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## Boston schools chief discusses upcoming year, district outlook

Posted by Matt Rocheleau September 7, 2011 03:06 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

As about 57,000 city youths prepare to start a new school year in Boston's public education system, Superintendent Carol R. Johnson discussed the upcoming academic year and the school district's outlook during a media roundtable last week.



At the meeting, Johnson: provided an update on teacher and bus driver union contract negotiations; discussed the signing of a new food vendor; welcomed the opening of two new in-district charter schools; announced plans to partner more closely with Boston-based, but out-of-district charter schools; and said there will be increased enforcement against non-Boston residents who illegally enroll in the city's school system.

Listen to the audio clips described below to hear what the superintendent had to say. Below the sound bytes is a summary of some recent popular issues related to Boston's school system:

### Part one audio clip (4:50):

- Back-to-school and welcoming activities – (0 to :35)
- Changes to student application and registration process; more physical education and arts opportunities – (:35 to 1:15)
- Some new, school-specific changes (1:15 to 2:05)
- Working to strengthen academics and athletics (2:05 to 3:00)
- Expect that another to-be-determined school in the district will receive a library makeover from retailer Target. (3:00 to 3:25)
- Hope to create a compact to partner more with Boston area, out-of-district charter schools (3:25 to 4:00)
- New food vendor signed, to focus on fresher, healthier foods (4:00 to 4:50)

### Part two audio clip (3:40)

- Update on negotiations with teachers' union and negotiations with the company that manages fleet of buses and bus drivers. Teachers being asked to be more flexible in terms of their position assignments and the hours they work. City also asking teachers to agree to new method of

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their evaluation as educators; officials want union to agree to new teacher evaluation that would include a review of students' progress. (0 to 3:40)

### Third audio clip (1:40)

- New food service vendor signed; new measures following last year's expired food controversy (0 to 1:40)

### Fourth audio clip (4:40)

- Crackdown on non-Boston residents who illegally enroll in city schools, an issue most common at the city's top exam schools; school officials are also working to collect back tuition from families caught enrolling illegally in the past. (0 to 3:15)
- The school district's policy concerning immigrant families that sometimes change residences more frequently (3:15 to 4:40)

To read what the schools leader had to say about [a proposal to relocate](#) the Boston Latin Academy, [click here](#). To read about what she said about space constraints at the John Eliot K-8 School in the North End, [click here](#)

### A refresher on recent topics related to the city's public school system:

Over this past summer, [18 city schools closed or merged](#) in order to help narrow a \$63-million budget gap. Two [new in-district charter schools](#) this academic year are the first to open in more than a decade. And, [additional controversial school moves](#) are being eyed.

Earlier this spring, amid [frustration from some students and families](#) and a [lawsuit alleging bias](#) over the restructuring plan, Boston Public Schools Superintendent Carol R. Johnson, who has led the system since 2007, had her [contract extended through 2015](#).

The school system also came under fire after [expired food was discovered](#) in cafeteria freezers. A [Globe analysis](#) recently found some teachers pushed out of underperforming schools in Boston the year prior now work at other low-achieving schools across the city. Last fall, the district [settled a lawsuit](#) from federal civil rights investigators agreeing to help students who are not fluent in English receive the extra help to which they are legally entitled to overcome their language barriers. And, the long-lived debate over the city's complex school assignment process, [detailed by the Globe in recent months](#), remains a key issue.

The superintendent's tenure has also seen, among other things, more college-level courses offered in high schools, a new reading program in elementary schools, a new center that helps drop-out students return to school and the expansion of schools with records of success, according to past Globe coverage.

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