

# Data-Based Inquiry in Boston High School Renewal Initiative

August 16, 2007

# Data-Based Inquiry in Boston

- New, challenging, critically important
  - comfort level/capacity to use it – district, school, classroom- varies widely
  - data capture technology far ahead of development of skill set to USE it
  - often times we have TOO MUCH; too little time to examine it
- Institutional and interpersonal tendency to view data from a particular angle that we want to pursue; often miss important perspectives and/or better questions

# Data-Based Inquiry in Boston

- HSR institutional partners (CCE, JFF, PIC, BPE, Freedom House) - serve as “think-tank”; inside/outside tension; bring data to bear;
- We’re learning the importance of balancing quantitative w/ qualitative

# Data-Based Inquiry in Boston

**Stream of key data provocations** has:

- driven move to small schools;
- affirmed our “portfolio” approach;
- highlighted the disconnect between student engagement/learning and our instruction;
- led schools towards “power standards”
- provoked greater understanding of true dimensions of “crisis of youth and families”

# Stream of Key Data Provocations (2003→2007)

- **Examination of BPS (cohort-based)  
Graduation Rates**

- revealed real 4-, 5- and 6- year grad. rates

- “alarm bell” for School Committee



# Too Big

To Be Seen:

The Invisible Dropout Crisis in Boston and America

A Report from the  
BOSTON YOUTH TRANSITIONS TASK FORCE

May 2006

*Y.T.F.G.*

Confirmed in  
real numbers  
the drop-out  
crisis that the  
community  
was feeling.

# “Too Big to be Seen” Contents

- **What the Numbers Tell Us: Quantitative Data**
- **What Youth and Adults Tell Us: Qualitative Research**
- **Mapping Systems of Education and Support. Recommendations**

# Youth Transitions Partners

- Boston Private
- Industry Council
- Boston Parent
- Organizing Network
- Boston Public Schools
- High School Renewal
- Unified Student Services
- Alternative Education
- Boston Youth Service Network
- Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services
- Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University
- Commonwealth Corporation
- Jobs for the Future
- Youth Opportunity Boston
- Black Ministerial Alliance
- Boston After School & Beyond
- The Boston Foundation
- Boston Higher Education Partnership
- Boston's One-Stop Career Centers
- Boston Plan for Excellence
- Boston Police Department
- Boston Student Advisory Committee
- Boston Urban Youth Foundation
- Boston WIA Youth Council
- Bunker Hill Community College
- Center for Collaborative Education
- Communities for People
- COMPASS
- Comprehensive School Age Parenting Program
- Diamond Educators
- Emerging Leaders Program, UMass Boston
- Friends of the Shattuck Shelter
- The Home for Little Wanderers
- Massachusetts Department of Education
- Massachusetts Department of Social Services
- Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance
- Massachusetts Department of Youth Services
- Roxbury Community College
- Youth Advocacy Project

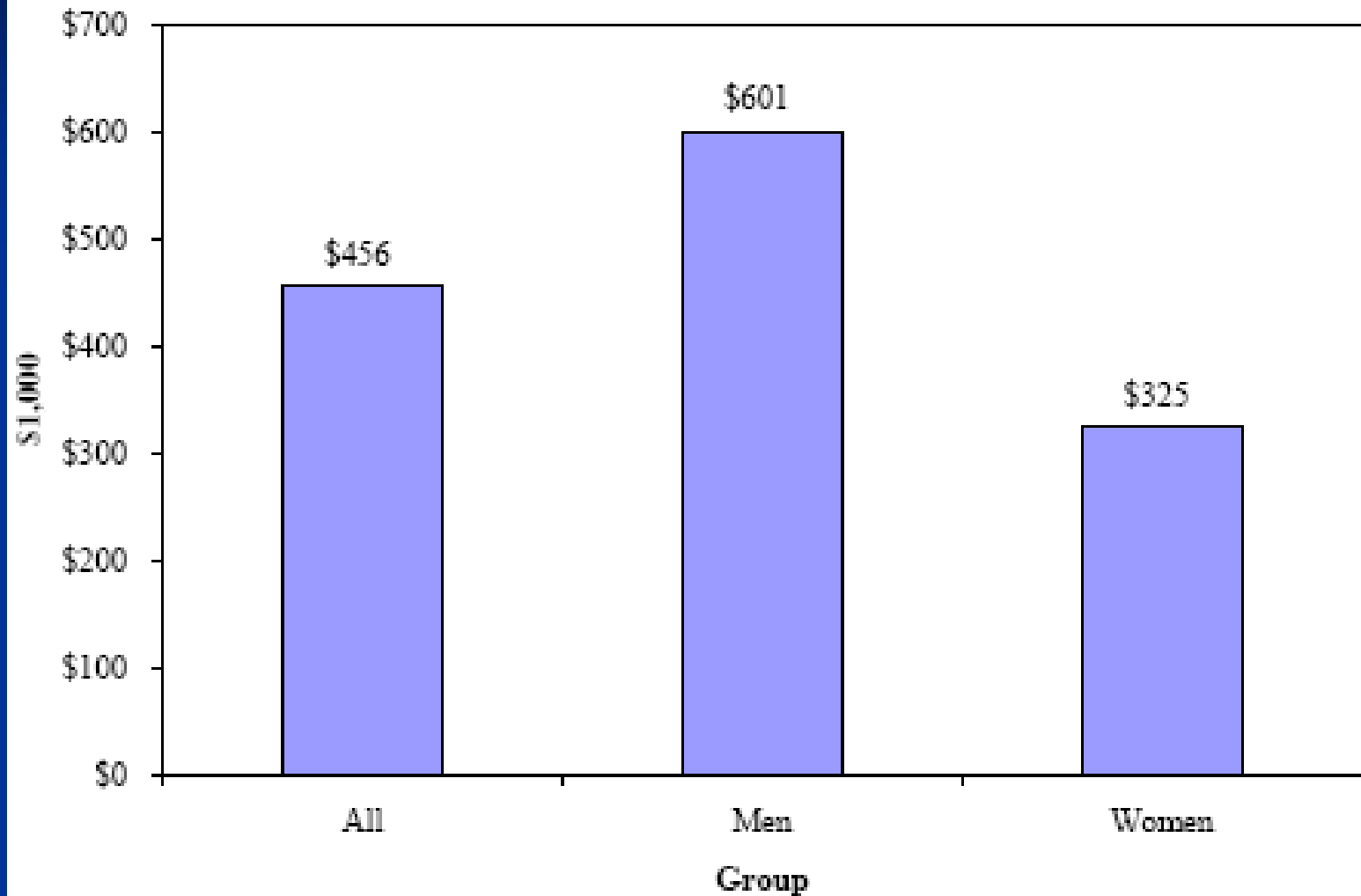
# “Too Big to be Seen”: What the Numbers Tell Us:

- The Boston Public Schools (BPS) reported 1,567 students dropped out in 2004.
- These students did not transfer to another district, enter an alternative school or return to their country of origin: they left school without a diploma.
- The 2004 figures are not an anomaly: each year, some 3,000 students graduate from the BPS, and roughly half that many drop out.
- Today, well over 8,000 youth and young adults in Boston are out of school with no diploma or GED certificate.

# Understanding Dropout Rates

- An **annual dropout rate** is the percentage of students who drop out during a single year.
- A **four-year, dropout rate** measures the percentage of 9th graders who leave a school before graduating in the 12th grade. It is projected on the annual rate of one class over four years.
- The **graduation rate** (or **on-time graduation rate**) is the percentage of students who graduate from a school or school district within a period of time, usually four years.
- The **status dropout rate** shows how many dropouts there are within a population, based on Census information.

Mean Lifetime Earnings Advantages of High School Graduates  
Over High School Dropouts in Massachusetts, All and by Gender  
(2005, in \$1,000 of Dollars)



Differences Between the Mean Lifetime Earnings of  
Massachusetts Adults in Selected Educational Groups, All and by Gender  
(in \$1,000)

	(A)	(B)	(C)
Educational Groups Being Compared	All	Men	Women
H.S. Graduate vs. High School Dropout	\$456	\$601	\$325
Associate Degree vs. High School Graduate	280	349	354
Bachelor's Degree vs. High School Graduate	982	1,340	710
Bachelor's Degree vs. High School Dropout	1,438	1,941	1,035

Trends in the Mean Lifetime Earnings of Male Adults From Ages 18-64 by  
Educational Attainment Over the 1979 to 2005 Period  
(in 1000s of Constant 2005 CPI-U Dollars)

	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
Educational Attainment	1979	1989	1999	2005	1999-2005	1979-2005	Per Cent Change 1979-2005
<12 or 12, no diploma/GED	\$1,383	\$1,276	\$1,104	\$981	\$-123	\$-402	-29
H.S. diploma/GED	1,892	1,891	1,672	1,582	-90	-310	-16
13-15 years	2,196	2,165	2,134	1,912	-222	-284	-13
Bachelor's degree	2,836	3,156	3,368	2,933	-435	+97	+3
Master's or higher degree	3,273	3,722	4,133	3,744	-384	+471	+15

Source: (i) 1980, 1990, and 2000 Censuses of Population and Housing, public use files; tabulations by authors;

(ii) 2005 American Community Surveys, public use files.

# “Student Voice” Initiatives

*included in both Carnegie & Gates grant initiatives*

- Focus groups about schools, teachers, instruction, relationships;
- Developing research methodologies;
- Documenting & presenting results to key audiences
- “Students-as-Researcher” grants & classes
- “Youth on Board” Town Meetings
- Boston Student Advisory Council

# Over-Age Reports by School

- Generated by HSR Office
- Identified 17, 18-year old 9th/10th graders for case management

.... but ...

# SLC "Transformations" Report

- **Report from HS Work Group – Carnegie Grant**
  - SLCs not working as intended; many too large; little “purity” of teacher-student groupings; special populations and “reach back” classes foiling staffing/scheduling – drove the move to small schools; data on teacher collaborative culture/coaching

# School Quality Reviews

## 2006-07

### ■ Institutional Data-

- mission/organization; funding/resources; educational programming; levels of soc/emotional support; partnerships and collaborations; intake/case management; outcomes; staff development

- **Student Data-** why the “first chance” system failed them; what’s working in the “second chance system”; (School-Based Case Logs – issues in student’s lives that constrain their ability to be successful- *sample*)

# Sample – Student Support Case Log

10 – Day Log of Student Support Issues  
- X Small High School -

## Enrollment- 300

- Aging out of DSS and personal information stolen (1)
- Aggressive behavior against other students or staff member requiring a police report (3)
- Arrested or incarcerated (3)
- Car accident requiring medical treatment (1)
- Car theft on school property (1)
- Court date for an armed robbery charge (1)
- Crisis about a previous traumatic event [House raided by Police; father killed] (1)
- First cousin shot and killed (1)
- Hostage situation next door to a student's home (1)
- Intervention for self-mutilation and cutting (1)
- Attacked, beaten and intimidated by young people in the neighborhood (2)
- Knife possession in school (1)
- Marijuana possession in school (1)
- Mental health issues requiring immediate intervention and referral (2)
- Moved to a shelter with a baby to escape an abusive living situation (1)
- Serious medical issue or diagnosis (2)
- Suicide attempt precipitated by sudden homelessness and domestic violence (1)
- Parental abuse reported (2)
- Parent hospitalized (2)
- Threatened by young people in the neighborhood (2)
- Victim of a shooting (1)

# BPS/Parthenon Work Group

Dec. 2006-July 2007

- Go deeper in understanding drop-out, over-age & off-track problem
- Assess the costs of doing business this way
- Identify leaks in the pipeline – when? where? under-and over-performing schools, cohorts
- Recognize and “mine” student persistence
- Push us to intensify portfolio approach with school designs that correlates w/ specific needs of segments of population (“OLE’s”; OFG’s; YFG’s; “therapeutic” cases