, Boston Arts Academy and Young Achievers K-8 Academy, will operate in the 2003-2004 school year as full-inclusion schools.

Figure 7. Breakdown of students classified as special education mainstream by school level



Finally, Pilot Schools enroll a smaller percentage of students who are English Language Learners than does the district, with the greatest gap at the middle school level and the narrowest gap at the high school level. Only two Pilot Schools—Lyndon K-8 and Boston Community Leadership Academy—have English Language Learner programs.

In summary, Pilot Schools serve a student population that is generally representative of the larger BPS student population. The most significant differences in Pilot Schools and BPS demographics are in the elementary schools, where Pilot Schools enroll higher percentages of White students and lower percentages of students with free/reduced lunch status. The difference in enrollment of English Language Learners may be accounted for by the fact that only one Pilot School has an English Language Learner program.

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

One way to measure school success is to examine how 'engaged' students are in school. Engagement can take many forms in school, such as high attendance, low numbers of discipline problems, and high interest in attending a school. Engaged students are more likely to learn, as they are more likely to be in school, and, when in school, more likely to be in the classroom than in the principal's office. This section presents information on the following student engagement indicators:

- Average daily attendance
- Number of students on waiting list
- Number of students who transfer out of a school within district
- Number of students suspended



## ***Student Attendance***

***Finding: Pilot Schools rank among the BPS schools with the highest student attendance rates, reflecting high levels of student engagement.***

High attendance in school is important because students who are not in school are not as able to learn and take advantage of the opportunities their school offers. Research on small schools has demonstrated that students in small schools have higher attendance than students in large schools (Cotton, 1996). High attendance has been positively correlated with higher student achievement. In examining student attendance data across all BPS schools from 1997-98 to 2002-03, we found that eleven of the thirteen Pilot Schools have among the highest attendance rates of all schools in the district, while the other two Pilot Schools serve students who have had histories of disengagement in other BPS schools.

### **Attendance in Pilot high schools<sup>9</sup>**

Boston Pilot high schools have consistently had among the highest student attendance of all Boston high schools, including exam schools. From 1998-99 to 2002-03 Fenway, New Mission, Health Careers Academy, and Boston Arts Academy have been among the top five non-exam schools in attendance, and New Mission has had the highest overall attendance of all schools in the city the past four years. Table 2 shows the student attendance percentage of each school for each of the last four years (in descending order left to right), as well as the corresponding rank for that year. We list schools according to rank in 2002-03 school year and highlight the Pilot Schools. Note that both Greater Egleston Community High School and Boston Evening Academy serve populations of students that have previously had unsuccessful experiences in other BPS schools and who have had patterns of low attendance and academic achievement. These schools would be expected to have lower attendance rates than other high schools.

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix A for a list of comparison schools for all levels.

Table 2. Student attendance rates in BPS high schools, 1998-99 to 2002-03

School Name	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
New Mission	1	99.1%	1	98.0%	1	98.6%	1	97.7%	11	86.2%
*Boston Latin	2	95.9%	2	95.5%	2	94.8%	2	94.9%	2	94.4%
*Latin Academy	3	94.8%	5	94.1%	3	94.2%	5	93.6%	4	93.7%
Health Careers Academy	4	94.6%	3	95.3%	6	92.4%	3	94.4%	7	90.5%
*O'Bryant	5	94.4%	4	94.7%	5	92.8%	4	94.0%	1	95.0%
Boston Arts Academy	6	93.8%	7	93.2%	7	89.3%	6	91.4%	3	94.3%
Fenway	7	93.6%	6	93.8%	4	93.0%	8	90.6%	6	90.6%
Boston Adult Academy	8	92.7%	8	91.7%	17	83.0%				
TechBoston Academy	8	92.7%								
Snowden International	10	90.4%	9	90.2%	9	88.3%	10	88.4%	8	89.1%
B.C. Leadership Academy <sup>10</sup>	11	88.3%	14	86.1%	13	84.6%	18	81.7%	20	78.9%
ACC	12	87.6%	10	88.4%	8	89.1%	7	90.9%	5	91.8%
Burke High	13	87.4%	12	87.4%	10	87.7%	9	88.8%	10	87.4%
West Roxbury	14	87.0%	11	87.6%	12	85.9%	14	84.9%	9	87.5%
Madison Park High	15	84.4%	17	83.7%	14	84.5%	13	84.9%	15	84.2%
Brighton High	16	84.0%	16	84.0%	16	84.1%	15	83.3%	12	85.7%
Hyde Park High	17	83.8%	18	83.6%	18	81.8%	16	82.7%	16	81.4%
Charlestown High	18	83.4%	15	85.1%	20	80.0%	17	82.6%	14	84.2%
East Boston High	19	83.3%	13	86.2%	11	86.6%	11	86.1%	17	81.0%
South Boston High	20	82.1%	20	81.6%	21	79.4%	19	80.2%	18	80.3%
English High	21	80.1%	19	82.3%	15	84.3%	12	85.1%	13	85.5%
Dorchester High	22	78.5%	21	78.9%	19	80.2%	20	80.1%	19	80.1%
Egleston Community	23	65.1%	22	72.3%	22	59.1%	21	60.2%	21	65.6%
Boston Evening Academy**										

\* Examination School

\*\* As a Horace Mann Charter School, BEA chose not to submit attendance data.

<sup>10</sup> Formerly Boston High.

### Attendance in Pilot middle schools

The range of overall average attendance rates for BPS regular middle schools from 1997-98 to 2001-02 was 89.3% to 97.4%. Of the twenty Boston middle schools that have been open since 1998<sup>11</sup>, the Harbor School ranks second (tied) in overall average attendance during that time at 94%, and in the last five years has never had overall attendance drop below 92.3%. Josiah Quincy Upper School, which opened in 1999, has had the highest attendance in the city during that time, averaging 97.4%. Table 3 shows the student attendance percentage at each school for each of the last five years, as well as the corresponding rank for that year. Again, schools are listed in order of rank in 2002-03 (in descending order left to right), and Pilot middle schools are highlighted.

Table 3. Student attendance rates and rank in BPS middle schools, 1997-98 to 2002-03

School Name	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
Quincy Upper School	1	97.1%	1	97.3%	1	97.5%	1	97.8%		
Lewenberg Middle	2	95.9%	4	94.9%	4	93.6%	7	93.0%	6	92.5%
Timilty Middle	3	95.4%	2	95.3%	2	94.9%	3	94.1%	2	94.1%
Harbor School	4	94.5%	2	95.3%	3	94.0%	5	93.7%	8	92.3%
Rogers Middle	5	94.2%	5	94.2%	5	93.5%	4	93.9%	3	93.9%
Wilson Middle	6	93.8%	6	93.6%	6	93.4%	9	92.5%	9	92.1%
McCormack Middle	7	93.1%	9	92.8%	12	91.4%	13	91.3%	18	90.6%
Curley Middle	8	92.7%	7	93.4%	10	91.9%	10	92.2%	1	94.8%
Irving Middle	9	92.5%	8	93.2%	7	93.1%	6	93.3%	5	92.8%
Dearborn Middle	10	92.4%	10	92.4%	9	92.1%	8	92.5%	4	93.6%
Edison Middle	10	92.4%	14	91.3%	11	91.4%	12	91.3%	13	91.6%
Umana/Barnes Middle	12	92.0%	12	91.4%	15	90.7%	15	91.2%	11	91.9%
Shaw Middle	13	91.3%	11	92.1%	14	90.8%	14	91.3%	14	91.6%
Thompson Middle	14	90.8%	18	90.2%	8	93.0%	17	90.6%	16	91.2%
Edwards Middle	15	90.4%	20	89.9%	16	90.5%	16	90.7%	12	91.8%
King Middle	15	90.4%	15	91.0%	18	90.0%	18	90.2%	20	88.1%
Lewis Middle	17	90.0%	15	91.0%	19	89.9%	19	89.9%	15	91.2%
Cleveland Middle	18	89.4%	12	91.4%	20	89.4%	21	87.3%	19	89.8%
Taft Middle	19	89.3%	19	90.1%	13	91.4%	11	92.0%	7	92.5%
Wheatley Middle	19	89.3%	17	90.3%	17	90.2%	2	94.5%	10	92.0%
Gavin Middle	21	88.9%	21	88.7%	21	89.1%	20	89.0%	17	90.8%

### Attendance in Pilot elementary schools

Two of the three Pilot elementary schools have consistently had among the highest attendance rates in the city since 1998, while the third school has been among the top third of all elementary schools. Over these five years, the three Pilot elementary schools have had an average

<sup>11</sup> Josiah Quincy Upper School opened in 1999.

attendance of 96% (Mission Hill), 96.1% (Young Achievers), and 95.3% (Lyndon). Of the seventy-nine elementary schools that have been open the last five years, Pilot Schools ranked 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>, respectively, in attendance. The average overall attendance in elementary schools during this period has ranged from 92.9%–97.5%.

### ***Student Wait List***

***Finding: Pilot Schools have among the longest student wait lists of any BPS schools. This desirability has remained stable or increased over time, signaling the attraction of Boston families and students to small, personalized schools.***

Examining the number of students on a school's wait list is an indication of interest by families in that school. High interest could result from the school's location, size, programming, academic reputation, or autonomy. Pilot Schools' elementary and middle schools participate in the regular lottery system of controlled choice for schools. Families may list their first, second, and third choices of schools. Pilot Schools are small, so the number of slots open each year is quite low.

This section examines school waiting list data from 1997-98 to 2002-03 for middle and elementary schools. Because Pilot high schools do not have their waiting lists compiled by the school district, we do not compare the waiting list numbers for high schools. We find that:

- Both Pilot middle schools are among the top five of the 21 middle schools requested by Boston families, based on total numbers of students on the waiting list
- All three Pilot elementary schools are among the top ten most requested of the seventy-nine Boston elementary schools in total numbers of students on the waiting list. (Two of them, Young Achievers and Mission Hill School, are citywide schools and draw from a larger pool of applicants than do zone schools.)
- Young Achievers Elementary School has had the highest total number of students on the waiting list of any elementary school in four of the last five years, and had the second highest in 1998.

Because Pilot Schools also demonstrate high levels of engagement and achievement outcomes, we argue that long wait lists result from their personalization and good academics. In a recent review of student applications to Pilot high schools, the Center for Collaborative Education confirmed that the two most prominent reasons for students choosing to apply to Pilot high schools were their challenging academic reputations and a culture of personalization (smallness, being known well by adults, and safety) (Doyle et al, 2003). High wait list numbers suggest that additional Pilot Schools would be embraced by families in Boston.

#### **Pilot middle school wait lists**

Boston Pilot middle schools have had among the longest waiting lists of any middle school in Boston, equal to or greater than their actual enrollments. Table 4 shows, for the Harbor and the Josiah Quincy Upper Schools<sup>12</sup>, the overall enrollment at the school each year, the number of students on the waiting list, and the percentage of students on the wait list as compared to the overall enrollment at the school.

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<sup>12</sup> Note that both the Harbor School and Quincy Upper 'rolled out' one grade at a time. Harbor opened with a 6<sup>th</sup> grade in 1997, added a 7<sup>th</sup> grade in 1998, and an 8<sup>th</sup> grade in 1999. Quincy Upper opened with a 6<sup>th</sup> grade in 1999, added a 7<sup>th</sup> grade in 2000, and an 8<sup>th</sup> grade in 2001.



Table 4. Number of students on waiting list in Boston Pilot middle schools from 1998-2003

School year	Total students enrolled	Number of students on wait list	Students on wait list as a percentage of total enrollment
<b>Harbor School</b>			
1998-99	90	132	147%
1999-2000	208	178	86%
2000-01	255	105	41%
2001-02	261	106	41%
2002-03	249	96	39%
<b>Josiah Quincy Upper School</b>			
1999-2000	95	2	2%
2000-01	200	89	45%
2001-02	275	92	33%
2002-03	323	233	72%

The Pilot middle schools have ranked at the top of all Boston middle schools for both the total number of students on the waiting list and the number of students on the waiting list as a percentage of the school's size. Table 5 shows the rankings of the Pilot middle schools when compared to all BPS middle schools for these categories for each school year since 1998 (in descending order left to right).

Wait list data indicate that Pilot middle schools are desirable among families, and that their desirability remains stable over time.

Table 5. Wait list figures for Pilot middle schools: Rank by total numbers and as a percentage of enrollment

School	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	% of student s rank	Total number rank	% of student s rank	Total number rank	% of student s rank	% of students rank	Total number rank	% of students rank	Total number rank	% of students rank
Harbor School	3	6	2	5	3	2	4	2	3	1
Josiah Quincy Upper School	2	2	3	6	2	19	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a

### Pilot elementary school wait lists

Like the Pilot middle schools, Pilot elementary schools are also highly sought after by parents. The Young Achievers School, for example, has had the highest numbers of students on the waiting list in four of the last five years for all elementary schools, with 983, 859, 773, 688, and 443 students waiting to enroll in the school—the school only had a total enrollment ranging from 230-275 students in these years. We note that both Young Achievers and Mission Hill School, as citywide schools, draw from a larger pool of applicants than do zone schools.

The Pilot elementary schools have ranked at the top of all Boston elementary schools for both the total number of students on the waiting list and the number of students on the waiting list as a percentage of the school's size. Table 6 shows the rankings of the Pilot elementary schools when compared to all BPS elementary schools for these categories for each school year since 1998.

Table 6. Wait list figures for Pilot elementary schools: Rank by total numbers and as a percentage of enrollment

School	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	Total number rank	% of students rank	Total number rank	% of students rank	Total number rank	% of students rank	Total number rank	% of students rank	Total number rank	% of students rank
Lyndon Elementary	3	6	2	5	4	8	5	5	26	15
Mission Hill Elementary	6	2	4	2	5	2	6	3	8	4
Young Achievers	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1

Elementary school wait list numbers show that Pilot Schools are popular among families, and that they have become more sought after since their establishment.

### ***Student Mobility***

***Finding: Pilot middle and high schools have significantly lower percentages of students transfer out of school than the BPS district average, signaling higher “holding power” than regular BPS schools.***

Student mobility greatly affects educational performance. A school’s level of student mobility includes both transfers in and transfers out of school. Transfers out of a school to another school in the district may indicate that a school is not meeting the needs of a child or that the child/family is dissatisfied with the school. Generally, students who remain in one school through promotion or graduation have a greater chance of achieving at high levels, because of continuity of curriculum and instruction and relationships with adults and peers, than students who move from one school to another.

This section examines data from the 2000-01 to 2002-03 school years for students who transferred from one BPS school to another BPS school. A low percentage of students who transfer out of a school to another BPS school suggests that students are highly satisfied with the school. For Pilot Schools:

- The Pilot high schools had among the lowest rates of students transferring to another Boston school from 2000 to 2003, especially among non-exam schools
- One Pilot middle school had the lowest rate for students transferring to another Boston school during 2000 to 2003, and the other was 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2002-03.
- The Pilot elementary schools were in the middle third of all elementary schools for students transferring to another Boston school from 2000 to 2003

### Pilot high school transfers within district

The six long-term Boston Pilot high schools have the lowest rates of students transferring within the district among non-examination schools; all five have rates of 6.8% or less. The median rate for all non-Pilot Boston high schools in 2000-01 is 7%, in 2001-02 is 8.5%, and in 2002-03 is 6.8%. Note that in its first year of Pilot status, Boston Community Leadership Academy's transfer rate was reduced by over 40%. Schools are listed by rank and Pilot Schools are highlighted.

Table 7. Within-district transfers for BPS high schools, by rank and percentage of student body transferring out

School Name	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
Egleston Community High	1	0.0%	8	4.9%	1	0%
*Boston Latin	2	2.2%	5	2.5%	3	2%
ACC	3	2.6%	6	4.2%	4	3%
Fenway	3	2.6%	9	5.6%	7	4%
Boston Evening Academy	5	2.9%	2	1.7%	2	1%
Health Careers Academy	6	3.3%	1	1.1%	4	3%
Snowden International	7	3.9%	12	6.8%	7	4%
*Latin Academy	8	4.3%	3	1.9%	9	6%
*O'Bryant	9	4.8%	7	4.4%	9	6%
Boston Arts Academy	10	5.5%	4	2.1%	4	3%
Madison Park High	11	5.7%	11	6.2%	11	7%
Hyde Park High	12	6.7%	13	7.5%	11	7%
New Mission	13	6.8%	10	5.9%	15	9%
Burke High	14	7.3%	14	8.1%	11	7%
Boston Adult Academy	15	8.4%	20	11.7%	15	9%
Charlestown High	16	8.8%	21	15.8%	22	26%
B.C. Leadership Academy	17	10.4%	22	17.5%	21	19%
Brighton High	18	11.9%	17	9.6%	19	11%
South Boston High	18	11.9%	16	9.4%	19	11%
Dorchester High	20	12.5%	15	8.5%	15	9%
TechBoston Academy	21	13.7%				
West Roxbury High	22	14.9%	18	11.2%	18	10%
English High	23	16.2%	18	11.2%	14	8%
East Boston High	24	18.9%	23	22.4%	23	34%

\* Examination school

### Pilot middle school transfers within district

The Boston Pilot middle schools had the lowest percentages of students transferring within the district in the 2000-01 and 2002-03 school years. Quincy Upper School also had the lowest transfer rate in 2001-02, with Harbor still in the top third of all middle schools. The median rate for all non-Pilot Boston middle schools is 8.4%.



Table 8. Within-district transfers for BPS middle schools, by rank and percentage of student body transferring out

School Name	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
Quincy Upper School	1	0.6%	1	1.1%	1	2%
Harbor School	2	2.4%	7	8.4%	2	4%
Lewenberg Middle	3	5.4%	4	7.9%	6	8%
Edison Middle	4	6.2%	12	10.5%	11	9%
Thompson Middle	5	7.6%	8	8.7%	11	9%
McCormack Middle	6	7.8%	5	8.1%	6	8%
Dearborn Middle	7	8.1%	15	11.0%	3	6%
Shaw Middle	8	8.2%	10	9.0%	15	12%
Curley Middle	9	8.4%	9	8.9%	4	7%
King Middle	9	8.4%	17	11.4%	17	14%
Timilty Middle	9	8.4%	2	4.1%	6	8%
Irving Middle	12	8.7%	3	7.5%	6	8%
Wilson Middle	13	9.3%	6	8.2%	6	8%
Taft Middle	14	11.0%	13	10.6%	4	7%
Lewis Middle	15	11.5%	16	11.2%	16	13%
Rogers Middle	16	12.0%	18	11.8%	14	11%
Gavin Middle	17	12.1%	11	9.1%	11	9%
Cleveland Middle	18	14.3%	19	15.2%	21	16%
Umana/Barnes Middle	19	14.7%	21	16.4%	19	15%
Edwards Middle	20	15.3%	13	10.6%	17	14%
Wheatley Middle	21	17.0%	20	16.1%	22	18%

### Pilot elementary school transfers within district

Of the seventy-nine Boston elementary schools, the three Boston Pilot elementary schools rank near the top by the percentage of students transferring out of the Pilot School but within the district in all three years. Mission Hill has been in the top ten all three years, but Young Achievers has seen a significant increase in transfers over this time. The median rate for non-Pilot Boston elementary schools in 2000-01 was 7.5%, for 2001-02 was 10.8%, and for 2002-03 was 9.9%.

Table 9. Within-district transfers for Pilot elementary schools, by rank and percentage of student body transferring out

School Name	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01	
	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage
Mission Hill School	9	5.8%	1	1.2%	1	0.0%
Young Achievers	48	12.1%	19	7.0%	2	1.0%
Lyndon Elementary	19	7.6%	38	10.3%	22	5.2%

## ***Student Discipline***

***Finding: Pilot Schools have among the lowest suspension rates of all BPS schools, indicating that they are safe and personalized cultures.***

Students who are engaged in academics are less likely to have discipline problems, and not surprisingly, students who have behavior problems are less likely to learn. Student suspension rate is one indicator of student discipline in schools. This section presents data from 1998-99 to 2002-03 and includes the findings that:

- Pilot high schools have among the lowest student suspension rates for all schools within the district
- Pilot middle schools have had among the lowest percentage of students suspended among all middle schools from 1998-99 until this past year.
- Two of the three Pilot elementary schools have among the lowest student suspension rates of all BPS elementary schools

The suspensions we report include only out of school suspensions. The percentage calculations were based on the number of students suspended and the May enrollment figures for each school year in order to control for the size of the school. They do not take into account the number of suspension occurrences (students with multiple suspensions) or the fact that enrollments change throughout the school year.

### **Pilot high school suspensions**

Since 1998, the Pilot high schools have had among the lowest percentage of students suspended of all Boston high schools. In the last five years, BEA has had no suspensions; in four and three of the last five years, respectively, Egleston and New Mission have had no suspensions; and in two of the five years that BAA, Fenway and HCA have had no students suspended. Except for ACC, which became a Pilot school in the 2003-04 school year, all other Boston high schools have had students suspended in at least four of the last five years. All schools with no suspensions are small schools. Note that Boston Community Leadership Academy had a 20% decrease in suspensions in its first year as a Pilot School.

Table 10 shows the ranking of all 22 Boston high schools in the percentage of students suspended, and provides that percentage. Schools are listed by rank in 2002-03, with Pilot Schools highlighted (descending by year from left to right).

Table 10. Student suspensions: Percentage of students suspended and rank among BPS high schools, by year

Schools	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
ACC	1	0.0%	1	0%	1	0%	10	1%	15	7%
Boston Adult Academy	1	0.0%								
Boston Evening Academy	1	0.0%	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%
*O'Bryant	4	1.0%	10	1.4%	1	0%	1	0%	6	1%
Boston Arts Academy	5	1.3%	7	0.8%	8	2%	1	0%	1	0%
TechBoston Academy	6	1.4%								
*Boston Latin	7	1.9%	8	1.1%	8	2%	10	1%	6	1%
West Roxbury	8	3.2%	11	1.9%	11	3%	12	2%	6	1%
Fenway	9	4.2%	5	0.4%	1	0%	1	0%	12	4%
East Boston High	10	4.6%	9	1.3%	11	3%	12	2%	11	3%
*Latin Academy	11	4.7%	12	2.2%	6	1%	1	0%	6	1%
New Mission	12	7.3%	1	0%	6	1%	1	0%	1	0%
Dorchester High	13	9.9%	16	6.5%	15	8%	17	8%	17	10%
Health Careers Academy	14	12.1%	6	0.6%	8	2%	1	0%	1	0%
English High	15	12.3%	13	2.6%	11	3%	21	20%	20	17%
Egleston Community High	16	14.7%	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%
Snowden International	17	14.9%	15	3.4%	17	15%	18	11%	16	8%
Burke High	18	15.5%	19	12.3%	22	23%	22	27%	22	29%
Charlestown High	19	15.9%	14	2.9%	16	11%	1	0%	19	15%
Brighton High	20	17.2%	17	11.4%	18	17%	20	16%	21	22%
Madison Park High	21	18.5%	20	20.0%	21	20%	12	2%	13	5%
Hyde Park High	22	18.6%	22	30.6%	19	18%	19	13%	18	11%
B.C. Leadership Academy	23	20.5%	21	25.0%	20	19%	16	4%	13	5%
South Boston High	24	20.7%	18	12.0%	11	3%	12	2%	6	1%

### Pilot middle school suspensions

Boston Pilot middle schools have also had among the lowest percentage of students suspended among all middle schools from 1998-99 until this past year. Both schools saw an increase in the number of suspensions during the 2002-03 school year. From the 1998-99 through the 1999-2000 school year, Harbor Middle School did not suspend a single student. In 2000-01, Harbor School ranked 13th among all Boston middle schools, with a suspension rate of 6%. In 2001-02, Harbor School again had the lowest number of suspensions of all middle schools in the city. The school experienced a leadership transition in 2002-03. Josiah Quincy Upper School ranked 10<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> with suspension rates of 3%, 2%, 7%, and 15.8% respectively, since its opening in 1999. Table 11 lists percentage of students suspended and school rank (descending by year from left to right).

Table 11. Student suspensions: Percentage of students suspended and rank among BPS middle schools, by year

School Name	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
Lewenberg Middle	1	4.0%	3	1.8%	8	3%	5	1%	9	4%
Irving Middle	2	4.8%	9	9.1%	11	5%	9	2%	5	2%
Timilty Middle	3	6.1%	4	1.9%	2	2%	16	9%	6	3%
Rogers Middle	4	6.6%	12	10.1%	13	6%	18	10%	12	5%
Wilson Middle	5	7.4%	11	10.0%	11	5%	13	6%	6	3%
Umana/Barnes Middle	6	9.7%	10	9.6%	16	7%	12	4%	9	4%
Curley Middle	7	10.1%	6	3.6%	2	2%	1	0%	4	1%
Gavin Middle	8	14.8%	7	5.2%	1	1%	18	10%	15	11%
Edison Middle	9	15.2%	17	18.4%	18	8%	14	7%	19	15%
Quincy Upper School	10	15.8%	2	0.7%	2	2%	10	3%		
Edwards Middle	11	19.0%	15	16.7%	2	2%	10	3%	12	5%
Cleveland Middle	12	20.1%	14	15.4%	19	10%	16	9%	14	10%
Shaw Middle	13	24.6%	18	28.5%	20	19%	5	1%	20	24%
Lewis Middle	14	24.8%	8	6.0%	2	2%	5	1%	6	3%
King Middle	15	25.6%	16	17.1%	13	6%	21	14%	15	11%
McCormack Middle	16	26.6%	5	3.1%	2	2%	15	8%	15	11%
Taft Middle	17	27.2%	13	14.2%	16	7%	18	10%	18	14%
Dearborn Middle	18	27.6%	20	29.7%	8	3%	5	1%	1	0%
Harbor School	19	28.1%	1	0.4%	13	6%	1	0%	1	0%
Thompson Middle	20	39.7%	19	29.1%	10	4%	1	0%	9	4%
Wheatley Middle	21	43.2%	21	45.8%	21	37%	1	0%	1	0%

### Pilot elementary school suspensions

In the last five school years, Mission Hill School and Young Achievers School have suspended only one student each. They join five regular BPS elementary schools that have not suspended any students or have suspended only one student during this time. The Lyndon School has suspended 2%, 5%, 1%, 2%, and 1.6% of its students in the past five years, ranking near the middle among elementary schools for number of students suspended.

Table 12. Student suspensions: Percentage of students suspended and rank among BPS elementary schools, by year

School Name	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
Mission Hill School	1	0.0%	1	0%	30	1%	1	0%	1	0%
Young Achievers	1	0.0%	1	0%	21 <sup>13</sup>	0%	1	0%	1	0%
Lyndon Elementary	32	1.6%	42	2%	30	1%	71	5%	52	2%

### STUDENT PERFORMANCE

While student engagement measures a school's holding power, or a school's ability to attract and engage students, a second way to measure student success is to measure student performance across a range of indicators. Student achievement may be measured in three ways: (1) outcome measures on standardized tests, (2) measures of school graduation rates, college attendance, and other quantitative indicators of achievement, and (3) outcome measures on performance assessments such as portfolios and exhibitions. This section presents information on the first two categories of student achievement:

- MCAS results from the 2000-01 to 2002-03 school year<sup>14</sup>
- Outcomes of 2001 and 2002 graduates
- Percent of senior class that graduated from 2000/2001
- Grade retention rates

<sup>13</sup> Young Achievers' ranking reflects that the school suspended 1 student, although the percentage was less than .05% of its student population.

<sup>14</sup> Data for this analysis is taken from the Massachusetts Department of Education, November, 2003 publication of MCAS results, available on their website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/results.html>.

## ***Comparison on BPS and Pilot Schools on MCAS Scores<sup>15</sup>***

***Finding: Ten of the thirteen Pilot Schools score comparably to or better than the district average in the MCAS English Language Arts and Math tests. Pilot high schools score consistently above non-examination BPS high schools in scaled scores and percentage of students passing. Four of the five Pilot middle schools are among the top performing schools in the district, as are both elementary schools (other than the one school which had fewer than 10 students take the exam).***

MCAS is a criterion-referenced test administered by subject. We examined 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grade English/Language Arts and Math scores as a school aggregate. Scores are divided into four levels: 1) Warning/Failing (200-219), 2) Needs Improvement (220-239) Proficient (240-259), and 4) Advanced (260-280). Students must score in level 2 or above in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade exam to be eligible to receive a high school diploma. The results reported include all students who took the test in May of 2003, both for the first time and retests.

### **MCAS Comparison of Boston Pilot Schools and Other BPS Schools at Grade 10**

This section compares the seven Boston Pilot high schools<sup>16</sup> with all Boston high schools. Scores are compared across the last three years of MCAS (2000-01 to 2002-03).

#### *MCAS 10th Grade English Language Arts*

Pilot high schools performed well when compared to other Boston Public high schools. BAA, Fenway, and Health Careers Academy scored just behind the examination schools in percentage of students passing in English Language Arts. BCLA, a new Pilot, showed the highest increase in the percentage of students who passed the exam (from 51% to 71%) of all high schools over the last year. Five of the seven Pilot schools were above the BPS system average<sup>17</sup> in percent students passing (67%).

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<sup>15</sup> We present MCAS data because MCAS is the assessment used by the state of Massachusetts to determine school probationary performance and student high school graduation. The Center for Collaborative Education affirms that the current MCAS is a test and not a comprehensive assessment system; that a single score on a test should never stand as the sole measure of a student's knowledge, understandings, performance, and intellectual habits; that the use of a single test for high stakes decisions is not educationally defensible; and that more appropriate accountability systems are possible. Although the MCAS is currently used as one way to assess and monitor each student's progress, we believe the MCAS has limitations as a research instrument, and should be used in conjunction with multiple measures of authentic assessment.

<sup>16</sup> Two Pilot high schools, Greater Egleston Community High School and Boston Evening Academy, were exempted from taking the MCAS by the Massachusetts Department of Education until the 2001-2002 school year, as they are ungraded schools enrolling over-age students.

<sup>17</sup> This includes examination schools.

Table 13. 2001-2003 MCAS English Language Arts Results for Boston High Schools

	2003 Percent Passing	2002 Percent Passing	2001 Percent Passing	2003 Percent Advanced and Proficient
*Boston Latin	100	99	99	98
*Latin Academy	100	99	100	92
*O'Bryant	99	99	93	73
Fenway	98	89	87	60
Boston Arts Academy	95	89	83	53
Health Careers Academy	88	83	89	44
Snowden International	88	82	59	36
B.C. Leadership Academy	77	51	41	24
Brighton High	75	64	58	34
Charlestown High	75	58	60	26
New Mission	71	69	68	14
West Roxbury	71	77	54	23
East Boston High	64	71	64	25
South Boston High	62	47	25	18
Boston Evening Academy	56	68		N/A <sup>18</sup>
Burke High	55	41	44	12
Dorchester High	50	45	34	11
Egleston Community High	48	46		15
English High	48	56	43	12
Madison Park High	41	30	32	5
Hyde Park High	38	34	39	9
McKinley	38	31	15	8

\* Examination School

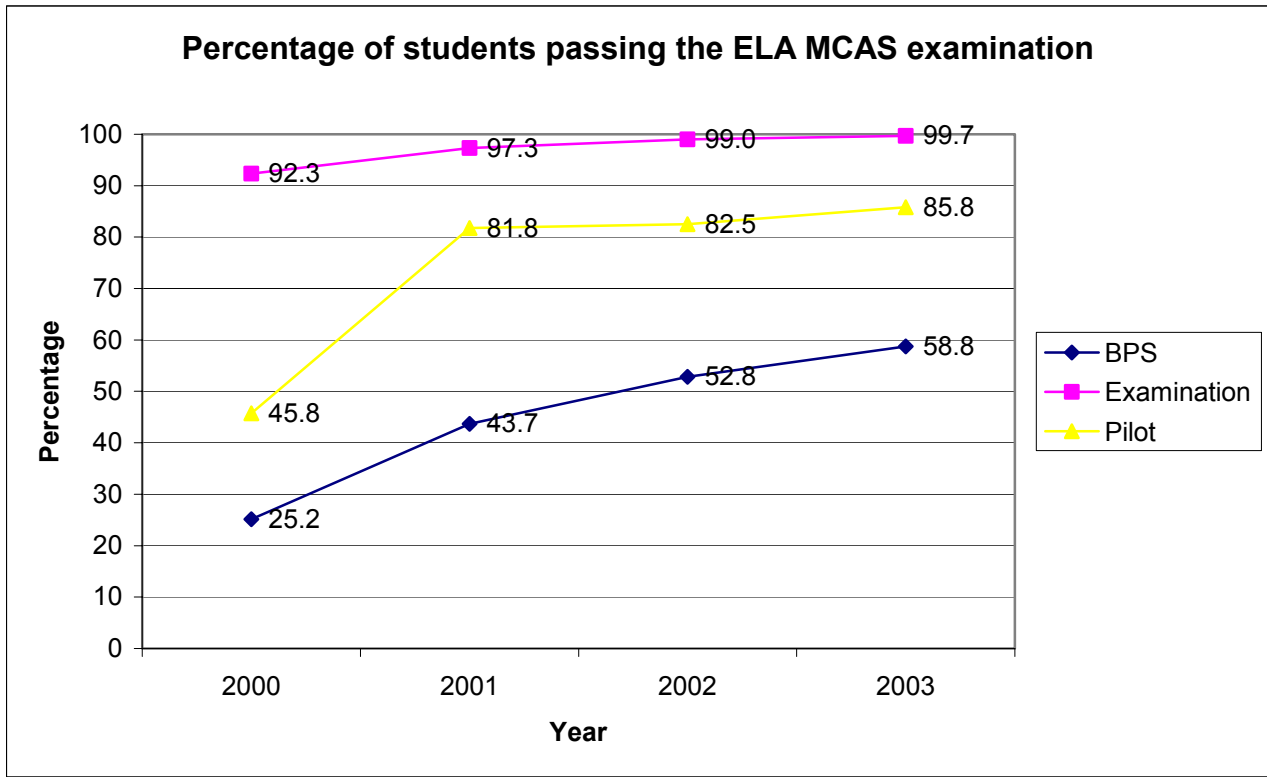
Figure 8 shows the changes in performance on the English Language Arts portion of the MCAS exam. Averages<sup>19</sup> are given for Pilot Schools<sup>20</sup>, Examination Schools, and Boston Public School non-examination schools (and non-pilots). Pilot Schools score consistently above non-examination BPS high schools.

<sup>18</sup> Due to their unique backgrounds, BEA students take the retest version of the MCAS that does not allow calculation of Percent Advanced and Proficient.

<sup>19</sup> Only schools with scores for each of the three years are included.

<sup>20</sup> Greater Egleston and BEA are not included because we do not have four years of results.

Figure 8: Percentage of students scoring in the passing categories on the English Language Arts scaled score from 2000-2003



*MCAS 10th Grade Mathematics*

Pilot high schools performed well when compared to other Boston Public high schools. BAA and Fenway scored just behind the examination schools and Snowden Academy in the percentage of students passing in Mathematics. Along with HCA, these three schools were in the top half of BPS schools in this category. BCLA once again showed the greatest increase in the percent of students passing the examination (from 30% to 51%).



Table 14. 2001-2003 MCAS Mathematics Results for Boston High Schools

	2003 Percent Passing	2002 Percent Passing	2001 Percent Passing	2003 Percent Advanced and Proficient
*Boston Latin	100	100	99	98
*Latin Academy	100	98	100	98
*O'Bryant	98	99	96	87
Snowden International	84	59	63	34
Fenway	82	69	79	31
Boston Arts Academy	73	72	71	
Charlestown High	70	53	62	46
West Roxbury	70	55	41	22
Brighton High	66	44	43	29
Health Careers Academy	62	46	61	18
East Boston High	55	39	50	21
McKinley	52	19	24	23
B.C. Leadership Academy	51	30	31	22
South Boston High	51	30	28	25
Dorchester High	48	21	31	8
Madison Park High	47	16	33	12
Burke High	44	37	37	10
New Mission	42	43	38	2
English High	38	28	25	16
Hyde Park High	33	18	18	5
Boston Evening Academy	17	21		N/A <sup>21</sup>
Egleston Community High	10	31		0

\* Examination School

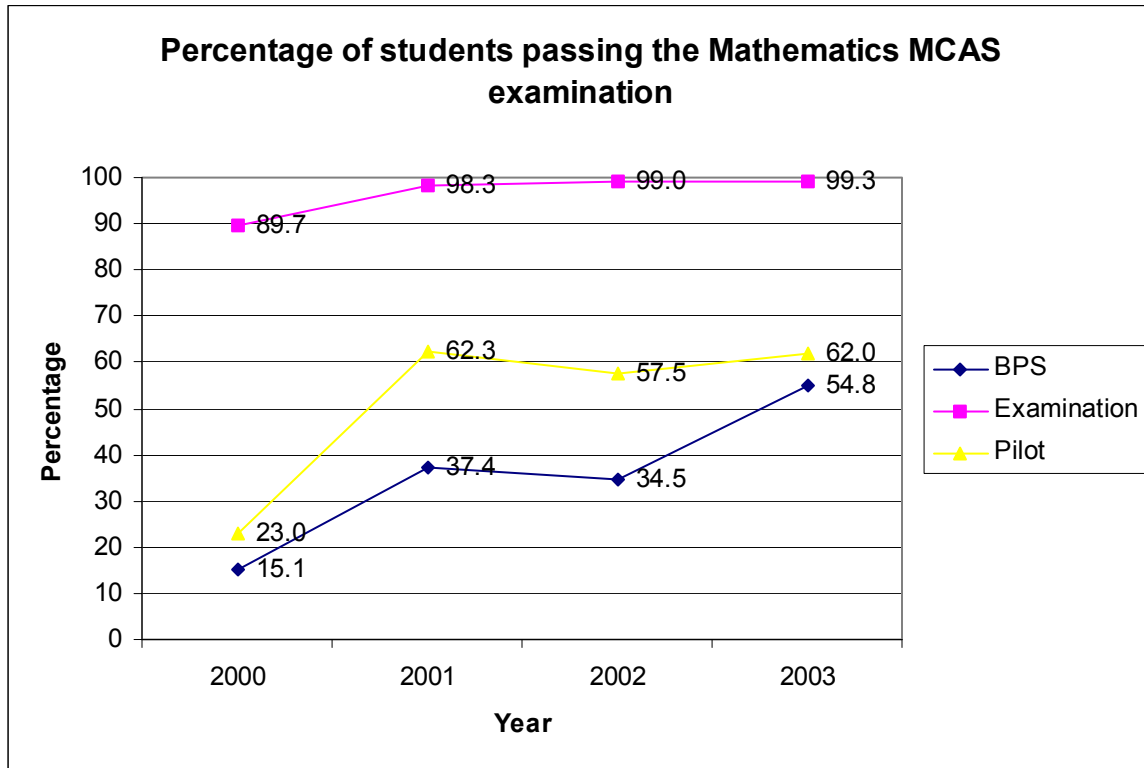
Figure 9 shows the changes in performance on the Mathematics portion of the MCAS exam. Averages<sup>22</sup> are given for Pilot Schools<sup>23</sup>, Examination Schools, and Boston Public School non-examination schools (and non-pilots). Pilot Schools score consistently above non-examination BPS high schools.

<sup>21</sup> Due to their unique backgrounds, BEA students take the retest version of the MCAS that does not allow calculation of Percent Advanced and Proficient.

<sup>22</sup> Only schools with scores for each of the three years are included.

<sup>23</sup> Greater Egleston and BEA are not included because we do not have four years of results.

Figure 9: Change in percentage of students passing mathematics from 2001-2003



### MCAS Comparison of Boston Pilot Schools and Other BPS Schools at Grade 8

#### *MCAS 8th Grade Mathematics<sup>24</sup>*

Pilot Middle Schools performed well when compared to other Boston Public Middle Schools. Lyndon, Josiah Quincy, and Harbor scored just behind the examination schools in the top 10 of all 32 schools in percentage of students passing in Mathematics. Young Achievers, which had among the top non-examination school rates for students passing, ranked near the bottom of the middle schools.

<sup>24</sup> There were not enough students at Mission Hill Pilot School or Horace Mann schools for school data to be released.

Table 15. 2001-2003 MCAS Mathematics Results for Boston Grade 8

	2003 Percent Passing	2002 Percent Passing	2001 Percent Passing	2003 Percent Advanced and Proficient
*Latin Academy	100	99	98	92
Mary Lyon	100	85		64
*Boston Latin	97	96	98	63
*O'Bryant	94	85	98	56
Lyndon	85	88		43
McKay	76	63	64	32
Harbor School	69	19	32	26
Quincy Upper School	67	63		21
Timilty Middle	58	62	60	20
Hernandez	56	61	64	16
Rogers Middle	52	49	39	21
Edison Middle	47	37	33	16
Tobin	43	56	48	12
Umana/Barnes Middle	41	43	37	12
Cleveland Middle	38	23	25	6
Edwards Middle	38	17	31	7
Curley Middle	37	26	23	5
Greenwood	36	37	55	0
Taft Middle	33	36	41	12
Irving Middle	32	36	42	12
Shaw Middle	32	37	41	6
Thompson Middle	32	26	33	6
Gavin Middle	31	27	16	7
McCormack Middle	31	44	39	9
Wilson Middle	30	37	34	7
Lewenberg Middle	29	30	21	6
Lewis Middle	29	35	31	6
Dearborn Middle	27	25	24	9
McKinley	27	20	9	10
Wheatley Middle	21	34	30	4
Young Achievers	20	63		5
King Middle	15	37	28	2

\* Examination School

*MCAS 7th Grade English Language Arts*

The five pilot schools ranked in the top 10 among the 30 non-exam schools taking the 7th grade English Language Arts exam. All had over 96% of their students pass.

Table 16. 2001-2003 MCAS English Language Arts results for Grade 7

School	2003 Percent Passing	2002 Percent Passing	2001 Percent Passing	2003 Percent Advanced and Proficient
*Boston Latin	100	99	99	99
*O'Bryant	100	99	98	79
Greenwood	100	96	64	75
Mary Lyon	100	100		71
McKay	100	97	100	72
Mission Hill	100	100		60
Tobin	100	89	88	58
Young Achievers	100	64	80	56
*Latin Academy	99	100	99	95
Harbor School	96	82	79	40
Hernandez	96	93	96	42
Lyndon	96	100	90	82
Quincy Upper School	96	94	79	29
Rogers Middle	91	90	75	43
Wilson Middle	90	86	73	30
Edwards Middle	87	77	73	36
Lewenberg Middle	86	78	58	29
Timilty Middle	85	91	86	43
Lewis Middle	82	68	65	26
McCormack Middle	82	80	72	36
Edison Middle	81	82	71	28
Cleveland Middle	80	79	56	19
Dearborn Middle	80	80	62	28
Irving Middle	79	71	64	41
King Middle	79	65	62	30
Taft Middle	79	72	71	24
Curley Middle	75	68	58	24
Gavin Middle	73	70	62	26
Shaw Middle	72	81	80	29
Thompson Middle	72	76	54	23
Umana/Barnes Middle	72	77	63	23
Wheatley Middle	71	66	57	18
McKinley	62	44	38	11

\* Examination School

*MCAS 6th Grade Mathematics*

Among the 30 middle schools, Pilots were the second, third, and ninth of the top ten, in their scores in 6th grade mathematics, when compared by the percentage of students passing.

Table 17. 2001-2003 MCAS Mathematics Results for Boston Grade 6

School	2003 Percent Passing	2002 Percent Passing	2001 Percent Passing	2003 Percent Advanced and Proficient
Mary Lyon	93	76	69	33
Lyndon	90	77	63	56
Quincy Upper School	80	80	75	59
Greenwood	75	60	34	11
McKay	74	56	60	32
Hernandez	73	48	55	41
Murphy Middle	71			39
Edison Middle	64	47	47	29
Young Achievers	60	59	40	20
Timilty Middle	56	47	45	27
Edwards Middle	55	36	34	19
McCormack Middle	52	45	40	23
Umana/Barnes Middle	52	39	48	23
Rogers Middle	51	47	45	18
Tobin	51	43	55	5
Irving Middle	48	48	44	24
Curley Middle	47	30	26	20
Dearborn Middle	45	30	19	13
Cleveland Middle	42	29	28	7
Gavin Middle	42	30	33	12
Shaw Middle	42	22	33	15
Wilson Middle	42	34	37	8
Harbor School	39	20	17	12
Lewenberg Middle	39	30	28	8
Wheatley Middle	37	16	16	8
Lewis Middle	36	23	26	6
King Middle	29	31	29	6
McKinley	29	39	12	5
Thompson Middle	24	26	24	10
Mission Hill		53		
Taft Middle		22	36	

### MCAS Comparison of Boston Pilot Schools and Other BPS Schools at Grade 4

Scores are compared across the last four years of MCAS (1999-2000 to 2002-03<sup>25</sup>). Tables 18-19 present Pilot elementary schools' passing rates from the 2001 to 2003 school years and their rankings with other BPS schools.

#### *MCAS 4<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts*

Of the 79 elementary schools with scores, the two Pilot elementary schools that have public MCAS results<sup>26</sup> have shown significant progress in increasing their scores compared to the district. Lyndon is one of the highest performing schools in the district, with greater than 90% of all students passing in each of the last two years (92% and 96% respectively).

Table 18. MCAS English Language Arts Results for Boston Elementary Pilot Schools

	2003 ELA	2003 ELA rank (of 79)	2002 ELA	2002 ELA rank (of 79)	2001 ELA	2001 ELA rank (of 76)
Lyndon	96	4	92	11	80	30
Young Achievers	76	38	93	8	76	37

#### *MCAS 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics*

Pilot elementary schools performed better on the ELA than the math portion of the 2002-03 MCAS exam, as measured by the percentage of students passing. Lyndon still ranked in the top quartile of all schools with more than 75% of their students passing, while Young Achievers fell to the last quartile of all schools, after having had one of the top ten rates of students passing in 2001-02.

Table 19. MCAS Mathematics Results for Boston Elementary Pilot Schools

	2003 Math	2003 Math rank (of 79)	2002 Math	2002 Math rank (of 79)	2001 Math	2001 Math rank (of 78)
Lyndon	76	22	82	9	65	32
Young Achievers	48	62	83	8	64	35

<sup>25</sup> For Mission Hill, only data from the 1999-2000 administration are used, as too few students took the exam in other years so that these results are not public.

<sup>26</sup> Many families at the Mission Hill School chose for their children not to take the examination. Consequently, there were not enough students taking the examination to make the results public.

## **Grade Retention**

***Finding: Pilot Schools have significantly low grade retention rates, a key predictor of dropping out of school. Pilot Schools' favorable scores on the MCAS suggest that these low retention rates are more due to students meeting the requirements for promotion to the next grade, rather than an indication of social promotion.***

Grade retention, especially at the secondary grades, is strongly correlated to dropping out of school. Research has shown that students who are retained in grade once have a 20-40% greater chance of dropping out of school, and those who have been retained in grade twice have a 90% greater chance of dropping out of school (Hammack, 1986; Mann, 1986).

Across the Pilot Schools Network, schools reported school year 2000-01 retention rates ranging from zero to 6.6% of each school's total population, with the average at 2.8%. When broken down by school level, in the 2000-01 school year, Pilot elementary schools retained 3% of students, Pilot middle schools retained 2.2% of students, and Pilot high schools retained 2.8% of students. In the 2001-02 school year, only 1 of 4 high schools which had retention data available actually retained any students, and the three elementary schools retained 2.2% of students. Because we were unable to obtain corresponding numbers from the Boston Public Schools for the district, we do not compare Pilot Schools' grade retention rates with BPS grade retention rates. However, initial BPS data suggests that, due to the tougher promotion policies in district high schools which are the result of the high stakes nature of MCAS at the tenth grade, ninth grade retention rates have risen dramatically, and are far greater than the rates of Pilot high schools. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this may be the case in middle schools as well.

While some view low grade retention rates as signs of social promotion in schools, in Pilot Schools these numbers indicate that the vast majority of students are meeting the requirements for promotion to the next grade. The fact that Pilot Schools students in most schools perform as well or better than BPS students on MCAS, the only measure common to both sets of students, suggests that students are in fact promoted because they meet high standards.

## **Graduates' Future Plans**

***Finding: Pilot high schools have both high rates of graduation and high rates of students planning to attend college. The rate of Pilot high school graduates planning to attend college, and in particular four-year colleges, is dramatically greater than the BPS district average.***

Plans of school graduates are another indicator of school success. The following information was collected from Pilot Schools about the future plans of their 2000-01 and 2001-02 school year graduates of both 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Middle School Graduates' Education Plans**

Graduate plan data was collected on all Pilot middle schools. Two hundred of the 204 8<sup>th</sup> graders were promoted to the ninth grade. Twenty-five of the 204 graduates (13%) were accepted to examination schools, an indicator of high academic achievement. Forty-one percent of Pilot 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates applied to and were accepted by Pilot high schools, indicating students' desire to attend small, personalized, academically challenging high schools.

Table 20. High School Plans for Pilot Middle School 2001-02 8<sup>th</sup> graders

High School Plans	Mission Hill	Young Achievers	Lyndon	Quincy Upper School	Harbor School
# 8th graders in 2001-02	12	19 (18 promoted)	32	67 (64 promoted)	74
# 8th graders promoted who were accepted and matriculated to exam schools	4 (0 matriculated)	4	7	6	4
# 8 <sup>th</sup> graders promoted who went to Pilot high schools	8	11	2	52 <sup>27</sup>	8
# 8th graders promoted who went to non-pilot BPS high schools	0	0	13	6	56
# 8 <sup>th</sup> graders promoted who went to other schools	4	3	10	0	6

### High School Graduates' Education Plans

All six Pilot high schools had graduating 12<sup>th</sup> graders in 2000-01, including the first graduating class from the Boston Arts Academy. According to Pilot high schools, an average of 90.7% of their 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2000-01 graduated. Graduation rates ranged from 81% to 100% of Pilot Schools 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

The plans of high school graduates for both Pilot and regular BPS high schools are self reported. System-wide data for 2001 was reported at the Massachusetts Department of Education web site (<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu>). Seventy-four percent of Pilot Schools graduates in 2001 planned to enroll in two- or four-year colleges, as compared with only 59% system-wide. Of these numbers, 50% of Pilot Schools graduates enrolled in four-year colleges, compared with 33.7% system-wide, and 24% of Pilot Schools graduates enrolled in two-year colleges, compared with 25.5% system-wide. Eighteen percent of Pilot Schools graduates reported going to work, compared with 8% system-wide. The high rates of Pilot Schools graduates planning to pursue post-secondary education suggests that Pilot Schools are preparing students well for college, and that Pilot School students have high academic aspirations for themselves.

For the 2002-03 school year, data has been collected from Fenway, Health Careers Academy, New Mission High, Boston Arts Academy, and Boston Evening Academy. Ninety-two percent of seniors from the first three schools graduated<sup>28</sup>. Seventy-nine percent of graduates plan on attending 2- or 4-year colleges (57% to 4-year colleges, 17% to two-year colleges, and 5% unspecified), 7% to work, 2% to further training, and the remainder undecided.

Two of the Pilot high schools deserve special attention. Both BEA and Egleston serve a student population that is older, and one in which many students have previously dropped out of non-Pilot Schools. A significant percentage of the students work and/or have children. The fact that

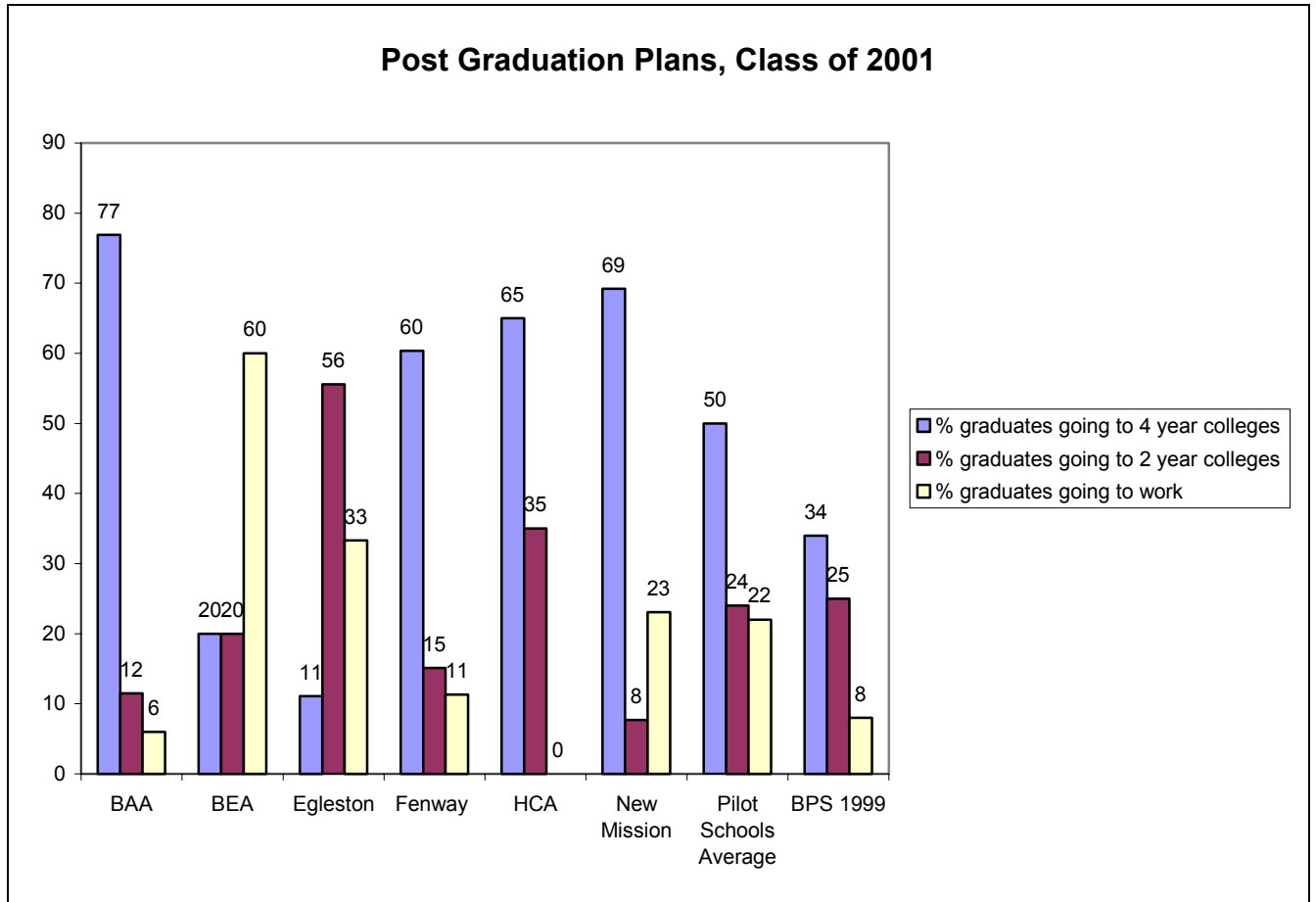
<sup>27</sup> All 52 students continued at Josiah Quincy Upper School.

<sup>28</sup> Boston Evening Academy is an ungraded school. In addition, we do not have data from BAA for this indicator.



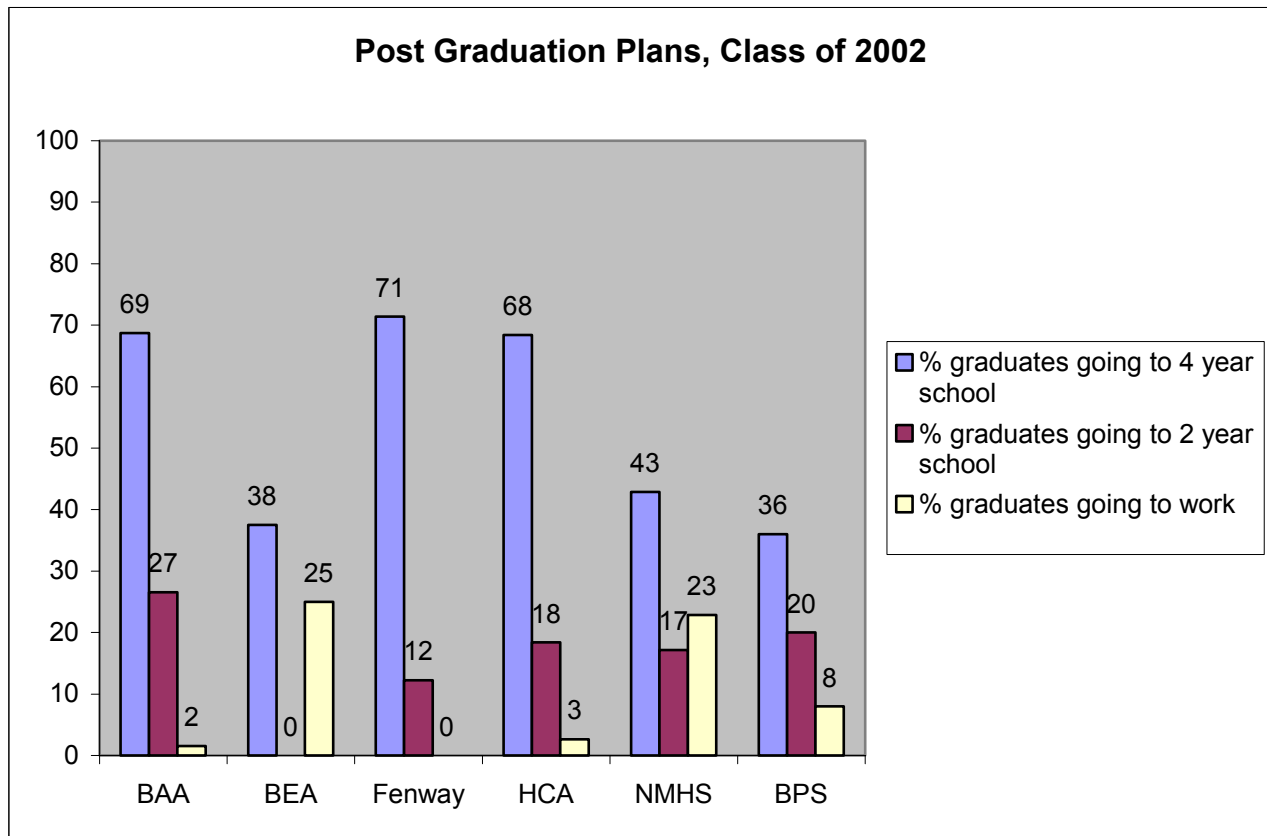
these two schools have graduation rates of 83% and 90%, respectively, in 2000-01 indicates success, since many of these students would otherwise not have completed high school diplomas. While the percentages of graduates in these schools pursuing postsecondary education are lower than other Pilot Schools, a significant percentage do plan to go on to two or four year colleges.

Figure 10. Future Plans of high school graduates, 2000-01<sup>29</sup>



<sup>29</sup> Note that figures for each school in this chart may not add up to 100%, as the chart does not include data from students who reported other plans or no plans.

Figure 11. Future Plans of high school graduates, 2001-02<sup>30</sup>



## DISCUSSION

This report presents data that show that Pilot Schools are among the top performing of all Boston public schools, based on a variety of measures of student achievement and student engagement. This success takes place with a Pilot student population that is generally representative of the larger BPS student population.

Pilot Schools:

- Have among the highest daily student attendance of all BPS schools
- Have among the highest total number of students on waiting lists to enroll in the school
- Have among the fewest transfers out of school
- Have among the lowest percentage of students suspended
- Are among the top performing schools in Boston on the MCAS
- Graduate a high percentage of their students
- Send a high percentage of their graduates to college

<sup>30</sup> Figures for Boston Evening Academy indicate the percent of students going to college. No data was available on whether the college was 2- or 4-years.

It is our premise that Pilot Schools perform so well because they are small and they have the autonomy to create conditions which research has found to improve student learning (Cotton, 1995).

*When you have a small school, the problems are still there, but the power of the community of a small school can help where the kids can be swept into a world that is not just their peers ...Kids can join a grownup culture because the size is such that an adult intellectual culture can be built. (Pilot School director, New England Small Schools Network forum, 2000)*

Pilot Schools are able to (1) personalize students' learning environment, and (2) provide teachers with sufficient, flexible blocks of time to collaborate and plan together. As documented in another recent study on the use of Pilot Schools' freedom over budget, staffing, and scheduling to meet student needs, specific practices of the Pilot Schools that contribute to their success include:

- Pilot Schools are all small schools, serving fewer than 500 students
- Although Pilot Schools are small, many still create even smaller learning communities within the schools so that the students and adults form close, personalized, multi-year relationships
- Class sizes are smaller than those in most BPS schools
- Student to teacher ratios are substantially lower than in most BPS schools
- Pilot Schools have longer instructional periods and total instructional time than most BPS schools
- Pilot faculty have significantly greater collaborative planning time to improve teaching and learning than most BPS schools
- Pilot Schools have student advisories, another means by which relationships can form among small groups of students and between students and adults

The Boston Pilot Schools have begun to demonstrate that when urban public schools are provided increased autonomy and flexibility to adopt innovative practices, and are held accountable for their results, student outcomes across a range of indicators improve. These findings have significant implications for the future of urban public education and suggest a movement toward creating small schools and providing these schools with greater autonomy over their resources as a key vehicle for improving urban student engagement and performance.

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## APPENDIX A

\* Signifies Pilot School

\*\* Signifies Exam School

### *Elementary schools (79)*

Adams Elementary	Grew Elementary	Mozart Elementary
Agassiz Elementary	Guild Elementary	Murphy Elementary
Alighieri Elementary	Hale Elementary	O'Donnell Elementary
Baldwin Elementary	Haley Elementary	O'Hearn Elementary
Bates Elementary	Hamilton Elementary	Ohrenberger Elementary
Beethoven Elementary	Harvard/Kent	Otis Elementary
Blackstone Elementary	Hennigan Elementary	Patrick Kennedy
Bradley Elementary	Hernandez Elementary	Pauline Shaw
Channing Elementary	Higginson Elementary	Perkins Elementary
Chittick Elementary	Holland Elementary	Perry Elementary
Clap Elementary	Holmes Elementary	Philbrick Elementary
Condon Elementary	Hurley Elementary	Quincy Elementary
Conley Elementary	Jackson/Mann	Roosevelt Elementary
James Curley	John F Kennedy	Russell Elementary
Dever Elementary	Kenny Elementary	Sarah Greenwood
Dickerman Elementary	Kilmer Elementary	Stone Elementary
Elihu Greenwood	Lee Elementary	Sumner Elementary
Eliot Elementary	*Lyndon Elementary	Taylor Elementary
Ellis Elementary	Lyon Elementary	Tobin Elementary
Emerson Elementary	Manning Elementary	Trotter Elementary
Endicott Elementary	Marshall Elementary	Tynan Elementary
Everett Elementary	Mason Elementary	Warren/Prescott
Farragut Elementary	Mather Elementary	Winship Elementary
Fifield Elementary	Mattahunt Elementary	Winthrop Elementary
Fuller Elementary	McKay Elementary	*Young Achievers ES
Gardner Elementary	Mendell Elementary	
Garfield Elementary	*Mission Hill Elementary	

Not included: McKinley Elementary

*Middle schools (21)*

Cleveland Middle	King Middle	Rogers Middle
Dearborn Middle	Lewenberg Middle	Taft Middle
Edison Middle	Lewis Middle	Thompson Middle
Edwards Middle	M Curley Middle	Timilty Middle
Gavin Middle	McCormack Middle	Umana/Barnes Middle
*Harbor School	*Quincy Upper School	Wheatley Middle
Irving Middle	R.G. Shaw Middle	Wilson Middle

In addition, the three examination schools, Boston Latin, Latin Academy, and O’Bryant, and seven K-8 schools, including the three Pilot elementary schools, were included in comparisons of standardized achievement data (MCAS). They were not included in other middle school comparisons because we received school level, not grade level, school indicator data.

Not included: McKinley Middle, Community Academy, Middle Academy

*High schools (25)*

Another Course to College	Charlestown High	**Latin Academy
*Boston Community Leadership Academy	Dorchester High	Madison Park High
Boston Adult Academy	East Boston High	*New Mission
*Boston Arts Academy	*Egleston Community High	**O’Bryant
*Boston Evening Academy	English High	Snowden International
**Boston Latin	*Fenway Middle College	South Boston High
Brighton High	*Health Careers Academy	*TechBoston Academy
Burke High	Hyde Park High	West Roxbury High

Not included: McKinley Technical, McKinley Vocational, Carter Center, Expulsion Alternative Sch/Prog, Community Academy

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