



Open Circle in Boston Schools

Boston educators share:

“Open Circle provides our students with strategies to communicate more effectively, problem-solve more independently, and practice self-control and self-regulation.”

“Open Circle has really helped me understand how to work a classroom to achieve high academic success.”

“With less time spent engaging in and resolving social conflicts in the classroom, students are able to devote more of their time to learning.”

“There seem to be fewer physical altercations in classrooms that have received Open Circle training and support.”

“I love the Open Circle lessons! SEL is integral to my students’ education and critical to my job as a teacher.”

Open Circle is a universal, year-long, classroom-based program that teaches foundational social and emotional learning (SEL) skills to all students in grades K-5. Students participate in twice-weekly, 15-20 minute, teacher-led classroom meetings which address lessons from the grade-differentiated *Open Circle Curriculum* or timely issues related to school, community, or the broader world. Students also benefit from the infusion of concepts by teachers and support staff throughout the school day as well as parents and other caregivers outside of school.

Since 1991, Open Circle has trained over 700 educators in public schools in Boston and reached an estimated 50,000 Boston children in Kindergarten through Grade 5. In the 2011-2012 school year, 16 public schools in Boston will use Open Circle.

School	Neighborhood	Year Started
Blackstone Elementary	South End	2011
Boston Renaissance Charter	Hyde Park	2009
Bridge Boston Charter	Jamaica Plain	2011
Eliot K-8	North End	2010
Ellis Elementary	Roxbury	2010
Everett Elementary	Dorchester	1996
Holland Elementary	Dorchester	2010
Horace Mann	Allston	1993
Hurley K-8	South End	2010
Kennedy, J.F. Elementary	Jamaica Plain	2010
Lee Academy	Dorchester	2005
Lee Elementary	Dorchester	2007
Mattahunt Elementary	Mattapan	2010
Mendell Elementary	Roxbury	2011
Philbrick Elementary	Roslindale	2008
Winship Elementary	Brighton	2008



Boston educators share:

“Students are learning how to use their words rather than their hands to solve problems between each other.”

“We have incorporated Open Circle language into our behavior plans and are sharing the language with parents and support staff as well.”

“Our teachers have expressed their delight in the structure of the training. They like the follow-up sessions and coaching they receive.”

“Teachers are noticing an increase in friendship building skills and a decrease in incidents involving bullying.”

Results from a 2010 survey of Boston public school teachers using Open Circle demonstrate the program's impact:

- 96% agreed that topics in the *Open Circle Curriculum* are relevant to Boston students' lives.
- 75% hold Open Circle Meetings at least once per week.
- 76% display materials pertaining to Open Circle in their classroom.
- 88% use Open Circle Meetings to address current issues in school or students' lives outside of school.
- 62% integrated Open Circle concepts into other academic subject areas.
- 100% report an increase in students' use of Open Circle skills such as cooperating, calming down, showing empathy, listening, problem solving, leadership, and appropriately expressing anger.
- 75% report decreases in at least one key negative behaviors: fighting, teasing, bullying, exclusion of peers, or disruptive behavior during class time.
- 100% agreed that Open Circle's Core Program training improved their overall teaching practice and their ability to identify and address students' social and emotional needs.
- 92% agree that Open Circle makes their classrooms safer, more caring, more cooperative, and more highly engaging.
- 92% report having more time for academics and fewer office referrals while using the *Open Circle Curriculum* in their classrooms.

Alignment with BPS' Acceleration Agenda and Academic Achievement Framework

BPS' Acceleration Agenda, finalized in May 2010, asserts that academic achievement depends on a positive school climate and effective social and emotional supports for students. In its Vision for Graduates, the Agenda outlines several outcomes related to social and emotional growth.

BPS' Academic Achievement Framework (AAF), adopted in the 2010/2011 school year, calls for a multi-tier system of support to address the academic, English language and behavioral development of all BPS students. AAF's goals include improving students' social competence and decreasing problem behavior. AAF highlights the need for universal social and emotional learning for all Boston students.

Open Circle's proven success in helping Boston teachers develop students' social and emotional skills and improve school climate make it uniquely suited to help BPS schools—particularly Turnaround and Circle of Promise schools—fulfill the Acceleration Agenda and implement the Academic Achievement Framework.