



english for **NEW
BOSTONIANS**

ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum: Companion Guide for Parents of Students in Grades 7-12

Unit 1: BPS Policies— Attendance, Homework, Graduation

Activities:

- #1: Attendance Policy: Excused vs. Unexcused Absences (b)**
- #2: How Do You Feel When You Miss Class? (b)**
- #3: Writing Schools Notes (b)**
- #4: What's the Homework Policy? How Much Time Does My Child
Spend on Homework (b)**
- #5: High School Graduation Requirements**

**Developed by Susan Klaw
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About English for New Bostonians

English for New Bostonians (ENB) invests in the future of our region by fostering a high-quality ESOL system that prepares immigrants to pursue their educational, economic and civic aspirations. Through grant making, training teachers, and building public awareness, ENB expands the number of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) seats, improves program quality across agencies, customizes curricula to diverse subpopulations, and leverages private and public resources. Founded in 2001 by the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA), immigrant leaders, and local foundations, ENB now involves several city departments, approximately 20 public and private funders, and numerous community organizations.

About the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Initiative

Through ESOL for Parents and Caregivers, ENB guides ESOL providers and immigrant-rich schools in building partnerships to facilitate parent engagement in schools, enabling parents/caregivers to improve their English and digital literacy skills, navigate school systems, and understand expectations and opportunities for school involvement and ways to optimize children's learning. At the same time, ESOL for Parents helps adults prepare to pursue their own educational and employment goals, while supporting children's learning – aiming to eliminate multigenerational poverty.

About Susan Klaw

Susan Klaw has directed, taught in, and developed original curriculum materials for Boston-based parent ESOL programs since 1991. She has delivered extensive training locally and nationally on various aspects of Family Literacy and been named a "Literacy Champion" by the Massachusetts Literacy Foundation, Parent Educator of the Year by the Children's Trust Fund, and Adult Educator of the Year by the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education.

About the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum

The Curriculum (on ENB website and available free of charge) gives ESOL teachers background materials, lessons and activities designed to help immigrant parents learn English and become more effectively involved in their children's education. Selecting curriculum units and lessons relevant to their classes, ESOL teachers can orient immigrant parents to the U.S. school system and provide practical skills such as interpreting report cards, participating in teacher conferences, advocating for children, and supporting children's learning at home. While some information is Boston specific, much can be used in any locale. ENB can assist in adapting materials for school districts. Additionally, ENB offers a Companion Middle/High School Guide, as well as a Digital Learning Guide to support online instruction.

Using the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum

All materials are intended to be downloaded and widely used. Please cite English for New Bostonians and credit English for New Bostonians on all reproductions. We welcome feedback and stories on how you and your students are using the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum!

Thanks to the many public and private funders that have supported this project, especially the Highland Street Foundation, Shipley Foundation, Hamilton Foundation, Moses Kimball Foundation, Plymouth Rock Foundation, Blum Shapiro Foundation and the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement's We Are Boston Gala.

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ACTIVITY #1: ATTENDANCE POLICY: EXCUSED VS. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES (Can be used/adapted for use with beginning level students)

Note to Teachers: *Before beginning this activity and unit in the Companion Guide, go to the [ESOL for Parents Curriculum](#) and do the very first unit, School Overview. It contains important information for parents of all ages.*

In this first activity, modifications for beginning level students are indicated in italics at the end of a given step.

Rationale:

Being in school every day, on time, is a child's job. Parents need to understand how important good attendance is and the consequences for children if they miss a lot of school.

Student Objectives:

- *Students will understand the consequences if their children are absent.*
- *Students will learn what BPS considers an excused absence and an unexcused absence.*
- *Students will practice getting information out of difficult texts.*

Materials:

- *Current [Guide to Boston Public Schools for Families and Students](#), "Promotion Policy and School Attendance." Hard copies are available at most schools and at the BPS Welcome Centers. Parents receive copies of the guide at the beginning of the school year. If you do not have a hard copy of the Guide, you can download the page. Go to the BPS website and search for the Guide.*
- *Boston Public Schools Report Card Schedule. Copy from inside back page of the current [Guide to the Boston Public Schools for Families and Students](#).*
- *Handout A: [Sample BPS High School Report Card](#)*
- *Handout B: [Attendance Policy Case Studies](#)*

Activity Outline:

1. *Explain objectives.*
2. *Opening discussion: When you went to school in your country, what happened if you missed school? Why is it important to be in school as much as possible? Explain that BPS has strict attendance policies.*

3. Create columns on the board with Excused Absence and Unexcused Absence as headings. Define the words. Ask students to list what they think are examples of either kinds of absences and write those down.

For beginning level students, the teacher could write on board additional situations that become excused or unexcused, based on info in the Guide. . Then skip to Step 7.

4. Hand out the Promotion Policy and School Attendance page from the current Guide. Show students a hard copy of the Guide so those who are BPS parents will recognize it as a booklet they received (but probably didn't read) at the beginning of the school year. Ask: How many of you have this Guide? How many of you have it in your first language? Who read it? Remind them that it contains a lot of information about the Boston schools and is good to have as a reference.
5. Help students learn how to decipher texts by reading the headings. What's this page about? Where you can you find information on excused absences? On unexcused absences?
6. Read the BPS list of excused and unexcused absences aloud with students, clarifying terms when necessary. Then go back to the examples students generated in Step 3. Read each one and ask, Were we correct? Is this excused or unexcused? Add in any additional reasons for excused or unexcused absences. Non-Christian students are often surprised and pleased that their religious holidays will be excused.
7. Show students a sample high school BPS report card. The Daily Attendance box shows the number of excused and unexcused absences the student has each term. If the parent or student thinks that number is wrong, when the student gets the report card, the parent and/or student should go into the school office to discuss it. Sometimes a child was out sick, parents did send in a note, but it didn't get recorded.

Beginning level students could practice the vocabulary-- present, absent, tardy-- and practice reading the numbers. Skip Step 8.

8. Give out the Handout: Attendance Policy Case Studies. This is a way for students to digest the above information. First practice reading the chart. This is a good way to review how to read dates. Ask questions such as When does Term 1 begin? When does Term 3 end?
9. Read the case studies aloud and then have students read and answer the questions in pairs. With beginning level students, the teacher will have to decide whether the case studies, even if read aloud, will be too difficult for the class to interpret. They can practice reading the chart however.

Follow-Up:

- *Review with students how to get to the BPS website on a digital device and how to find translation function. Then find the Guide for Students and Families and go to the attendance pages so students can review in their first language.*

Handout A: Sample BPS High School Report Card



Boston International
Tony King, Headmaster
100 Maxwell St. Dorchester, MA 02124
(617)635-9373

Report Card
February 6, 2019

Term	Start Date	End Date
T1	9/6/2018	1/28/2019
T2	11/13/2019	2/3/2019
T3	2/4/2019	4/21/2019
T4	4/22/2019	6/18/2019

Students Name

BPS ID: 011230

Grade: 12 YOG 2020

Homeroom: 1990_001

Counselor:

Course	Marking Term					Exam Effort	Final Conduct	Absent	Comments
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5				
Dual Enrollment English (Russo)	A	--							
AP Human Geography (Boldewskull)	B	--							
AP Calculus (Hogu)	A-	--						0	Improvement Noted
Biology 2 (Wong)	A+	--							
AP Computer Science (Tasa)	P	--				A	A+	2	Demonstrates strong understanding of content on classwork

Daily Attendance

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	Total
Day Present	87					87
Excused Absents	0					0
Unexcused Absents	3					3
Unexcused Tardy	3					3

Promotion/ Graduation Requirements

BPS Graduates must take and Pass the following courses:

Pathways 1: 4 English, 3 History (including history 1&2)

Pathways 2: 4 Humanities (English, History 1&2)

Pathways 1&2: 4 Math (including Algebra, Geometry, Adv.

Algebra), 3 Lab Science (incl. Biology, Chemistry, Physics)

2 World Languages, 2 Arts, 2 PE, 1 Health, 1 Computer, and pass

MCAS ELA, Science/Tech and Math Exams

Benchmark Assessment: Passing score on the MCAS (Level 2-4),

BPS Mathematics Assessment (D-), BPS Math tasks (P).

Note: Graduation requirements are under review. These are the requirements as of the 2022-2023 school year.

Grade key

Excellent A+(97-100) A(93- 96.9) A-(90- 92.9) Good B+(87-89.9) B(83-86.9) B-(80-82.9)	Fair C+ (77-79.9) C (73-76.9) C-(70- 72.9) Poor D+ (67-69.9) D (63- 69.9) D- (60- 62.9)	F+ (50- 59.0) Failure F (<50) Failure P Pass NC No Credit I Incomplete W Withdrawn UN Ungraded
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Parent/ Guardian Signature

Handout B: Attendance Policy Case Studies

Term	Start Date	End Date
T1	9/6/2018	11/10/2018
T2	11/13/2018	2/3/2019
T3	2/4/2019	4/21/2019
T4	4/22/2019	6/18/2019

1. Jose is in 9th grade. In September he missed two days of school because he had a sore throat and a bad cough. In October, he missed one day of school because he was in NY visiting his cousins over a weekend and didn't come back to Boston until Monday night. In November, he didn't miss any days.

How many unexcused absences will he have for the first term (T1)? _____

2. Amalia is in 10th grade. She missed a week of school in May because her four year old brother was sick and her mother needed her to babysit while she went to work.

How many unexcused absences will she have for the fourth term (T4) ? _____

3. Victor is in 11th grade. In February he missed four days of school because he had a bad asthma attack. When he returned to school, his mother sent in a note from the doctor who had seen him in the emergency room of Boston Medical Center. He didn't miss any other days of school for the rest of the school year.

How many unexcused absences will he have for the third term (T3)? _____

4. Carmen is from Guatemala and speaks almost no English. She asked her daughter Rosa who is in 12th grade to stay home from school for a day to help her go to some appointments and translate. Rosa said okay, even though she didn't want to miss school because she was having a test that day.

● **Is that an excused or unexcused absence? _____**

● **Do you think Carmen should have asked her daughter to stay home? Why?**

ACTIVITY #2: HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU MISS CLASS?

(Can be used/adapted for use with beginning level students)

Rationale:

When parents make connections between their own learning experiences and those of their children, it helps them support their children's learning and further motivates them in reaching their own goals.

Student Objectives:

- *Students will be able to talk about how they feel and how their children feel when they miss school.*
- *Students will learn adjectives that describe feelings.*

Materials:

Activity Outline:

1. *Explain objectives.*
2. *Write the following key "feeling" adjectives on the board. Ask students for suggestions of additional adjectives. Clarify meanings by giving examples of how one feels in different situations. Have students give examples too: When do you feel **proud** of your children? Do you ever feel **shy**?*

<i>embarrassed</i>	<i>proud</i>
<i>ashamed</i>	<i>excited</i>
<i>confused</i>	<i>confident</i>
<i>shy</i>	<i>talkative</i>
<i>discouraged</i>	<i>encouraged</i>

1. *Have students complete the following sentences:*

When I miss my English classes, I feel _____.

When my child misses school, they feel _____.

2. *Ask students to share and discuss what they wrote with a partner, then ask for volunteers to share what they wrote.*
3. *Write on the board and explain the following key phrases:*
all behind
catch up

make-up work

4. Write: **When you miss a lot of classes, you fall behind and it is hard to catch up.**
Ask for a show of hands: Who agrees with this statement? Who disagrees with this statement?

Do a group brainstorm: What can you do to help your child catch up when your child misses school? Suggest that if your child is going miss school for a couple of days, the student needs to ask the teacher for make-up work and homework and have the child do it at home.

Follow-up:

Adjective Bingo Board: *For further feeling adjectives practice, create an Adjective Bingo Board. This Bingo Board technique is adapted from Zero Prep, Ready to go Activities for the Language Classroom, by Laurel Pollard and Natalie Hess, published by Alta Book Center Publishers, 1997. Write the adjectives used in this activity on the board and add to them. Have students draw a 3 x 3 grid on a piece of paper. Instruct them to fill their squares with adjectives from the board, taken at a random order. Give them something to mark their bingo squares with (dried beans, paper clips, pennies). Call out the adjectives. If a student has one on his/her board, the student covers that square. Three covered squares in a row is a Bingo. When a student gets Bingo, they are not automatically the winner. The student must first use each of the adjectives comprising the Bingo in a sentence such as "I feel _____ when I _____."*

ACTIVITY #3: WRITING SCHOOL NOTES

(Can be used/adapted for use with beginning level students)

Rationale:

This authentic writing activity was developed because of a student request. A mother wanted to know how to write the BPS required absence notes in good English, even though her daughter's teacher spoke and read Portuguese.

Student Objectives:

- *Students will learn how to write required school notes when their child is absent.*
- *Students will review what is an excused and what is an unexcused absence.*
- *Students will learn the format for writing a note.*

Materials:

- *Handout: Absences: Writing School Notes*
- *Copies of any letters schools may have sent to parents re their Attendance Policy*

Activity Outline:

5. *Explain objectives.*
6. *Distribute Handout Absences: Writing School Notes. Explain that parents must send in notes to school with their children after their children have been absent if they want the absence to be excused. Sometimes parents say "Well, I just text my child's teacher if he is sick." In general, a text does not constitute the record teachers need to change an absence from unexcused to excused. Review what needs to be included in the note to teacher. In the BPS guide it says:
"Students must bring in a note after each day they are absent. The note must include the date absent, the reason for the absence, a phone number for the parent or guardian, and the parent or guardian's signature."*
7. *Review the format for writing a letter.*

Make a list of key childhood illness related words on the board. Have parents practice pronouncing the words and then have them copy down the list.

<i>Headache</i>	<i>Vomiting</i>
<i>Fever</i>	<i>Upset Stomach</i>
<i>Ear Infection</i>	<i>Sore throat</i>
<i>Cough</i>	<i>Asthma</i>
<i>Cold</i>	<i>Flu</i>

8. *Have students write their sample notes, using the handout as a guide. Circulate to help and correct. Have students read their notes aloud to the class. Suggest that students save their notes as a model to use in the future.*
9. *Homework: have students write two absence notes to their child's teacher. Write the notes on two different sheets of paper. One should be for an absence that will be excused. One should be for an absence that will not be excused. Explain that you will play a guessing game with these notes in the next class. **Note: homework assumes students did Activity #1 on excused vs unexcused absences.***
10. *Collect the notes students have written, put them in a box and shuffle them around. Pull out a note and read it aloud. Students have to guess whether this is an excused or unexcused absence and explain their reasoning.*
11. *Students should ask their teenagers to find out from their teachers what they want from parents when a student is absent.*

Follow-Up:

- *Have students write and receive help with other authentic notes in class: thank you notes, appreciation notes, holiday cards, sympathy notes.*
- *Have students practice writing absence notes by writing them to you, explaining their own absences.*

Handout: Absences: Writing School Notes

When your child is absent from school you must write a note to the teacher and send it in when your child returns to school. The note should include:

- *Your child's name*
- *The dates your child was absent*
- *The reason your child was absent*
- *A doctor's note if your child was out sick for more than two days.*
- *Your signature and a phone number*

Here is a sample note:

February 8, 2019 Dear Ms. Perez, My daughter, Andrea Vazquez, was home because she was sick on February 6 and February 7. She had a bad cold (upset stomach, headache, asthma). Please excuse her absences. Sincerely, Maria Vazquez 617 313 1311
--

Now you practice:

Situation: *Your daughter (or son) was out sick for two days because of a fever.*

Directions: *Write a note for your child to take to the teacher when returning to school. Copy the sample. Use your real name and your child's real name.*

ACTIVITY #4: WHAT'S THE HOMEWORK POLICY? HOW MUCH TIME DOES MY CHILD SPEND ON HOMEWORK?

(Can be used/adapted for use with beginning level students)

Rationale:

Parents understand that monitoring homework is a primary parental responsibility. In elementary school- based parent ESOL classes, "Being able to help my child with homework" is the number one reason students give for joining the class. While parents of middle and high school students may not be able to help their children with homework, they still need to understand the BPS homework policy and make sure that their children are getting the homework done.

Student Objectives:

- *Students will be able to state how much homework BPS says middle and high school students should have on a daily basis.*
- *Students will be able to compare a written policy with their children's actual experience.*

Materials:

- *Current Guide to Boston Public Schools for Students and Families. "Homework Recommendations". Focus on the pages for middle and high school students. Hard copies are available at most schools and at the BPS Welcome Centers. Parents receive copies of the Guide at the beginning of the school year. If you do not have a hard copy of the Guide to copy from, you can download the page.
<https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/familyguide>*
- *Handout: My Child's Experience with Homework*

Activity Outline:

1. *Explain objectives.*
2. *Ask two opening whole group discussion questions: Why do teachers give homework? How much homework do you think students should get? List responses on the board.*
3. *Have students in partners discuss these questions.*
 - *If you went to middle school or high school, did you have homework?*
 - *Did you have homework every day?*
 - *What did you have to do for homework?*

If the class is small, ask students to report back to the group what their partner said. In a bigger group, just ask for a show of hands. For example: How many people had homework every day? Raise your hands.

4. *Distribute and have students fill out the handout: My Child's Experience with Homework. If enough students indicate they don't know the answers for their high school aged children, have them do it as a homework assignment after they have talked with their son or daughter.*
5. *Read together the section on homework recommendations for high school from the BPS Guide. Or, if more of your students' children are in middle school, look at that section instead. Make sure students understand the concept of average with a quick math lesson.*
 - *Compare the reasons given by BPS for homework with the reasons students listed in the initial discussion.*
 - *Compare recommended homework time with what students thought. Point out that the amount of homework goes up as children get older. BPS recommends 30-60 minutes per day for elementary school, 2 hours for middle school and 2 ½ hours for high school.*
 - **Make sure students understand that in middle and high school, doing the homework is part of the grade a student receives.** *On the BPS K-5 report cards, students get a separate grade for "Regularly completes homework assignments." On the BPS 6-12th grade report card, homework is folded into the grade. If a student is not completing the homework, that might be mentioned in the comment section and will lower the student's grade.*
6. *Have parents look back at the handout they filled out to consider whether their child's actual experience matches BPS policy. Write these three statements on paper and post them in different corners of the room. Review the meaning of these statements and then do a **vote with your feet** activity*
 - *My teenager spends **about** 2 ½ hours on homework per day.*
 - *My teenager spends **less than** 2 ½ hours homework per day.*
 - *My teenager spends **more than** 2 ½ hours of homework per day.*
 - *Ask students to go stand under the statement that matches their child's experience.*
7. *Ask those students whose children spend either less than or more than the recommended amount to explain. Is this a problem in their opinion? If it is, have the class help problem solve.*
8. *College Talk: Take a moment to explain how most of the work students do in college is homework, or independent work. You are expected to do approximately 10 hours per week of independent work for each course you are taking. A full time student usually takes four courses a semester. Homework in elementary, middle and high school*

teaches students how to learn independently. This is something they need to know how to do to succeed in college.

Follow-up:

- *For those students who have children in elementary school as well, they could look at the homework recommendations in the Guide for that age group. Encourage any parents concerned about homework to talk with their child's teacher and ask them to report back to the group on the meeting.*

Handout: My Child's Experience with Homework

For your child in high school:

My child is in _____ grade.

*My child gets homework (every day, 3-4 times a week, once a week, never).
(circle one)*

*It usually takes my child _____ do to the homework.
amount of time*

The homework is usually (too hard, just right, too easy) for my child. (circle one)

When does your child do his homework? _____

Where does your child do his homework? _____

If you have more than one school age child, answer the same sentences for a second child.

My child is in _____ grade.

*My child gets homework (every day, 3-4 times a week, once a week, never).
(circle one)*

*It usually takes my child _____ do to the homework.
amount of time*

The homework is usually ((too hard, just right, too easy)) for my child. (circle one)

When does your child do his homework? _____

Where does your child do his homework? _____

ACTIVITY #5: UNDERSTANDING HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Rationale:

High school graduation requirements in Boston are complex because it is a large system with a wide range of high school types and choices. However adults in an ESOL setting can gain a basic overview of the system through learning key vocabulary and understanding the basic concept that high school students must pass certain numbers of courses in certain subjects. This will make it easier for parents when they see the report cards and talk with teachers or guidance counselors. While this activity refers specifically to BPS graduation requirements, a general handout is included that teachers could use in any school district.

Student Objectives:

- *Students will learn basic graduation related vocabulary.*
- *Students will be able to identify which Pathway their child is in.*

Materials:

- *Current Guide to Boston Public Schools for Families and Students, “High School Graduation Requirements, page 23.” Hard copies are available at most schools, at the Welcome Centers, and at many community centers. They are available at the Welcome Centers in many languages. Parents receive copies of the Guide at the beginning of the school year. If you do not have a hard copy of the Guide, you can download the page. <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/familyguide>*
- *Handout: Sample BPS High School Report Card*
- *Handout: Practice With Words Related to Graduation*
- *Handout: General Graduation Requirements*

Activity Outline:

1. *Explain objectives.*
2. *Distribute copies of a BPS high school report card and graduation requirements page from the Guide. Show students how the Graduation Requirements are listed in both places, although it is clearer and easier to read from the Guide.*
3. *Look at the Pathways I chart from the guide. Write on the board and explain that **“Take and pass four English Courses”** means that students must take and pass four full years of English. So they have to take English every year they are in high school. Write on the board and explain **“Take and pass one semester course in computers.”** This means that students must take at least one half year computer class*

in order to graduate. If they are interested in computers, they can take more computer classes if they have time in their schedule.

4. **Alternate:** *If students in the class do not live in Boston, distribute the handout General Graduation Requirements. Read and discuss, then proceed with the same vocabulary exercises.*
5. *Write key graduation related terms, phrases and abbreviations on board and explain*
 - *requirement*
 - *pathways*
 - *take a course*
 - *pass a course*
 - *passing grade/failing grade*
 - *retake (a course/an exam)*
 - *PE*
 - *MCAS*
 - *ELA*
 - *semester*
6. *Distribute Handout: Practice With Words Related to Graduation for students to complete in partners. Have students read and practice the dialogue with those same partners.*
7. *Homework: have students show their children the Pathways chart from the Guide and ask their children which Pathway they are in and why. Have them report back in their next class.*

Follow-Up:

- *Invite a guidance counselor or advisor to the class to explain how students choose their classes.*

Handout: Sample BPS High School Report Card



Boston International
Tony King, Headmaster
100 Maxwell St. Dorchester, MA 02124
(617)635-9373

Report Card
February 6, 2019

Term	Start Date	End Date
T1	9/6/2018	1/28/2019
T2	11/13/2019	2/3/2019
T3	2/4/2019	4/21/2019
T4	4/22/2019	6/18/2019

Students Name

BPS ID: 011230

Grade: 12 YOG 2020

Homeroom: 1990_001

Counselor:

Course	Marking Term				Exam Final Conduct		Absent	Comments
	T1	T2	T3	T4	Effort			
Dual Enrollment English (Russo)	A	--						
AP Human Geography (Boldewskull)	B	--						
AP Calculus (Hogu)	A-	--					0	Improvement Noted
Biology 2 (Wong)	A+	--						
AP Computer Science (Tasa)	P	--			A	A+	2	Demonstrates strong understanding of content on classwork

Daily Attendance

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	Total
Day Present	87					87
Excused Absents	0					0
Unexcused Absents	3					3
Unexcused Tardy	3					3

Graduation Requirements

BPS Graduates must take and Pass the following courses:

Pathways 1: 4 English, 3 History (including history 1&2)

Pathways 2: 4 Humanities (English, History 1&2)

Pathways 1&2: 4 Math (including Algebra, Geometry, Adv.

Algebra), 3 Lab Science (incl. Biology, Chemistry, Physics)

2 World Languages, 2 Arts, 2 PE, 1 Health, 1 Computer, and pass

MCAS ELA, Science/Tech and Math Exams

Benchmark Assessment: Passing score on the MCAS (Level 2-4),

BPS Mathematics Assessment (D-), BPS Math tasks (P).

Grade key

Excellent A+(97-100) A(93- 96.9) A-(90- 92.9) Good B+(87-89.9) B(83-86.9) B-(80-82.9)	Fair C+ (77-79.9) C (73-76.9) C-(70- 72.9) Poor D+ (67-69.9) D (63- 69.9) D- (60- 62.9)	F+ (50- 59.0) Failure F (<50) Failure P Pass NC No Credit I Incomplete W Withdrawn UN Ungraded
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Parent/ Guardian Signature

Handout: Practice with Words Related to BPS Graduation

New words and phrases

Requirements	Pathway
Take a course	Pass a course
Retake (a course, an exam)	Passing grade/failing grade
Senior	Semester
ELA	MCAS
PE	GPA

1. Read the paragraph below and underline new words and phrases that relate to graduation.

Susana's son Danny is in 10th grade. He is in Pathway I and plans to go to a four year college. He has always gotten passing grades in all his courses. But now he is having difficulty in his Algebra 2 course, and in the second marking term he got a failing grade. Susana is trying to find him a tutor. She hopes he will get passing grades for the third and fourth terms. If not, he will have to retake the course in summer school. He also has to take the MCAS this year. Passing the MCAS is a high school graduation requirement in Massachusetts.

2. Underline the correct meaning for the sentences:

Maria's son will be a high school senior next year.

- Maria's son will be in his last year of high school next year.
- Maria's son will be in the 11th grade next year.

In order to graduate from high school, students must take one semester of Health.

- Students must take one workshop on health.
- Students must take at least one half a year of Health.

She passed all her courses in 9th grade.

- She did not do well in her courses.
- She got a passing grade in all her courses.

He had to retake the ELA portion of the 10th grade MCAS.

- He had to take again the reading and writing part of the MCAS test.
- He had to go to summer school.

Taking and passing four years of different math courses is a BPS high school graduation requirement.

- *If you don't take and pass four math courses, you will not graduate.*
- *If you don't take and pass four math courses, you will not get into a good college.*

3. Practice the following dialogue with a partner. Read it several times. Change roles.

Advisor: *Hi, Mrs. Flores. I am so glad you came in to meet with me. I want to talk to you about your daughter Teresa.*

Parent: *Is anything wrong?*

Advisor: *She is having trouble with chemistry. Did you see her last report card?*

Parent: *I remember one F grade. That isn't very good, is it?*

Advisor: *No, F is a failing grade. You know passing chemistry is a graduation requirement?*

Parent: *So what can I do? I can't help her. I don't understand any of her classes.*

Advisor: *You can make sure she has time to do her homework and study for tests. That means no TV, no cell phones during her homework time, maybe working fewer hours at her part time job.*

Parent: *She does work a lot at her job at Wendy's.*

Advisor: *I am going to get her a tutor to help her. I also suggest that she stay after school for our homework help sessions.*

Parent: *That sounds great. Thank you.*

Advisor: *I also want you to talk with her about why she is having so much trouble in the class. If the three of us work together as a team, I am sure we can help her improve her grades. We don't want her to have to retake the course in summer school.*

Handout: General Graduation Requirements¹

Before your child enrolls in the 9th grade, you should find out what the specific graduation requirements are for your child's high school. Generally, high school students have to meet the following basic requirements in order to graduate.

- *English Language Arts — 4 years*
- *Math — 3-4 years*
- *Science — 3 years*
- *Social Studies — 3-4 years*
- *Foreign Language — 2-3 years*
- *Visual and Performing Arts — 1-2 years*
- *Electives — 1-4 years*
- *A passing grade point average (GPA)*
- *Passing score on state exam/s*

¹ Adapted from the Colorín Colorado website