

City of Boston

In School Committee

July 14, 2021

EXAM SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS POLICY

ORDERED, that the School Committee hereby approves the attached Policy Regarding Exam School Admissions in the Boston Public Schools.

This policy will promote equitable, city-wide access to the district's exam schools and ensure that the educational experience of all students is enriched by socioeconomic, geographic and racial diversity through the adopted entrance criteria.

On roll call, the order was approved by the following vote:

YEAS – Hardin Coleman; Ernani DeAraujo; Quoc Tran;
Vice Chairperson Michael D. O'Neill; and Chairperson Jeri Robinson - 5

NAYS – 0

ABSENT – 0

Attest:



Elizabeth A. Sullivan
Executive Secretary

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BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS EXAM SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS POLICY

In order to promote equitable, city-wide access to the district's exam schools and to ensure that the educational experience of all students is enriched by socioeconomic, geographic and racial diversity, the exam school admissions policy in the Boston Public Schools shall be as follows:

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact on students, the Boston Public Schools will implement the following in two phases.

1. **Phase I:** In the first year of the policy, the Boston Public Schools will implement the following for entrance in school year 2022-2023:
 - a. Any 6th grade student residing in Boston (or otherwise served by Boston Public Schools) is eligible for admission into the 7th grade in Boston's exam schools in the 2022-23 school year, any 8th grade student residing in Boston (or otherwise served by Boston Public Schools) is eligible for admission into the 9th grade in Boston's exam schools in the 2022-23 school year, and any 9th grade student residing in Boston (or otherwise served by Boston Public Schools) is eligible for admission into the 10th grade in the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science in the 2022-23 school year if they meet the following:
 - i. A grade point average (GPA) of B or higher in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies in the first two quarters/first trimester of 2021-2022 school year; and
 - ii. A representative for the attending school/district shall verify that the student is performing at grade level based on the Massachusetts Curriculum standards.
 - b. Eligible applicants will receive a composite score, ranging from 1-100, made up of their GPA only. Additional points shall be added to a student's composite score if they meet one of the following factors:
 - i. Fifteen (15) additional points will be added to composite scores for students experiencing homelessness, students in the care of the Department of Children and Families, and students living in traditional public housing that is federally or state funded and owned by the Boston Housing Authority.
 - ii. Ten (10) additional points will be added to the composite scores for students attending a school in the year prior to application that has, on average over the past five years, an enrollment of 40% or more economically disadvantaged students, as defined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. In the event a student is a new resident of Boston in the school year of application, then the current school will be used to determine eligibility for these additional points.

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- iii. Students may not receive the additional points for both areas. If students receive the 15 points, they are not eligible for the 10 points.
2. **Phase II:** In the second year of implementation, for entry starting in the 2023-2024 school year, and every year during the duration of this policy thereafter, the entrance requirements will be fully implemented as follows:
- a. Any 6th grade student residing in Boston (or otherwise served by Boston Public Schools) is eligible for admission into the 7th grade at Boston's exam schools; any 8th grade student residing in Boston (or otherwise served by Boston Public Schools) is eligible for admission into the 9th grade at Boston's exam schools; and any 9th grade student residing in Boston (or otherwise served by Boston Public Schools) is eligible for admission into the 10th grade at the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science if they meet the following:
 - i. A GPA of B or higher in ELA and Math in the last marking period of the year prior to application, and ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies in the first two quarters/first trimester of their 6th, 8th or 9th grade year.
 - ii. A representative for the attending school/district shall verify that the student is performing at grade level based on the Massachusetts Curriculum standards.
 - iii. A complete assessment result on the district-identified assessment for exam school entrance. Students will have the opportunity to take the assessment twice, once in the spring prior to the application year and once in the fall of the application year, with the higher score being used for admissions.
 - b. Eligible applicants will receive a composite score, ranging from 1-100, made up of their GPA and assessment result. The assessment shall be weighted at 30% and the GPA shall be weighted at 70%. Additional points shall be added to a student's composite score if they meet one of the following factors:
 - i. Fifteen (15) additional points will be added to composite scores for students experiencing homelessness, students in the care or custody of the Department of Children and Families, and students living in traditional public housing that is federally or state funded and owned by the Boston Housing Authority.
 - ii. Ten (10) additional points will be added to the composite scores for students attending a school in the year prior to application that has, on average over the past five years, an enrollment of 40% or more economically disadvantaged students, as defined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. In the event a student is a new resident of Boston in the school year of application, then the current school will be used to determine eligibility for these additional points.
 - iii. Students may not receive the additional points for both areas. If students receive the 15 points, they are not eligible for the 10 points.
3. **In both Phase I and Phase II:** Boston Public Schools will distribute exam school invitations evenly across eight tiers of census tracts grouped together based on socioeconomic factors.

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Each tier will be awarded approximately the same number of exam school invitations. Within each tier, students will be ranked based on their composite score plus any additional points described above.

- a. Boston Public Schools will group census tracts into tiers based on the following socioeconomic factors as provided by 5-year averages from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey: percentage of persons below poverty, percent of households not occupied by the owner, percent of families headed by a single parent, percent of households where English is not the primary language spoken, and educational attainment.
 - b. Tiers will be of relative equal size based on the number of school-aged children in grades 5-8, according to the 5-year average from the American Community Survey.
 - c. Invitations will be distributed in ten (10) rounds with 10% of available seats within each tier distributed in each round. The tier with the lowest socioeconomic score will go first in each round, followed by the remaining tiers in order from lowest to highest socioeconomic score.
 - d. Students with identical composite scores within a socioeconomic tier will be assigned a random number to determine which will precede first. The individual with the lower random number will be ranked higher than the other(s).
 - e. Invitations to each exam school will be awarded based on students' preference. If all the seats at a student's first-choice school are already allocated, the student will receive an invitation to their second-choice school, unless all of the seats at the student's second-choice school are already allocated. In this case, the student will receive an invitation to their third-choice school until all seats are filled.
4. This policy shall be evaluated and assessed every five years.

A clear plan will be developed to operationalize the policy and the following recommendations. A Superintendent's Circular will formalize the operational logistics related to GPA calculation, test administration and application process:

- Develop and publish a plan for supporting incoming students and the academic plan for grades 4 to 6.
- Publish an annual report in June to include disaggregated student outcomes and program evaluation, including disaggregated results of school climate surveys and other student outcome data as relevant to the implementation of the policy.
- Plan for a budget to implement policy.
- Plan for family and community engagement and communications regarding the application and invitation process.
- Develop and publish a coherent district equitable grading policy using an A-F scale wherein an A+ is treated like an A.