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BOSTON'S PICK FOR SUPERINTENDENT COMES FROM DISTRICT THAT SPENT LESS FOR SIMILAR ACADEMIC RESULTS

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By **Matt Rochelean**
GLOBE STAFF MARCH 04, 2015

Newly selected Boston Public School Superintendent Tommy Chang is poised to move across the country, leaving a school district that has performed similarly to Boston in terms of academic achievement.

Still, key differences remain: The Los Angeles Unified School District, from which Chang is relocating, is remarkably larger, spends significantly less per student, and has a student-teacher ratio double that of Boston.

Chang was selected for the job Tuesday night by the school committee, whose members voted 5-2 to hire Chang.

LA Unified, the second-largest school district in the nation, includes about 980 schools enrolling some 650,000 students.

And even though Chang oversaw just a section of the district as a local instructional area superintendent, he was in charge of several more schools — 135 — and many more students — 95,000 — than there are in Boston. Boston enrolls about 57,000 students across 128 schools.

The Boston district isn't only smaller, it also spends more per student.

Boston spent about \$20,099 per student compared to \$13,993 spent in Los Angeles in 2010-11, the last year for which district spending figures are available from the National Center for Education Statistics. Meanwhile, in 2012-13, the pupil-teacher ratio in Boston was 12:1 compared to 23.6:1 in Los Angeles, according to national data.

Because Chang only oversaw a part of the district, districtwide test results and demographics do not necessarily reflect the group of students and staff he oversaw. But the figures still provide a glimpse into where he is coming from: a sprawling urban district that, like Boston, lags behind national averages for SAT scores and graduation rates.

About 68 percent of seniors graduated from LA Unified last year, about one percentage point better than in Boston, according to information the Globe collected from state and district officials and databases. In each of the cities, about 17 percent of the class of 2013 dropped out at some point during their high school careers.

Average total SAT scores in Boston were better: 1325 compared to 1311 in Los Angeles. But LA Unified students scored slightly better on the reading portion of the test: 434 to 431; and on writing 436 to 430. Meanwhile, Boston students, on average, performed slightly better on the math portion of the exam, scoring 464 in math compared to 441.

In Boston, Chang will meet a different student population than the one he has worked with in Los Angeles.

About 40 percent of students in Boston identify as Hispanic, compared to three-quarters of students in LA Unified, according to 2012-13 data from the National Center for Education Statistics. About 36 percent of Boston students identify as black, compared to about 10 percent in LA Unified.

Boston also has a greater proportion of students who come from low-income families. About 72 percent of Boston students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch in 2012-13, national data shows, while about 59 percent were eligible in LA Unified that year.

The specific section of LA Unified that Chang oversaw, however, may be more similar to Boston. In his application for the Boston job, Chang wrote that in the area he oversaw, about 95 percent of students were eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

In both of the districts, about 28 percent of students are classified as either limited English proficient or English language learners. In Boston, more students receive special education: about 20 percent compared to about 12.5 percent in LA Unified.

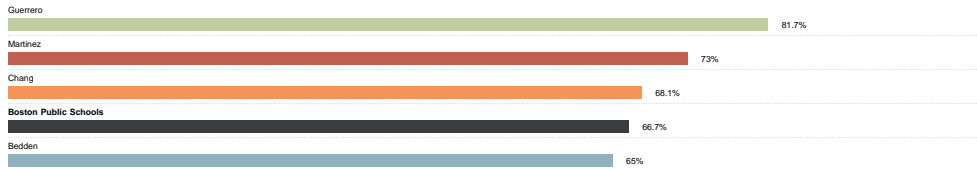
By the numbers

A comparison of Tommy Chang and the other three finalists for Boston's superintendent of schools position, and how their numbers compare to Boston City Schools:

 <p>Dana Bedden SUPERINTENDENT Richmond (Va.) City Public Schools YEARS: 1 AGE: 48</p>	 <p>Tommy Chang LOCAL INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERINTENDENT Los Angeles Unified School District YEARS: 2.5 AGE: 39</p>	 <p>Guadalupe Guerrero DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF INSTRUCTION, INNOVATION, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE San Francisco Unified School District YEARS: 2.5 AGE: 45</p>	 <p>Pedro Martinez SUPERINTENDENT Washoe County (Nev.) School District YEARS: 2.5 AGE: 47</p>
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Matt Rochelean can be reached at

GRADUATION RATE

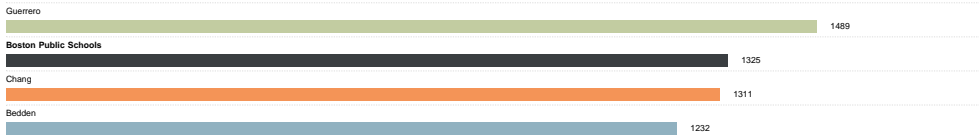


AVG. SAT SCORE



DATA: National Center for Education Statistics; Candidate applications on Boston Public Schools website; District, state education department reports, data

MATTHEW ROCHELEAN/GLOBE STAFF



SALARY

Name	Salary
Boston Public Schools	\$216,000-\$264,000
Pedro Martinez	\$238,000
Dana Bedden	\$234,068
Guadalupe Guerrero	\$217,444
Tommy Chang	\$174,644

DROPOUT RATE

Name	Dropout rate
Tommy Chang	17.2
Boston Public Schools	17.1
Dana Bedden	13.6
Pedro Martinez	9
Guadalupe Guerrero	8.9

STUDENT/TEACHER RATIO

Name	Ratio
Tommy Chang	23.6
Pedro Martinez	20.8
Guadalupe Guerrero	19.8
Dana Bedden	12.3
Boston Public Schools	12

matthew.rochekau@globe.com Follow him on Twitter @mrochele.



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