



# Exam School Task Force Update on Potential Considerations

---

Co-Chairs: Tanisha M. Sullivan and Michael Contompasis  
6.16.21

# Task Force Charge

*Building upon the work initiated by the Superintendent's Exam Schools Admissions Criteria Working Group, the Boston School Committee Exam Schools Admissions Task Force is charged with developing a set of recommendations for the admissions policy for Boston Public Schools exam schools. The desired outcome is to expand the applicant pool and create an admissions process that will support student enrollment at each of the exam schools such that rigor is maintained and the student body better reflects the racial, socioeconomic, and geographic diversity of all students (K-12) in the city of Boston. The Task Force shall consider use of the new NWEA assessment and other factors, and leverage learning from a full review of the implementation of the SY 21-22 admissions criteria, as well as a thorough review of practices in other districts.*

# Agenda Topics

- **The Exam School Task Force:** Mission, Members and Meetings
- **Considerations:**
  - Student Eligibility & Admissions Criteria
  - Invitation Distribution
  - Weighting the Criteria
- **Potentials Options**
- **Annual Policy Review Process**
- **Investment Recommendations**

# Task Force Members

- Co-Chair, **Michael Contompasis**, former Boston Latin School Head of School and former BPS Superintendent
- Co-Chair, **Tanisha M. Sullivan**, Esq., President, NAACP Boston Branch and former BPS Chief Equity Officer
- **Pastor Samuel Acevedo**, Co-Chair, Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force
- **Acacia Aguirre**, parent, John D. O'Bryant School of Math and Science
- **Simon Chernow**, student, Boston Latin Academy
- **Matt Cregor**, Esq., Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee, Supreme Judicial Court
- **Dr. Tanya Freeman-Wisdom**, Head of School, John D. O'Bryant School of Math and Science
- **Katherine Grassa**, Principal, Curley K-8 School
- **Zena Lum**, parent, Boston Latin Academy
- **Zoe Nagasawa**, student, Boston Latin School
- **Rachel Skerritt**, Head of School, Boston Latin School
- **Dr. Rosann Tung**, Independent Researcher
- **Tamara Waite**, parent, Philbrick Elementary School

# Task Force Public Engagement

- **Public Meetings:** 19 meetings held and 2 public listening sessions, including a student led session between February and June 2021
- **Public Comment and Attendees:** All meetings included a public comment section and ranged from 40-126 attendees, with an average of 62 attendees per meeting
- **Accessibility:**
  - All meetings hosted on zoom and had simultaneous interpretation in 9 spoken languages: Spanish, Cabo Verdean, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Arabic, Somali, Vietnamese, Mandarin, and Cantonese and American Sign Language.
  - All materials are translated and posted on the website.
- **Equity Roundtable:** Presented at the Community Equity Roundtable on June 11
- **Expert Presentations:** Engaged with 6 experts at our public meetings to understand best practices, how other cities have done admissions and important factors for consideration (see appendix for specifics)
- **Additional Public Listening Sessions:** In partnership with the Boston School Committee, two additional public listening and comment session will be hosted on **June 22 and June 23**

# Task Force Goal:

## What are we trying to achieve?

Develop a recommendation for the exam school admissions process that:

- Maintains rigor
- Increases geographical, socioeconomic, and racial diversity

## How will we do this? What is the task force considering?

1. Eligibility
2. Invitations

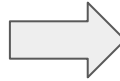
***We want to be very clear:*** No decision on a final recommendation has been made. These are the factors we're considering and will do more engagement following this meeting before a final recommendation is made.

# Exam School Admission Process

## Step 1: Who Is Eligible

**Purpose:** Determine Student Preparedness

Admissions Cycle	Criteria	Weight
SY20-21	Assessment Grades	50% 50%
SY21-22	Grades	100%
SY22-23 and beyond	<i>Potential Option(s):</i> Assessment Grades Educator Validation Student Portfolio High Poverty Indicator	TBD



## Step 2: Who is Invited

**Purpose:** Ensure Citywide Access

Admissions Cycle	Criteria	Weight
SY20-21	Straight Rank	100%
SY21-22	Straight Rank City-wide Straight Rank within Zip Codes	20% 80%
SY22-23 and beyond	<i>Potential Option(s):</i> Straight Rank Qualified Lottery Zip Codes Census Tract Tiers	TBD

# Exam School Admission Options for Consideration

## Step 1: Who Is Eligible

**Purpose:** Determine Student Preparedness

### Course Grades

Admissions Cycle	Grades to include
SY20-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Final term of 5th grade: ELA and Math</li><li>● First two terms of 6th grade: ELA and Math</li></ul>
SY21-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● First two terms of 5th grade: ELA and Math [Pre-COVID]</li></ul>
Proposed SY22-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● First two terms of 6th grade: ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies</li></ul>
Proposed SY23-24 and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Final term of 5th grade: ELA and Math</li><li>● First two terms of 6th grade: ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies</li></ul>

- Additional recommendation to change the 5th grade grading system from standards-based to A-F grading scale



# Exam School Admission Options for Consideration

## **Step 1:** Who Is Eligible

**Purpose:** *Determine Student Preparedness*

### ***High poverty indicator***

- Definition: Students attending schools with 50% or more of students identified as economically disadvantaged
- Students would receive an additional 10 points in the invitation process

# Exam School Admission Options for Consideration

## **Step 1: Who Is Eligible**

**Purpose:** *Determine Student Preparedness*

### ***Educator validation + Student portfolio***

- Educator validation: verification of grade-level performance
- Student portfolio options include an essay, writing sample and other qualitative measures.

# Exam School Admission Options for Consideration

## **Step 1:** Who Is Eligible

**Purpose:** *Determine Student Preparedness*

### **Assessment**

- NWEA MAP Growth
- MCAS
- Use of an achievement measure vs. a growth measure
- Potential for a phased recommendation regarding use of an assessment

# Exam School Admission Options for Consideration

**Step 2: Who is Invited**  
*Purpose: Ensure Citywide Access*

Option	Criteria	Weight
Option A	Straight Rank City-wide Straight Rank Census Tract Tiers	20% 80%
Option B	Straight Rank City-wide Straight Rank Census Tract Tiers Qualified Lottery in Census Tract Tiers	20% TBD TBD
Option C	Straight Rank City-wide Qualified Lottery in Census Tract Tiers	20% 80%
Option D	Straight Rank Census Tract Tiers	100%
Option E	Qualified Lottery in Census Tract Tiers	100%

# Moving Forward

- **Annual Report:** An annual report should be made to the School Committee to assess student admissions data.
- **Policy Review:** After 3 to 5 years there should be a full policy review.
- **Investments:** We are recommending the school district understand more about the types of financial investments that may be needed to support rigor across all schools and provide supports for admitted students.
- **Next Task Force Meeting:** Thursday June 17
- **Listening Sessions:** We invite the public to join us and provide further input
  - Tuesday, June 22nd 6-8pm
  - Wednesday, June 23rd 4-6pm
- **Phased recommendation**
  - Phase 1 for SY22-23 admissions cycle due to COVID
  - Phase 2 for SY23-24 admissions cycle and beyond

# Appendix



# Details on external experts and presentations

- **External Presentations included**

- Presentation of existing admissions models in other districts - Dr. Sean P. Corcoran, Associate Professor of Public Policy and Education at Peabody College, Vanderbilt University
- Presentation: The Chicago Model for Selective High School Enrollment- Richard D. Kahlenberg, The Century Foundation
- Presentation: Bridging Collectives: A Summit on Selectivity, Integration, and Equity at Elite Public High Schools Michelle P. Burris, The Century Foundation.
- Overview of the Detroit Public Schools Community District Selective Schools process - Kisha Verdusco, Senior Director, Selective Admissions
- Presentation: The Use of Tests in Selective School Admissions, Dr. Lorrie A. Shepard, University of Colorado Boulder
- Overview of the MAP Growth Assessment, Chris Minnich, CEO, NWEA

# Census Tract Tiers

- Modeled after the tier system used in Chicago Public Schools and San Antonio Independent School District, tiers have been created for the city of Boston for each census tract, using data from the American Community Survey (ACS).
- The tiers are based on a socioeconomic score for each census tract. The socioeconomic score is a composite measure of 5 data points from the ACS and indicates need relative to the other census tracts in the city. The tiers are proportionally sized based on the number of school-aged children in grades 5-8 living in each census tract.
- Factors included in the socioeconomic score for each tract are:
  - Income measure [*options under consideration include median household income; percentage of persons below poverty; or index of concentration at the extremes*]
  - Percent of households occupied by the owner
  - Percent of families headed by a single parent
  - Percent of households where a language other than English is spoken
  - Educational attainment -- weighted average of 5 data points:
    - Do not have high school diploma (0.2)
    - High school diploma (0.4)
    - Some college (0.6)
    - College degree (0.8)
    - Advanced degree (1.0)