Criteria for the New Superintendent

BSAC and the Youth Organizers United for the Now Generation (YOUNG) Coalition want to ensure the new superintendent is a strong supporter of BPS students’ engagement, leadership and achievement in all aspects of their education. We ask BPS Superintendent Search committee to include the following criteria to measure each candidate:

**Put Students First**
The new Superintendent should understand that young people are vital stakeholders in their education rather than passive recipients. The Superintendent should listen to, and value highly, the voices of students at all levels of the district.

- **Regular, direct communication and dialogue with the BPS student population**
- **Regular visits to schools**
- **Supportive of student participation in decision-making**
  - Meet with BSAC and the YOUNG Coalition at least 3 times per year
  - In favor of voting powers for the Student Representative to the School Committee
  - Encourages and supports students serving on their School Site Councils
- **Support BSAC’s Student Rights and Responsibilities** campaign which aims to inform students of their rights and their responsibilities as BPS students and track their implementation and effectiveness

**Understand “We’re the Ones in the Classroom—Ask Us!”**
BSAC and the YOUNG coalition lead the “We’re the Ones in the Classroom—Ask Us!” campaign that helped to pass statewide regulations that mandate student voice in teacher evaluations starting in SY 2014-2015. The new superintendent should:

- Ensure the quality and intent of student input in teacher evaluations under the new evaluation system and support ongoing use of constructive feedback in the classroom
- Be supportive of the philosophy **that students should have a fair and decisive say in the evaluation of the adults in their schools**
- Support the work of the Student Feedback Working Group, comprised of district officials, student, parent, teacher and community representation, to monitor and improve the regulation’s implementation across the district

**Be a Diverse, Culturally Competent Leader**
Boston is a diverse city and BPS must meet the needs of students and parents with various backgrounds, including those for whom English is not their first language. To embrace and celebrate diversity within BPS, the Superintendent should:

- **Reflect the BPS student population**
- **Show cultural competence** when interacting or communicating with BPS student, staff, and families
- **Demonstrates history** of successfully working with districts of similar size and composition and of implementing effective student, parent and community engagement in large urban districts

**Champion Equity and Quality for All Students**
Every student, whether they attend a traditional, pilot, innovation or charter school, deserves access to a quality and excellent education. The rapid expansion of in-district and out-of-district charter schools that are unaccountable to the district and public and that have proven to limit access to certain high-risk populations is creating an unequal dual system in our district, state and country. The superintendent should **support equity and quality for all students** by:

- Working with the Mayor and his administration, BSAC, the YOUNG coalition and the Boston Truth Coalition to **monitor equity in the Boston Public Schools**, the expansion of in-district and out-of-district charter schools and their impact on the quality of education of all Boston Public Schools students.
Promoting the funding and development of traditional public schools over charter schools that have selective enrollment, high attrition rates, and fail to educate special needs and English Language Learners properly.

Supporting measurements for school, teacher, and student quality that do not rely on high stakes testing which create stressful classroom environments and pressure teachers to “teach to the test.”

Rejecting privatization and corporate reform model efforts that create systems of winners and losers and only serve to reinforce systemic inequality.

Rejecting school closings as a solution and recognizing that school closings hurt students and destabilizes communities.

**Promote Just and Fair Schools**

The new superintendent should be a champion of **restorative** and **alternative school discipline models** that have proven to rehabilitate students with behavioral issues and prevent repeated offenses. The new superintendent should be a partner in eliminating the **school-to-prison pipeline** completely by:

- Promoting and successfully implementing the new Boston Code of Conduct, adopted unanimously in June 2013 by the Boston School Committee, which dramatically reduces the use of punitive measures and highlights alternative measures to school discipline.
- Supporting a student-driven, centrally-administered grievance process by which students are able to report infractions against their code of conduct to be investigated and corrected by central office.

**Support Students in Reaching Their Full Potential**

Many students served by the District come from low-income families. However, all students will benefit from policies that take a holistic approach in supporting students. We need a superintendent that will:

- **Fight for equitable funding** so that all students, regardless of background, are equipped with the school facilities, school materials, teacher supports and in-school enrichment they need to graduate and succeed.
- **Prioritize wrap-around supports** for students, including access to guidance counselors, mental health professionals, college and career readiness programs and staff, and other programs and policies that promote students’ wellbeing.
- **Create quality partnerships for after school programming, youth jobs, and internships** to enrich out-of-school time, provide safe spaces after school hours, and supply students with the skills they will need to succeed before and after graduation.
- **Promote alternative education**, for those who wish to learn outside of a traditional classroom setting.
- **Ensure access to a diverse curriculum** at every school, including honors and advanced placement classes, culturally relevant coursework, and SAT preparation.
- **Support transportation equity** so that all students can afford to go to school, work and enrich their lives.

Since 2008, **Youth Organizers United for the Now Generation (YOUNG)**, a youth-led coalition, founded by the Boston Student Advisory Council & Boston-area Youth Organizing Project, has worked to improve BPS by and for BPS students. Established in 2013, the **Boston Truth Coalition** represents students, educators, families and other community members who are deeply tied to the neighborhoods of Boston and directly affected by public education.

Together our coalitions are committed to ensure student, family and community engagement in the BPS Superintendent Search.
Boston Truth Coalition Recommendations

In addition to the BSAC criteria, that the coalition fully supports, we want to emphasize additional criteria that are particularly important to parents, educators, and community members.

Commitment to the Principles of Unity
Over the last year, the Boston Truth Coalition convened hundreds of stakeholders to create a vision for public schools in Boston that prioritizes collaboration, stability, democratic, and community-driven reform. This vision is shared in the Boston Truth Principles of Unity. It is important that the superintendent support and commit to reform strategies that are in line with the vision of this student, parent, educator, and community coalition, and not strategies that are based on competition, turnover, and further instability. It is also important that the new superintendent values and supports shared leadership and shared decision making. [http://www.bostonedtruth.org/principles.html](http://www.bostonedtruth.org/principles.html)

Reducing Opportunity (Achievement) Gaps
The continuing underperformance of a number of students in core academic subjects, despite years of reform efforts, is an extremely urgent problem. The superintendent must have strategies and a track record in improving the performance of Black and Latino students, especially males, as well as SPED and English Language Learners that is comprehensive, and not based on standardized testing. Ensure the quality and intent of student input in teacher evaluations under the new evaluation system and support ongoing use of constructive feedback in the classroom.

Instructional Leadership in Addressing the Needs of Diverse Student Populations
- Candidates must have a demonstrated understanding of the different dynamics in educating different populations.
- Candidates must also have strategies to meet the current needs of students for critical thinking, the use of technology, and the ability to participate fully in society.

Commitment to Family and Community Engagement
- The new superintendent must be committed to, and have demonstrated success in, engaging parents as full partners in the education of their children, including immigrant parents and parents who use a primary language other than English.
- Candidates must show success in engaging the community in public education including community-based, faith-based, and parent groups as well as successful relations with others, like higher education, elected officials, and business.

Successful Management Experience
- Candidates must have strategies and achievements in recruiting, hiring, and retaining strong people of color at all levels (teachers, principals, headmasters, and senior administrative staff).
- Candidates need to show experience and success in union relations and negotiations, including teacher hiring, evaluation, and accountability.
- Candidates must have a proven track record of respecting the rights of educators and valuing the professionalism and experience of educators.
- There should be a proven track record in managing large systems, including the application of technology to improve efficiency and responsiveness.

Facilities Maintenance Experience
There should be a proven track record in successfully creating and implementing a facilities maintenance plan (which should include a long term capital plan) to address environmental health and safety. Many of our schools are in disrepair and are in great need of proper maintenance systems, renovations and modernization for 21st century classrooms. A comprehensive facilities plan is critical to address student and staff health (particularly because of Boston’s high asthma rates) and to promote healthy, high performing schools.