



**Remarks of Mayor Martin J. Walsh
Boston Compact Event
September 17, 2015**

As prepared for delivery

Thank you, Chief [Rahn] Dorsey. Thank you to Dr. [Valerie] Roberson. Thank you, Superintendent [Tommy] Chang, Superintendent [Kathleen Power] Mears; Shannah [Varón]; and Chairman [Michael] O'Neill.

Thank you to all the principals and educators for joining us today.

I want to thank the Boston Compact steering committee, for all the hard work you've done. It's led to increased school collaboration over the last few years.

We just heard it from Oscar [Santos], Naia [Wilson], and Erica [Brown]. You have shown us that school leaders in our city can and are working together.

By working together, we can help break down old barriers. And we can make sure that all of our students get the education that is right for them.

I know that the Boston School Committee, the Archdiocese, and charter boards will soon consider renewing the compact. I hope they will.

As they think about how to strengthen our work together, I want to share my hopes for all of our city's students.

Here in Boston, we offer so many options for a world-class education. And we're not only talking about our colleges and universities. We have some of the best performing grade schools, right in our neighborhoods and back yards.

As Mayor, I have visited schools all across the city – our district schools, our charter schools, and our parochial schools. I've seen firsthand the great quality of teaching and mentoring that goes on in our classrooms. It makes me proud to represent a city where so many are working so hard to help our kids thrive.

As principals and educators, you are dedicated to the success of your schools and the students that attend them. I thank you for that commitment, and for being there for our students and families, every day.

I know many of you consult each other informally. We need to support that collaboration and build on it. We need to build systems to support every family and kid in our city. We need to coordinate our planning and share our successes and challenges.

We've seen how operating in silos can create barriers to good communication. It can confuse families and limit their options. It can prevent them from finding the best fit for their children.

So today, we'll talk about a great opportunity before us: to make sure that all of Boston's children have access to the schools that fit their individual needs. That's why I support a unified system for school sign up. I am proposing that

we have one application, one deadline, and one process – for both district and charter schools.

I want to make it clear – we’re not starting from scratch. We have a home-based system. A lot of thought and input went into it. We want to build on that system to create more options for families.

This move would open up more opportunities for our students and families. They’ll see both district and charter schools on their list of options.

We also know, right now, not every school is a good fit for every kid. That’s why it has to be about options. And that’s why we also have some capacity-building to do across the system.

That way, universal enrollment can also provide more options for high needs students, such as ESL students and students with disabilities.

All students, of all abilities, will be given a greater chance to attend excellent and supportive schools. This is something that our families want, and what I want, for our City.

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Of course, before any big change, we have to hear from our parents and educators. The community process is essential. We will be holding six citywide meetings over the next few months to hear from families, from educators, from students.

But this process starts with all of you here in this room, tonight.

Tonight, my Chief of Education, Rahn Dorsey, will outline some discussion questions.

As principals, you work directly with students, parents, and staff. On the first day of school, I saw many of you being great leaders --- talking compassionately with our students and families, clearing up confusion; all the while juggling a thousand variables to make sure the day went smoothly.

You are our leaders on the front-line of transformative education in Boston. We are looking to you to help us shape this new plan. And we value your input on how a unified system might work.

We look forward to having many more discussions with all of you --- on how we can strengthen and increase success for all of Boston's schools and students. I am eager to hear your thoughts.

Thank you.