The Youth Transitions Task Force (YTTF) has been working to lower the dropout rate since 2004

- Members include Boston Public Schools, Boston PIC – Boston’s Workforce Development Board, city and state agencies, community-based organizations, youth-serving agencies
YTTF activities

• Research: quantitative and qualitative data
• Public forums analyzing the data
• Policy and practice recommendations
• State legislation and advocacy
• Media projects
Too Big
To Be Seen:
The Invisible Dropout Crisis in Boston and America
1. BPS Parthenon study – segments off track youth
2. PIC dropout outreach leads to BPS-PIC Re-Engagement Center (REC)
3. BPS starts credit recovery, implements tiered intervention system
4. Dropout rate decreases
5. Graduation rate increases
The Re-Engagement Center (REC) has reconnected thousands of students.

Source: Re-Engagement Center, student engaged completed an intake between July 1 and June 30 of the following year.
Media coverage chronicled both the dropout crisis and the response to it...
As the response to the crisis continued, dropout rates decreased

Boston Public Schools (BPS) dropout rates, 2008-2022

Source: DESE Dropout Rate Report.
Despite overall rates decreasing, disparities remain
At the same time, high school graduation rates increased.

BPS 4-year graduation rates, 2006-2022

Source: DESE Graduation Rate Report.
As overall high school graduation rates increased, disparities narrowed.
With increased high school graduation, attention turned to postsecondary attainment.

“About two-thirds of the city’s high school graduates... have failed to earn degrees...”
Success Boston was founded to address low college completion

**Strategies:**

- **Getting Ready:** Remove academic barriers by increasing the rigor of high school and improving Boston Public Schools students’ college and career readiness.

- **Getting In:** Provide coaching for students as they move from high school and for the next two years; expand effective programs that help students apply to and navigate higher education.

- **Getting Through:** Track student persistence, progress, and performance; college partners lead campus-based efforts to ensure students earn a credential in a timely way.

- **Getting Connected:** Increase connections to the workforce in high school, college, & after graduation through internships, summer jobs, career exploration.
Success Boston set goals for college attainment

• Double the college graduation rate for college enrollees from BPS Class of 2011 & beyond

• 70% of those who enroll will complete within 6 years of high school graduation
College enrollment rates started to increase

Trends in the 6-year college completion rate of first-year enrollees, selected BPS classes, 2000-2015

Source: The Boston Foundation
Despite improvements in postsecondary completion, race-ethnic gaps persisted.

6-year college completion rates by gender and race-ethnic groups, BPS class of 2015

Source: The Boston Foundation
After much progress, college enrollment drops starting in 2018
In 2018, college enrollment begins to decrease

First-year college enrollment rate of BPS classes 2014-2021
There are pronounced race-ethnic gaps in college enrollment rates.
Recent Success Boston research reports frame Boston’s next steps

• Boston Private Industry Council, *College Enrollment and Completion: Trends for Boston Graduates*
  
  o BPS postsecondary enrollment rate: 53% for Class of 2021, down from 70% for Class of 2017
  
  o Postsecondary completion recently stalled in low-50%: just over 52% of BPS Class of 2015 graduates who enrolled in college graduated in six years
  
  o The pandemic exacerbated racial and ethnic disparities in enrollment and completion

• Abt Associates, *Coaching for Completion: Final Report for Success Boston Coaching*
  
  o 21% increase in completion rates for coached students from BPS Classes of 2015-2017
  
  o Impacts particularly pronounced for associate degrees
  
  o Positive impact on completion across gender and across racial/ethnic groups
Boston starts to focus on Opportunity Youth (OY) in 2013, tracking historical disconnection rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of Youth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>7,574</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>11,370</td>
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<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>5,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>6,167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS (selected years), 2007-2019.
Our initial research showed that a majority of OY had a HS diploma, and this is still the case.

- Less than a High School Diploma or Equivalency
- High School Diploma/ Equivalency or Higher (including postsecondary)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 2019.
We worked with the Aspen Institute on nationally defined Common Measures of disconnection.

**Community Disconnection Rate**: The rate of young people disconnected from work and school (i.e., opportunity youth).

**High School Disconnection Rate**: The rate of young people without a high school diploma/GED and not working who are disconnected from high school.

**Postsecondary Disconnection Rate**: The rate of young people with a high school diploma/GED, without a postsecondary credential who are disconnected from postsecondary education and not working.

**Workforce Disconnection Rate**: The rate of young people with a postsecondary credential, but not enrolled in postsecondary, who are disconnected from the workforce.
We set targets for reducing the disconnection rates down closer to pre-pandemic levels
Goals for reducing disconnection rates by 2025

- Reduce the community disconnection rate by 19% to 5.4%
- Reduce the high school disconnection rate by 34% to 9.1%
- Reduce the postsecondary disconnection rate by 9% to 6.6%
- Reduce the workforce disconnection rate by 26% to 7.3%
How we are trying to reduce disconnection rates by decreasing leading indicators of disconnection: secondary level

Lower HS dropout rate and increase the 5-year graduation rate year over year.

• Decrease chronic absenteeism year over year.
• Implement the Panorama database to better track chronic absenteeism and interventions
• Provide consultative support to individual schools with high chronic absenteeism
• Public-facing *I’m In* Attendance Campaign
• Improve retention rate for young men of color (African-American and Latinx BPS Students)
• Improve completion rate for young men of color (African-American and Latinx BPS Students)
• Track persistence, retention and graduation rates and disaggregate by race and gender
• Track men of colors participation in high impact interventions
• Track how participation and success compare to other race/ethnic groups and genders
• Survey men of color about their student experience
  - Share this information with the administration
  - Develop new interventions in response to student input
Other OYC strategies

**HOPE Forward**: This postsecondary coaching initiative builds on BHCC’s Halting Oppressive Pathways (HOPE) initiative, which brings together male faculty and students of color to build a community centered on anti-racism, belonging, meaning-making, and purpose, and to pilot empowerment interventions.

**Young Adult Career Center Services**: This program will bring young adults not enrolled in postsecondary education or training into the MassHire Downtown Career Center to access career coaching, employment connections, and job training referrals.

**Healing Centered Organizing (Youth Voice)**: Led by the United Way of Massachusetts Bay, the OYC's youth leaders organized mental health peer leadership training and engaged with the community and political leaders to advocate for mental health services for young people.