



Exam School Task Force Recommendation

*Co-Chairs: Tanisha M. Sullivan and Michael Contompasis
Superintendent Dr. Brenda Cassellius
6.30.21*

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.

What are we accomplishing tonight:

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

What are we discussing tonight?

The formal recommendation from the task force that is supported by the Superintendent on the admissions criteria and process for Boston's three exam schools.

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

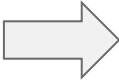
Task Force Public Engagement

- **Public Meetings:** 24 meetings held and 4 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
- **Equity Roundtable:** Presented at the Community Equity Roundtable on June 11
- **Accessibility:**
 - All meetings hosted on zoom and had simultaneous interpretation in 9 spoken languages: Spanish, Cabo Verdean, Hatian Creole, Portuguese, Arabic, Somali, Vietnamese, Mandarin, and Cantones and American Sign Language.
 - All materials are translated and posted on the website.
- **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)

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%



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%

Past Admissions Data

This slide shows a comparison of invitations distributed during the SY20-21 and SY21-22 admissions cycles, by student group.

Race	SY20-21	SY21-22
Asian	21%	18%
Black	13%	23%
Latinx	21%	23%
Multi-Race/Other	5%	6%
White	40%	31%

Student Group	SY20-21	SY21-22
Economically Disadvantaged	35%	43%
English Learners	0%	7%
Homeless Students and Students in the Care of DCF	1%	5%
Students with Disabilities	2%	4%

Zip Code	Neighborhood	SY20-21	SY21-22
2108	Beacon Hill	0.1%	0.6%
2109	Downtown	0.7%	0.2%
2110	Downtown	0.7%	0.1%
2111	Chinatown	2.3%	0.7%
2113	North End	0.7%	0.2%
2114	Beacon Hill / West End	1.9%	0.7%
2115	Longwood/Fenway	1.4%	1.0%
2116	Back Bay	2.6%	1.3%
2118	South End	3.51	2.8%
2119	Roxbury	2.6%	5.1%
2120	Roxbury	1.6%	1.1%
2121	Dorchester	2.6%	6.9%
2122	Dorchester	6.1%	4.9%
2124	Dorchester	8.2%	11.1%
2125	Dorchester	4.6%	6.1%
2126	Mattapan	2.0%	5.2%
2127	South Boston	3.3%	3.6%
2128	East Boston	5.6%	7.7%
2129	Charlestown	5.5%	3.6%
2130	Jamaica Plain	7.5%	5.5%
2131	Roslindale	9.2%	6.9%
2132	West Roxbury	13.0%	7.1%
2134	Allston	1.7%	1.1%
2135	Brighton	5.1%	3.0%
2136	Hyde Park	6.5%	6.9%
2163	Allston	0.0%	0.1%
2199	Back Bay	0.0%	0.0%
2210	South Boston Waterfront	0.2%	0.2%
2215	Fenway/Kenmore	0.8%	0.2%
2467	Chestnut Hill	0.3%	0.4%
9999	Homeless/DCF	Not used	5.4%

Addressing Stakeholder Feedback

Areas Reviewed	Solutions Incorporated
<p>Economic disparity within zip codes</p> <p>Seat allocation proportional to number of school-aged children living within the zip code</p>	<p>Socioeconomic Status Tiers group census tracts together based on similar socioeconomic factors</p> <p>Each tier will have relatively the same number of seats</p>
<p>High stakes testing</p>	<p>Multiple opportunities for students to test</p> <p>Test aligned with MA Curriculum Frameworks</p>

Task Force Recommendation: Eligibility

Step 1: Who Is Eligible

Purpose: Determine Student Preparedness

Admissions Cycle	Criteria	Weight
SY22-23	Grades (B average or higher) +High Poverty Indicators	100%
SY23-24 And beyond	Assessment Grades +High Poverty Indicators	30% 70%

High poverty indicators

- Students attending schools with 50% or more of students identified as economically disadvantaged would receive an additional 10 points in the invitation process.
- Students experiencing homelessness, students in the care of DCF and students living in BHA housing would receive an additional 15 points in the invitation process.

Task Force Recommendation: Eligibility Details

Step 1: Who Is Eligible

Assessment

Admissions Cycle	Assessment Offered
SY22-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No assessment required this year due to continuing COVID-19 pandemic
SY23-24 and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Assessment would be offered twice: Spring of 5th grade and Fall of 6th grade○ Student's best score would be considered

Grades:

Admissions Cycle	Grades to include
SY22-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First two quarters/first trimester of 6th grade: ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies due to continuing COVID-19 pandemic
SY23-24 and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final term of 5th grade: ELA and Math• First two quarters/first trimester of 6th grade: ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies

Task Force Recommendation: Invitations

Step 2: Who is Invited
Purpose: Ensure Citywide Access

Admissions Cycle	Mechanism
SY22-23 And beyond	<p>20% Straight Rank Citywide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">20% of invitations at each exam school will be reserved for the top ranking applicants citywide. Invitations will be extended to the top ranking applicants to their first choice selection.
	<p>80% Straight Rank Socioeconomic Status Tiers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The remaining 80% of seats will be distributed to the highest ranking applicants within Socioeconomic Status Tiers. Invitations are distributed in 10 rounds with 10% of each SES tier's seats allocated in each round.A specialized tier will be created for students experiencing homelessness, students in the care of DCF and students living in Boston Housing Authority housing.Each round will begin with the specialized tier, followed by the tier with the lowest socioeconomic band.

Task Force Recommendation: Socioeconomic Status Tiers

- Socioeconomic status (SES) tiers are based on a socioeconomic score for each census tract in the city. The socioeconomic score is a composite measure of 5 data points from the American Community Survey 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 incorporated in the SES tiers include:
 - 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
 - Educational attainment
- A specialized tier will be created for students experiencing homelessness, students in the care of DCF, and students living in Boston Housing Authority housing.

Additional Recommendations

Student Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide appropriate support – both before and during the school year - for admittees who, while academically prepared for exam school content, may require more time to get acclimated to the pace of exam school study.• Expand the Exam School Initiative (ESI), beginning as early as 4th grade and running through October of the 6th grade year, focused on academic acceleration in both ELA and math.
Annual Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct annual monitoring of applicants, invitees and enrollees to the exam schools, disaggregated by student group and school.• An annual report should be made to the School Committee to assess the wellness of the school community and student admissions data.
Policy Review and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Require a full policy review at least every 5 years, ensuring there is student and teacher voice represented in the review process.• Work with an external researcher to evaluate and understand the impact of policy changes for multiple cohorts of students, starting with the SY20-21 admissions cycle.
Investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school district will fund a summer academic orientation, academic interventions, acceleration and rigor for elementary grades.• Secure the additional funds required for implementation from the city, not from the existing budget.
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide information about the application process in native language online, in print and at community centers
Grading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommend changing the 5th grade grading system from standards-based to A-F grading scale.

Summary Final Recommendation

Step 1: Who Is Eligible

Purpose: Determine Student Preparedness

Admissions Cycle	Criteria	Weight
SY22-23	Grades (B average or higher) +High Poverty Indicators	100%
SY23-24 And beyond	Assessment Grades +High Poverty Indicators	30% 70% (10 <u>or</u> 15 points)

High poverty indicator:

- 15 Points for students living in BHA housing, experiencing homelessness and in DCF care.
- OR
- 10 points for students attending a school whose enrollment reflects 50% or greater low income students

Step 2: Who is Invited

Purpose: Ensure Citywide Access

Admission s Cycle	Mechanism	Weight
SY22-23 And beyond	Straight Rank City-wide Straight Rank Socioeconomic Tiers	20% 80%

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 Verduco, 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

Socioeconomic 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:
 - Percentage of persons below poverty
 - 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 (composite of 5 data points: Do not have high school diploma; High school diploma; Some college; College degree; Advanced degree)

