COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS

70TH ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

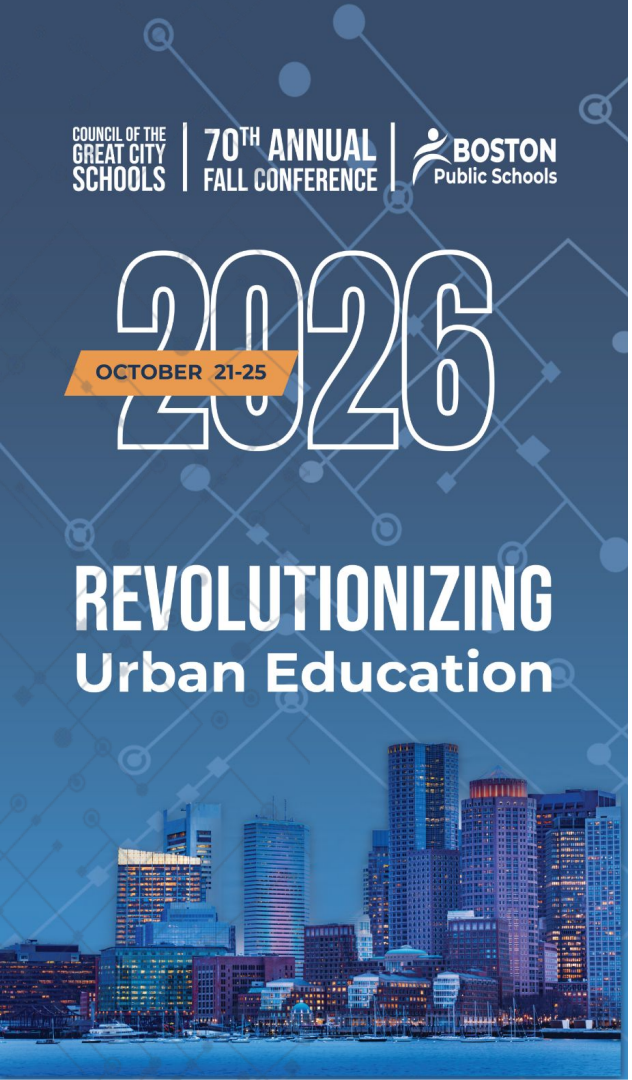
BOSTON Public Schools

2026

OCTOBER 21-25

REVOLUTIONIZING Urban Education





Ensuring Fair Access:

Strategic Service Delivery for All Students

Presenters:

Erin Herlihy, Lauren Shannon, Michelle Simon, Julia Pandolfi

Boston Public Schools

Boston Public Schools

Meet the Presenters



Lauren Shannon

Assistant Director of Special Education

lshannon@bostonpublicschools.org



Erin Herlihy

Inclusive Education Coach

eherlihy2@bostonpublicschools.org



Michelle Simon

School Leader: Mozart Elementary

msimon3@bostonpublicschools.org



Julia Pandolfi

Assistant Director of Special Education

ljpandolfi@bostonpublicschools.org

What We'll Cover Together

- **The Why:** Scheduling as an Equity and Compliance Lever
- **Framework:** A Student-First Design Process
- **In Practice:** What Changes for Students
- **Scaling Across Settings:** Elementary and Secondary
- **Results:** Early Outcomes & Lessons Learned

At BPS, every child in every classroom is entitled to an **equitable, world-class, high-quality education**.

Each child should have the same unfettered access to every conceivable resource to **unlock the greatness within them**.

BPS Strategic Vision
Preamble to BPS Opportunity Gap Policy

The BPS Inclusive Education Plan aims to provide all students access to:

- Grade-level instruction that is culturally and linguistically responsive, and
- A full continuum of services - a comprehensive, tiered range of supports and settings to serve each student's diverse individual needs - to ensure every student has what they need in the least restrictive environment.

To make the change we need, we outlined four key shifts for our current practice:

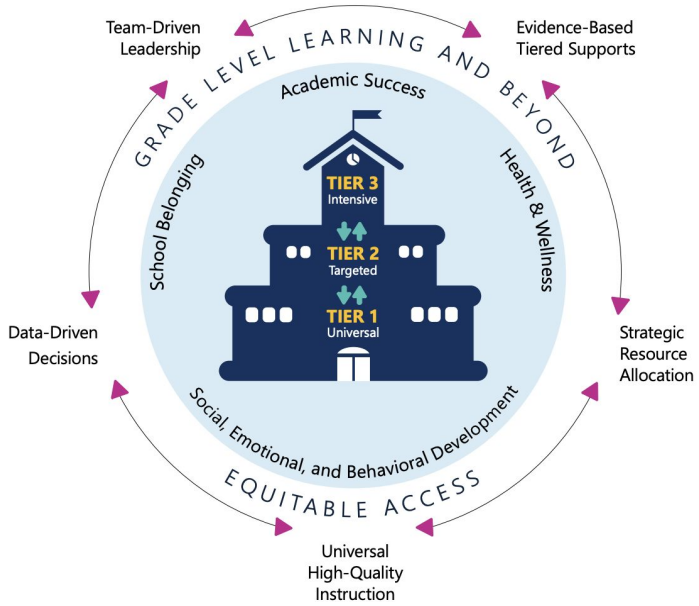
Shift 1	**Increase Access to Grade-Level Learning**
Shift 2	**Ensure the Inclusive Delivery of Interventions, Supports, & Services**
Shift 3	**Engage in Team-Based Planning and Collaboration**
Shift 4	**Reset District Infrastructure with Systems of Support and Accountability**

A Student-First Design Process

Driver 5 of the DESE MTSS Blueprint in practice: aligning ***who delivers what, to whom, and when*** - based entirely on student need.

→ **Student-First Paradigm:** Roles, teams & schedules aligned entirely to student need; personalized time & attention.

→ **Structured, Iterative Process:** Adaptive decision-making structures that evolve with services.



Strategic Service Delivery Framework

Student needs drive the design. Grade-level access and required services guide decisions.

1



Data Foundation

Understand Student Needs

Identify required services, instructional needs, and supports.

2



Decision Rules

Coordinate & Plan

Align groupings, staffing, and service delivery.

3



Schedule Build

Organize & Implement

Build schedules that protect core instruction and services.

link to framework one-pager



Monitor Progress & Adjust

Use student progress to refine services, groupings, and schedules.

Framework: Build the Schedule

Identified Supports
Assign students with identified support needs first to lock in necessary services.

Homerooms
Build homeroom assignments directly around student support placements and provider needs.

Content Schedules
Design subject blocks to ensure required service minutes and consider consistent collaborative planning and teaching opportunities.

Protected Tier 1
Establish uninterrupted core instruction blocks around finalized placements.

Core Takeaway

Scheduling around student needs first prevents service fragmentation and protects access to T1 instruction.

What We Changed

We planned around students' instructional needs.

Redesigned Groupings

Used student assignment data and the class map planning tool to align groups with language development, learning needs, and grade-level tasks.

Aligned Staffing & Schedules

Identified embedded ESL teachers to support ESL and ELA standards, building schedules without fragmenting the day.

Protected Core Instruction

Preserved grade-level core instructional time as an uncompromised foundation for all students to protect Tier 1.

Established Review Cycle

Teams used shared planning time to examine student learning, identify gaps, adjust instruction, and refine groupings.

What the Data Revealed

Services were competing with access to core instruction.

Student assignment data, reviewed alongside class maps and service schedules, revealed:

- **Core instruction interrupted:** students were pulled from ELA or math each day/week.
- **Service inconsistency:** Students schedules were inconsistent and prioritized adult availability
- **Provider time misaligned:** Daily & weekly provider minutes involved service delivery during core instruction.

Priority populations: Multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students identified in both groups.

What It Looks Like in Practice

What we measured (Before → After)

Access to core instruction

Students pulled from core academic period - ELA and/or Math

BEFORE	AFTER
16 →	2

Required service delivery

Students receiving all required weekly minutes

BEFORE	AFTER
100% →	100%

Provider alignment

Weekly service minutes overlapping core instruction

BEFORE	AFTER
720 →	90

From IEP Minutes to Master Schedules: Ensuring Alignment Across Grade Bands

Student First Principles

Allows schools to group students with disabilities first and is a checks and balances system that gives schools tangible data to best schedule and advocate based on concrete data.

GRADES 7–12

Pair special educators with general educators based on content knowledge, certification, and shared instructional approach.

Resource Accountability

Translates individual student service minutes into clear staffing requirements, equipping school leaders and central administration to partner around shared data and allocate resources where they are needed most.

KEY IMPACT

Aligns student service minutes directly with staffing needs and central administration support.

The Alignment Check

The key question for every school leadership team across all grade bands:

"Does the anticipated service delivery schedule align with official scheduling guidance?"

SY25–26 Learning Impact

Service & Grade Access

The schedule must support both specialized services and access to grade-level instruction.

Transparent Data

An accurate, role-maintained data set (LATF, COSE, MTSS Coordinator, Admin).

Grade-Level Visibility

A planning tool that made student-level service data visible at each grade level.

Coaching

Coaching that bridged district guidance and school-level implementation to support key schedule developers.

Shared Scheduling Guidance

BPS Scheduling Guidance as a shared reference making fixed vs. flexible blocks visible.

Shared Commitment

Collective responsibility breaking down divides between general and special education