

Equity Impact Statement Template for School Committee Proposals and Presentations

Title: Exam Schools Admissions Test Update

Date: 07-22-20

Was the [BPS RACIAL EQUITY PLANNING TOOL](#) used? (Yes or No): Yes

BPS Racial Equity Planning Tool Sections	Summary/Rationale
<p>1. Proposal/Presentation & Impact <i>What is the proposal's/presentation's desired outcomes and impact? Who led this process and do they reflect the diversity of BPS students/families?</i></p>	<p>The intended impact of the proposal is to achieve racial parity in the test component of the exam schools admissions criteria. We aim to close an opportunity gap for underrepresented students by replacing the previous test with an admissions assessment that is better aligned to the district's curriculum.</p>
<p>2. Alignment with the Strategic Plan <i>How does the proposal/presentation align with the district's strategic plan?</i></p>	<p>The proposal is aligned with the strategic plan in the commitments, Eliminating Opportunity and Achievement Gaps and Accelerating Learning. Our goal is to ensure BPS graduates will be ready for success in college, career and life, and this includes designing the exam schools admission criteria to ensure equitable access for all of Boston's young people.</p>
<p>3. Analysis of Data <i>What data did you use to analyze the issue/subject? Was it disaggregated by race? What did it show regarding disparities of historically marginalized populations?</i></p>	<p>Contents of the three responsive vendors' proposals were reviewed according to the criteria set forth by the RFP. Vendors were required to submit evidence that their proposed solution was validated for use with racially and programmatically diverse students. Students enrolled at Boston Latin School are about 45% White, 30% Asian, 14% Latinx, and 8% Black. At Boston Latin Academy, there is a more even distribution of White, Latinx, Black, and Asian students, although it is predominantly White (30%). Percentages for Black and Latinx students at the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science are within the range of percentages for the City's and the District's percentages of Black and Latinx populations. Comparatively, BPS is 43% Latinx, 31% Black, 14% White, and 9% Asian. There is a negative correlation between the selectivity of the exam school and the enrollment of students with economic disadvantages, disabilities, and English learner statuses. About 2% or less of the students enrolled at the exam schools are English learners and about 5% or less are students with disabilities. At Boston Latin School about 16.3% of students are considered economically disadvantaged as compared to 46.1% at the O'Bryant School and 58.3% across the district.</p> <p>NWEA conducted a Differential Item Functioning (DIF) analysis to assess whether items are fair to students in different subgroups. When students with the same ability from two different groups of interest have different probabilities of correctly answering an item, the item is said to exhibit DIF, a statistical characteristic of an item that shows the extent to which the item might lack fairness at the item level. Results from the study indicate that DIF related to gender and race is rare for</p>

	MAP Growth items.
<p>4. Stakeholder Engagement <i>Who was engaged (quantity, demographics, and roles), how and what did it yield? What did the students/families most impacted by the proposal/presentation say?</i></p>	<p>Lawyers for Civil Rights and NAACP Boston submitted a letter to Mayor Walsh, Superintendent Cassellius, and the School Committee on June 19, 2019, which included four proposed options for more equitable exam schools admissions criteria as a result of a series of community meetings from 2017 to 2019. The fourth proposal stated, “To the extent that BPS retained use of an exam as part of any revamped admissions process, BPS could institute an exam that actually reflects curricula taught in its public schools.”</p> <p>A Request for Proposals (RFP) was developed by 10 members of the exam schools admissions working group from the following BPS offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Office of Student, Family, and Community Advancement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Devon McCarley, Senior Director of Welcome Services (Black) ○ Barry Kaufman, Director of Assignments (White) ○ Maria Vieira, Exam Schools & AWC Assignment Specialist (Black) ○ Joane Etienne, School-Based Testing Project Manager (Black) ● Office of Data and Accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Apryl Clarkson, Director of Research (Black) ○ Mary Dillman, (former) Executive Director (White) ● Office of Opportunity Gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Colin Rose, (former) Assistant Superintendent of Opportunity Gaps (Black) ○ Ilyitch Nahielly Táborá, Executive Director (Latina) ● Office of Equity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Becky Shuster, Assistant Superintendent of Equity (White) ● Office of the Superintendent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monica Roberts, Chief of Student, Family & Community Advancement (Black) <p>RFP 1118 was published on February 17, 2020, but received no responses by the March 19 deadline. The working group reconvened to update the RFP, and BPS reissued RFP EV00007954 on April 20, which received three responses by the May 15 deadline.</p> <p>The RFP Review Committee evaluated the three proposals and ultimately recommended that the “Exam Schools Admissions Assessment” 3-year contract be awarded to NWEA. Those committee members were (where not specified, see titles above):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joane Etienne(Black) 2. Maria Vieira(Black) 3. Barry Kaufman (White) 4. Apryl Clarkson (Black) 5. Christine Landry, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Academics

	<p>and Professional Learning (White)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Daphne Germain, Director of English Learner (EL) Program Planning and Implementation, Office of English Learners (Black) 7. Michelle Plasse-Collins, Assistant Director of Compliance, Office of Special Education (White) <p>The review committee submitted a recommendation to the BPS Business Office for a contract award to NWEA on June 19, 2020. On July 2, BPS published a press release announcing the selection of a new test.</p> <p>Students, families, and communities most impacted by the proposal have expressed concerns via emails, phone calls, and during the Exam School Initiative virtual orientation in early July. The concerns have centered on inequities exacerbated by COVID-19, particularly for Black, Latinx, Asian, and low-income families, and the impact of administering any test for admissions during COVID-19. Specific concerns have included anticipated learning loss during remote instruction, and a need for sufficient test preparation resources that are free and accessible for interested students and families.</p>
<p>5. Racial Equity Strategies <i>How does this proposal/ presentation mitigate disparities and increase equity, particularly racial equity? What are the unintended consequences? What complementary strategies will further advance equity?</i></p>	<p>The Racial Equity Planning Tool (REPT) was used to analyze the RFP process in the broader context of racial equity in exam school admissions. The working group held a series of 5 meetings from April 16 through May 14 with this focus, and four of the seven RFP review committee members participated.</p> <p>The RFP review committee rated each proposal according to the criteria set forth in the RFP, which resulted in one “Not Advantageous,” and two “Advantageous” ratings. In selecting the final vendor to recommend, the committee considered key points from the working group’s REPT discussions. The committee recommended that NWEA’s MAP Growth assessment be used for exam school admissions. The committee noted that BPS must determine how to use scores equitably since the adaptive test may include off-grade level items. This was a critical point that emerged from the working group’s racial equity discussions.</p> <p>Administering NWEA’s MAP Growth test mitigates opportunity gaps for Black, Latinx, EL, and low-income students because the assessment is strongly aligned to the standards that are taught in BPS classrooms. The assessment is also offered in Spanish and includes several built-in universal testing tools for all students, including ELs and students with disabilities.</p> <p>Given that the assessment is a computer adaptive test, an unintended consequence is that the district will need to determine an equitable admissions process for students whose IEP indicates a need for a paper-based test.</p> <p>To further advance equity, the district will need to consider what other student data may be used in conjunction with the MAP Growth</p>

	assessment to make admissions decisions, as strongly recommended by NWEA.
<p>6 Budget & Implementation <i>What are the budget impacts? How will implementation ensure equity objectives are met? Are there leadership and personnel who are Black, Latinx and bring a racial equity lens?</i></p>	The selected assessment is fully covered by and included in the Welcome Services' budget. The total cost of the test is significantly lower than the prior assessment, which will allow for reinvestment in other critical areas such as exam school prospective family outreach efforts.
<p>7. Accountability & Communication <i>How will impacts be assessed, documented and communicated to stakeholders? Who will be responsible for this?</i></p>	As impacts are determined throughout this process, notes have been and will be recorded for each meeting discussion. Updates and information on findings, impacts, etc. are provided to stakeholders. The district communicates with families and community members through letters, website updates and robocalls from the Superintendent's Office and Communications department. Additionally, information has and will be shared through the District Equity Roundtable. This work will be completed through a collaboration of Welcome Services and Communications, with oversight by the Chief of Advancement and the Superintendent's Office.