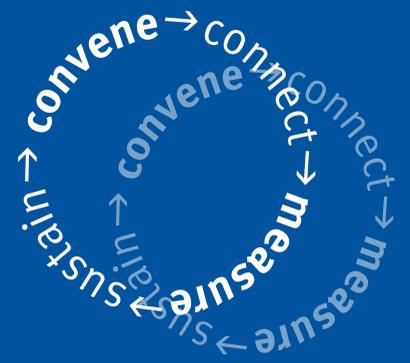


Youth Transitions Task Force

BOSTON PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL



History

The Youth Transitions Task Force (YTTF), organized by the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC), comprises a broad group of stakeholders—including the Boston Public Schools, community organizations, city departments, state agencies, and philanthropy.

The YTTF was first convened by Mayor Thomas Menino in 2004 and charged with lowering the high school dropout rate. The group is now part of a national campaign to bring struggling students and dropouts to the center of high school reform. The YTTF's 2006 report *Too Big to Be Seen: The Invisible Dropout Crisis in Boston and America* helped demonstrate the urgency of the dropout crisis.

The YTTF made six initial recommendations and has maintained them as the foundation of its research and advocacy work.

1. Refine dropout data collection and deepen the analysis.
2. Develop early intervention strategies and an outreach and referral system for dropouts.
3. Increase the number and variety of alternative education and training opportunities.
4. Create school climates that are welcoming and respectful.
5. Increase coordination among schools, alternative programs, and city agencies to close gaps.
6. Develop revenue strategies for alternative programs, early intervention, and outreach to dropouts.

Progress

Since then, the YTTF has worked with state legislators to implement these six recommendations. For example, Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz filed a bill that called for implementing a graduation coaching initiative. Representative Alice Peisch filed a bill that called for competitive grants for schools to provide more support to at-risk youth. Representative Alice Wolf sponsored a bill that was passed in 2012, which required schools to provide educational services to suspended and expelled students and more due process provisions for disciplined students, as well as requiring the state to publicly report all suspensions and expulsions in public schools.

Next steps

Since 2006, Boston has lowered its dropout rate by 58%, from 1,936 students in 2006 to an average of 823 students per year over the last four years. To continue this progress, the YTTF is partnering with the Boston Public Schools on a campaign to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline through increasing awareness of the consequences of absenteeism, dropping out, and punitive school discipline. The goal of the campaign is to implement positive and proactive alternative approaches to these issues.



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