
TO: Boston City Council

FROM: Sam Depina, Deputy Superintendent, Boston Public Schools

DATE: June 14, 2024

RE: 17F (Docket 0938) Response

Below please find the response to the 17F (Docket 0938) filed by At-Large City Councilor Erin Murphy on June 3rd, 2024.

Chronic Absenteeism is a serious problem in school districts across the Commonwealth. Massachusetts defines chronic absenteeism as missing at least 10% of the school year for any reason. Usually this means 18 absences out of a 180-day school year. Chronic absence does not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, illness, obstacles such as lack of transportation, or truancy. Students need only to miss two days of school per month to become chronically absent.

Boston Public Schools recognizes the importance of our students attending school. When students are not in school they can't learn and don't have access to critical social networks and support. While we have seen a decline in our chronic absenteeism rates there is more work to do and we have developed different methods to help reduce the rates of absenteeism. In spring of 2024, BPS launched the new "WIN THE DAY" pilot campaign aimed at significantly improving student attendance rates across schools in region 8.

The BPS team, lead by Chief of Student Support Cory McCarthy, reached more than 800 students in Region 8 through the campaign and drew them back to school with creative strategies like:

- Home visits, transportation support and credit recovery;
- Before school intramural sports including basketball, volleyball and indoor soccer which promotes both exercise and friendship;
- And community incentives like visits to the nail and hair salon and local pizza shops.

BPS chose **Region 8** due to its high rate of chronic absenteeism and the diversity of schools:

- Another Course to College
- Boston Arts Academy
- BCLA/McCormack
- Boston International Newcomers Academy
- Boston Collaborative High School
- Excel High School
- Greater Egleston High School
- Henderson K-12 Inclusion School
- Margarita Muniz Academy
- New Mission High School

This Pilot will run through June 20th, 2024.

Pilot programs like this are helping to slow the trend of Chronic Absenteeism in Boston. BPS acknowledges that there is more work that needs to be done in order to help to ensure student success through school attendance.

The 17F data for Chronic Absenteeism for SY 23-24, was pulled on 6/5/2024 therefore including attendance records through 6/4/2024.

[Here you will find a chart](#) with a comparison of Chronic Absenteeism by school in 2022-23 and 2023-24.