

Questions from Michael O'Neill

1. In your Friday memo, you highlight how we were able to accommodate a large number of high school students to take the SAT exam, in person safely, with appropriate proctors and health protocols. If we are able to do that, why do we feel we cannot safely administer the MAP assessment in person, safely, with appropriate proctors and health protocols?
 - a. The SAT is a timed test that is administered on paper. The test administration is done in approximately 4 hours. It is only able to be administered on specific days as determined by the College Board. Because it is on paper, there is no technical troubleshooting that would require proctors to be close to students. The SAT was an opt-in test, and families could choose if they wanted their children to test.
 - b. MAP Growth is an untimed, computer adaptive test. Because Boston's contract was for three assessments (Reading, Language, Math), each subject assessment would need to be administered on different days, to ensure that all students had ample time to complete the assessment. As MAP Growth is given on the computer, troubleshooting will require close proximity between proctor and student to resolve. Requiring the test as part of admissions would not honor the choice of families who have elected to have their children learn remotely. Additionally, we would need to secure additional devices for non-BPS students to be able to take the assessment.
2. On slide 27 (in the appendix) of the Exam School working group recommendations that were presented to us just prior to our last meeting, it lists the city's zip codes, neighborhood names, household incomes and % of school age children. It says the source was BPDA planning document from 2014-2018. Please provide the actual source document, as well as the specific year used for household income and % of school aged students.
 - a. The source note says "Note: median household income and percentage of school-aged children provided by BPDA Research Division, sourced from 2014-2018 American Community Survey." This refers to the 5 year averages published by the American Community Survey, an annual survey based on a sample of the population. 5 year averages are used to reduce any year-to-year fluctuations.
3. Please also provide this chart with a bit more detail, specifically how many seats are available per school, for both 7th and 9th grade admissions, and therefore how many seats would be available, by school, by zip code.
 - a. The exact number of invitations for this round of admissions will be determined through the projections process conducted for all schools every year by the Planning and Analysis team. Final numbers become available in late November and early December. The table below shows the distribution of invitations based on the number of invitations sent for admission in SY20-21. Note: zip codes are not allotted a certain number of seats at a particular school. Invitations during the zip code rounds are determined by the student's preferences; students are placed in their highest ranked school that still has space available.
 - b. The numbers below show portions of seats, with some zip codes showing less than 1 seat. All zip codes will be given at least one seat in the zip code rounds. In small zip codes, there may not be any students in the applicant pool from that zip code, in which case, we would re-distribute the percentage of school-aged children without that zip code to determine the number of seats in each zip code.

			7th Grade	9th Grade
Total Invitations for SY20-21 Admissions			1025	408
	BLS Invitations		484	58
	BLA Invitations		336	89
	OB Invitations		205	261
	20% of BLS Invitations		97	12
	20% of BLA Invitations		67	18
	20% of OB Invitations		41	52
Invitations for 80% Distribution			820	326
Zip Code	Neighborhood	Percentage of School-Aged Children	7th Grade	9th Grade
2119	Roxbury	6.1%	50.0	19.9
2121	Roxbury	8.2%	67.2	26.8
2120	Roxbury	1.5%	12.3	4.9
2115	Longwood/Fenway	1.4%	11.5	4.6
2111	Chinatown	0.8%	6.6	2.6
2215	Fenway/Kenmore	0.4%	3.3	1.3
2163	Allston	0.1%	0.8	0.3
2126	Mattapan	6.3%	51.7	20.6
2124	Dorchester	12.4%	101.7	40.5
2128	East Boston	9.0%	73.8	29.4
2125	Dorchester	6.3%	51.7	20.6
2134	Allston	1.2%	9.8	3.9
2122	Dorchester	4.6%	37.7	15.0
2136	Hyde Park	7.8%	64.0	25.5
2118	South End	3.3%	27.1	10.8
2135	Brighton	3.7%	30.3	12.1
2131	Roslindale	6.5%	53.3	21.2
2130	Jamaica Plain	5.1%	41.8	16.6
2199	Back Bay	0.1%	0.8	0.3
2114	Beacon Hill/West End	0.7%	5.7	2.3
2127	South Boston	4.2%	34.4	13.7
2113	North End	0.3%	2.5	1.0
2132	West Roxbury	4.8%	39.4	15.7
2116	Back Bay	1.3%	10.7	4.2
2110	Downtown	0.3%	2.5	1.0
2129	Charlestown	3.0%	24.6	9.8
2108	Beacon Hill	0.3%	2.5	1.0
2109	Downtown	0.1%	0.8	0.3
2210	Seaport	0.1%	0.8	0.3

4. Please stack rank the neighborhoods by income, so it is clear which goes first, second, etc. in the various allocation rounds, so we can have a sense of how many seats are available by neighborhood, by round, for the 80% that are distributed through that method.

Zip Code	Neighborhood	Median Household Income	Rank: Median Household
2119	Roxbury	\$30,551	1
2121	Roxbury	\$30,712	2
2120	Roxbury	\$33,727	3
2115	Longwood/Fenway	\$37,340	4
2111	Chinatown	\$40,870	5
2215	Fenway/Kenmore	\$45,337	6
2163	Allston	\$49,659	7
2126	Mattapan	\$52,474	8
2124	Dorchester	\$53,174	9
2128	East Boston	\$55,483	10
2125	Dorchester	\$56,318	11
2134	Allston	\$58,068	12
2122	Dorchester	\$60,474	13
2136	Hyde Park	\$64,784	14
2118	South End	\$65,250	15
2135	Brighton	\$72,009	16
2131	Roslindale	\$73,199	17
2130	Jamaica Plain	\$90,813	18
2199	Back Bay	\$91,125	19
2114	Beacon Hill / West End	\$95,161	20
2127	South Boston	\$99,340	21
2113	North End	\$100,063	22
2132	West Roxbury	\$100,915	23
2116	Back Bay	\$105,559	24
2110	Downtown	\$116,932	25
2129	Charlestown	\$118,226	26
2108	Beacon Hill	\$136,667	27
2109	Downtown	\$143,191	28
2210	Seaport	\$163,068	29

5. As we go through the rounds, how do we distinguish between a student's various choices for schools. If student A comes up as next when we get to their neighborhood and GPA, do they get their first choice if it is available? If it isn't, do they get their second, if available, and then 3rd, if available?
 - a. Yes. Students will receive their first choice, so long as there are seats available in their first choice school. If their first choice school is not available, students will receive a seat in their second choice, and so forth.
6. How long will students and families have to decide before moving on to wait list to invite another student?
 - a. The recommendation does not include a plan to have a wait list. Exam schools typically do not have a waiting list as other BPS schools do. However, we do over invite students

based on their historical yield data and our projections for the number of students who will accept the seat.

7. How do we insure parity between two different grading methods? How do we account for + and – in one systems (A+, etc.) and not in the other in figuring out common GPA's?
 - a. The BPS grading system in grades K-5 uses a 1-4 grading scale. There is no overall ELA or Math score in grade 5, so the 5th grade GPA historically used in exam school admissions uses a combination of 3 math grades for Math, and 3 reading grades and 4 writing grades for ELA. These grades are converted to a 12 point scale, and the grades submitted from non-BPS schools are also converted to a 12 point scale.

8. How we will decide on ties between GPA's? (need more detail that “random number” process)
 - a. When two or more students have the same GPA and there are not enough seats at their preferred school for all students to receive a seat, each student will be assigned a random number. The student with the lowest random number will be assigned first.

9. How do we insure transparency in this work? I suggested at our last meeting that we consider an independent 3rd party firm to help us with this work, as frankly, the trust factor is not there with our public, and the mistakes made on exam school admissions as outlined this summer perpetuate this. I would like a firm like DMC, or ERS, or any one of a number of outside firms would be very helpful in this regard. This is highly complicated and we have to get it right. I would like to **strongly encourage** that we engage a firm to work, and I would expect we could potentially find foundational support for the financial implications, if necessary.
 - Working Group members are interested in monitoring and supporting the implementation process including a review of the data. The Office of Data and Accountability will provide significant support and expertise to check the data. Lastly, the district will consider potential vendors for an independent third party to support implementation, and review and verify results.