

## **Boston Green Academy Executive Summary**

*This was prepared by the founding group of the Boston Green Academy.*

Our proposal closely aligns with the goals of Superintendent Johnson's *Acceleration Agenda*, her *Five-Year Plan*, and *An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap* recently approved by Governor Patrick and the Massachusetts Legislature.

Boston Green Academy's mission is to graduate all of our students prepared for success in college and the workforce. We are especially committed to recruiting, enrolling, and supporting off-track 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students before they enter the "drop-out pipeline". As a public school that is deeply vested in cultivating a highly skilled and actively engaged global citizenry, we will prepare all of our students to be leaders in local and global environmental stewardship and activism, to live their lives responsibly and sustainably, and to take advantage of employment opportunities in the burgeoning "green" economy.

We will replicate Fenway High School's successful family and student support systems, its high-quality instruction and performance assessments, and its systems for including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. We will also add innovative approaches, e.g., a pervasive "sustainability" theme, trauma readiness, community-based support systems, single-sex programming, a Summer Academy, and Universal Design for Learning/graphic design strategies that are woven into our pedagogy, assessments, and educational materials.

Boston Green Academy will open in 2012 with new students in grade 9 and students from a closed BPS high school (TBD) in grades 10-12. Starting in 2013, we will add middle school grades over three years until we reach full capacity (595 students) in 2015. To ensure a high degree of personalization, enrollment in each grade will not exceed 85.

We will be a school that is accessible to all Boston students and families, but our recruitment strategy will emphasize outreach to students and families who might never find their way to a high quality educational option like Boston Green Academy. Our goal is to create a truly heterogeneous student body in which 50% of our school's entering 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders have not experienced success in the previous academic year (per Parthenon & Balfanz reports).

Proximity to rapid transit will allow our students to access dual enrollment, internships, and off-site job training opportunities and will allow resources (tutors, guest speakers, mentors, etc.) to flow freely into the school. Rapid transit access is also consistent with our "sustainability" theme and will save the Boston Public Schools transportation costs.

In summary, Boston Green Academy will:

- graduate students who are at high risk of dropping out
- attract/re-enroll families who leave BPS

- improve the district’s fiscal health by increasing enrollment, reducing the number of students who drop out, and implementing “green” practices throughout the school
- increase the district’s overall capacity to end the drop-out crisis by developing, implementing, documenting, and sharing best practices that address the crisis early in students’ academic career.

Boston Green Academy’s academic program is innovative and rigorous and will prepare all of our students to be successful in college and the workforce. Our courses will adhere to the Massachusetts Frameworks while cutting across traditional academic boundaries and using resources creatively. Our school’s “green” theme will be woven into all courses. We plan to offer the following curricular areas:

**Science:** Using the extensive resources of our partners, we plan to provide an inquiry-based science education that prominently features our “green” theme. We plan to offer unified science in grades 6-8 with a focus on building strong habits of mind and investigatory skills. Our high school program includes Physics, Biology, Chemistry, and AP Environmental Science. We also plan to offer robust internships, community-based fieldwork, and exploratory opportunities.

**Math:** In keeping with the “habits of mind” approach to mathematics that the Boston Public Schools has adopted, we plan to offer the Connected Math Program 2 in grades 6 and 7 supplemented by a program like Mathscape that supports math investigations more fully. We will implement the new Center for Mathematics Education Project program for grades 8-11 with Algebra I being the standard course for all grade 8 students. For seniors, we plan to offer AP Calculus and to explore dual enrollment options at area colleges. A “Foundations of Math” course will also be offered in grades 6 and 9 to shore up students’ identified skill and content gaps.

**Humanities:** We will offer an interdisciplinary course of study for students in grades 6-12 that integrates the frameworks for ELA and History into in-depth courses focused on essential questions, literacy development, research-based writing, and critical thinking. We will also offer “Foundations”, a supplemental literacy course in reading and writing, to all students in grades 6 and 9 and to students who need it in grades 8 and 10. Nationally acclaimed curriculum resources developed by Facing History and Ourselves will be used in Humanities courses across all grades.

**World Languages:** We plan to greatly exceed the BPS standard requirements in this area by offering Spanish in grades 6 and 7 for a half-year, in grade 8 for a full year, and in grades 9-11 as required courses. In addition, we are exploring ways to partner with cultural and academic institutions to offer Mandarin Chinese, both as a way to support global awareness and to provide native Spanish-speakers—and those who prefer another language option—an additional college-preparatory experience.

**Arts, Entrepreneurship, and Physical Education:** These powerful content areas inspire many adolescents and will be offered in innovative ways to all students through

our collaborative partnerships and our core faculty, both as discrete courses and as essential elements of our core curricular classes and Advisory.

**Advisory:** Students at all grade levels will be supported academically and socially through the implementation of an Advisory program that will feature ongoing study skills development, role-alike groups and field experiences, mentoring and tutoring, physical activity and recreation, college application support, financial literacy training, and civic education. In most cases advisories will be co-taught by one teacher who is a consistent advocate for a small cohort of students and families over multiple years and another teacher who has expertise with students at specific developmental levels.