



## UP ACADEMY BOSTON ENROLLMENT POLICY (APRIL 2020 UPDATE)

As a Horace Mann charter school, UP Academy Boston is a public school that is open to all students on a space available basis. When recruiting or admitting students, UP Academy Boston *does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed or religion, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement.* M.G.L. c. 71, § 89(m); 603 CMR 1.05 (2). Moreover, UP Academy Boston will not set enrollment requirements that are intended to discriminate or that have the effect of discriminating based upon any of these characteristics. UP Academy Boston will have and implement a student recruitment and retention plan as outlined in G.L. Chapter 71, Section 89(f); CMR 603 1.05(1).

UP Academy Boston serves grades 6-8. UAB Accepts applications for all grades. Primary entry point is the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, but UAB will backfill any vacancies that may occur in all grades in accordance with our vacancy/backfilling policy.

All applicants will be notified in writing of the rights of students with diverse learning needs to attend UP Academy Boston, and to receive accommodations and support services, including students who may have disabilities, require special education, or are English language learners. Information regarding the availability of services will be available in places including, but not limited to school outreach materials, the student handbook, and on UP Academy Boston's website (603 CMR 1.05 (4)).

*Third Party Mail House.* Upon request, and if applicable to UP Academy Boston, UAB will provide the names and addresses of students to a third party mail house for mailings, unless the parent of the legal guardian requests that the school withhold their child's information.

UP Academy Boston has no plans to expand beyond its current charter cap of 540 students. The total number of students attending UP Academy Boston in a given school year will not exceed the total number of students reported in UP Academy Boston's pre-enrollment submission to the Department in the previous spring in accordance with 603 CMR 1.08(5).

### **Admissions Criteria**

*Eligibility Criteria.* UP Academy Boston requires:

1. Candidates to be residents of Boston, Massachusetts by the application deadline for the lottery in which their enrollment at UP Academy Boston will be considered. Students must remain residents of Boston in order to stay enrolled at UP Academy Boston.

*Priority.* In accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 89; 603 CMR 1.06 (4)(h) enrollment in UP Academy Boston will be conducted in the following order of preference:

1. **Priority 1:** Siblings of students currently enrolled in UP Academy Boston ;<sup>1</sup>
2. **Priority 2:** Other students who are currently enrolled in the Boston Public Schools; and then
3. **Priority 3:** Other students that are residents of Boston, Massachusetts (e.g., students enrolled in private schools, parochial schools, or Commonwealth charter schools in Boston).

UP Academy Boston will not:

1. Give preferences to children of staff members, members of the Board of Trustees, or members of UP Education Network staff or Board of Directors;
2. Take any actions or make any statements that discourage parents/guardians of students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency or any other protected group of students from submitting an application. M.G.L. c. 71, § 89;
3. Administer tests to potential applicants or predicate enrollment on results from any test of ability or achievement;
4. Require obligatory attendance at informational meetings or interviews prior to enrollment;
5. Mandate an application fee for admission.
6. Use financial incentives to recruit students.
7. Require dual parent/guardian signatures.
8. Require submission of the student's social security number of the application.
9. Admit students in excess of the school's approved maximum enrollment.

### **Principal Application Cycle**

UP Academy Boston will not set any principal application deadlines or hold any enrollment lotteries for student admission for the upcoming school year until after January 1<sup>st</sup> and shall conclude its principal enrollment process no later than March 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. 603 CMR 1.05(3)(c).

UP Academy Boston will also give reasonable public notice, of at least one month, of all application deadlines 603 CMR 1.05(5). Dates will be publicized via the UP Academy Boston and UP Education Network websites. The application deadline for the principal lottery typically is the last Friday in February, with the principal lottery occurring the following Wednesday. If any school closures due to weather or other emergencies occur, the lottery will be rescheduled to the next available school day. As a Horace Mann Charter, the UP Academy Boston application process is separate from the Boston district process. A description of UP Academy Boston's application process follows.

While UP Academy Boston is a tuition-free, public, in-district charter middle school, all eligible families must apply by submitting an information-based application. UP Academy Boston has developed an easy and quick information-based application<sup>2</sup>, which will be made available to families in October of each year (e.g., the application for the 2021-2022 school year will be made available by October 2020). The application will be available on the UP Academy Boston website, both online and paper-versions. Physical copies of the application can be found on our website,

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<sup>1</sup> Per DESE regulations, siblings receive this preference following their sibling's actual enrollment at UP Academy Boston. A sibling's receipt of a seat via the lottery does not grant preference, rather the sibling receives this preference after their brother or sister begins attending UP Academy Boston. This is an important distinction for siblings applying for enrollment at the same time.

<sup>2</sup> See section V(E)(1) – UP Academy Boston Application Form for 2021-2022 academic year for an example of our application form (subject to change)

at UP Academy Boston, at Boston Public Schools Welcome Centers, and at various other public locations throughout Boston. All information requested in the application, such as language for translation, is not intended to and will not be used to discriminate (603 CMR 1.06(2)).

To ensure that all families have a just chance to apply, UP Academy Boston will assist families throughout the application process, as needed. Assistance may include, but is not limited to, providing a straightforward application translated into multiple languages, answering applicants' questions via information sessions for interested families, and requesting additional information when incomplete or illegible applications are submitted prior to the application deadline and completing applications for families with information provided verbally either in-person or over the phone. While the application is primarily available online interested families will have the option to submit completed applications: (1) by mail; (2) in-person; (3) by fax, (4) via email.

### **Subsequent Application Cycles**

In order to fill all seats that may still remain or become available during the school year, UP Academy Boston will continue to accept applications using the method described above after the principal application deadline passes. Applications received after the principal application deadline will only be processed after the initially created waitlist has been exhausted. UP Academy Boston will follow the processes described in the principal application cycle to comply with all accessibility and deadline notification requirements in subsequent application cycles. 603 CMR 1.05(8)

### **Processing Applications**

While UP Academy Boston seeks to serve a broad spectrum of underserved families, in the following cases, UP Academy Boston reserves the right to mark applications void, effective immediately wherein an applicant:

1. Fails to meet eligibility criteria;
2. Intentionally provides false, inaccurate, or misrepresented information; and/or

For applicants who have failed to meet eligibility criteria, UP Academy Boston will communicate to these families that they are not eligible to be enrolled in UP Academy Boston in the quickest manner possible (i.e., via phone call) so that these families have time to seek out alternative education options for their children. Please note that if it is determined that an applicant provided misinformation, even after an offer of admission has been made, the offer will be rescinded and the student will be unenrolled. For more information please see page 8 section on confirming residency.

To ensure accurate and effective student application records, UP Academy Boston will develop its own system (e.g., in an Excel spreadsheet) or purchase an Application Received Tracking System (e.g., SchoolMint, SchoolBrains or Veracross, etc.). This system will include student records regarding real-time status of their application (e.g. accepted, applied, waitlisted, enrolled, withdrew, or loss of seat.)

**Community Outreach.**

UP Academy Boston has developed a comprehensive recruitment plan to provide information about the school to potential applicants and their families throughout the year. Through promotional materials, all applicants will be notified in writing of the rights of all students to attend UP Academy Boston and receive accommodations and support services, including students who may have disabilities, require special education, or are English Language Learners. 603 CMR 1.05(4)

As a part of this plan, UP Academy Boston will host information sessions for interested applicants and their families<sup>3</sup>. UP Academy Boston strongly advises – but will not require - parents/guardians and students to attend one information session. Sessions will be approximately 1-2 hours in length and will discuss the program and culture of UP Academy Boston. UP Academy Boston will strive to make accommodations for all families, for example, by offering sessions at various times of the day and by providing both written and oral translations for families. Time will be included for families to ask questions.

**Lottery and Enrollment Process.**

*Public Lottery.* UP Academy Boston will manage enrollment via public lotteries that are open, fair, and in accordance with the charter school statute and regulations. Annually, UP Academy Boston will define the number of seats available for a given year by grade level. If the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of available seats for a given year, UP Academy Boston will hold a public lottery shortly after its first application deadline (603 CMR 1.05(6)(a) and (c)). At least one week notice will be given prior to each lottery. 603 CMR 1.05(9)

UP Academy Boston may choose to hold electronic lotteries instead of traditional, paper-based lotteries. These electronic lotteries will be subject to the same DESE regulations that govern traditional, paper-based lotteries, with a neutral party to certify that the process is fair and that the selection is random, in accordance with 603 CMR 1.05(9)

If UP Academy Boston will hold an electronic lottery and it will follow the following procedures described below.

A single lottery will be held for each grade, all eligible applicants will have their priority levels identified and entered into their respective grades in the lottery.

On the day of the lottery, the number of available seats, by grade, will be announced. For each grade-level lottery, the electronic lottery will generate an initial random order for each grade. After the initial random order has been generated, priority levels will be applied. All names (or UP Academy Boston ID numbers) will be drawn and assigned an enrollment number, resulting in a list of applicants with enrollment numbers 1 to XXX, with 1 being the first applicant drawn in the grade-level lottery and XXX being the total number of applicants for that particular grade. Following the lottery, a “prioritized enrollment list” will be created, by moving students with Priority 1 status to the top of the enrollment list, in the same order in which their names were called during the lottery. Students with Priority 2 status

will then be moved to immediately following the Priority 1 students on the enrollment list, also in the same order in which their names were called during the lottery. The order of applicants on the enrollment list will therefore be based on both priority status and the order that each applicant name was drawn on the night of the lottery.

On its application, UP Academy Boston will also allow parents to indicate that they do not want their child(ren)'s names used publicly and would instead prefer to have their application drawn by number only (ie, by UP Academy Boston ID #, which is specifically assigned to each application received by UP Academy Boston). Drawing by numbers only, rather than drawing by individual student names, is permissible to ensure the privacy of student information as required by state and federal law. If UP Academy Boston decides to draw by numbers only, or if any parents or guardians request that their child(ren)'s names not be publicly used, then the parent or guardian of each student is entitled to and will be provided the opportunity to know his or her lottery number in advance of the drawing to ensure the transparency and fairness of the process.

Based on the number of available seats per grade, UP Academy Boston will determine the number of eligible applicants on the prioritized enrollment list who receive a seat at UP Academy Boston following the lottery. For example, if 100 seats are available in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, then applicants who are in spots 1 to 100 on the prioritized enrollment list will receive a seat at UP Academy Boston. All eligible applicants whose names remain on the enrollment list after all available seats are filled will be placed on an active waiting list. The names on the active waiting list will be ordered in exactly the same order as on the prioritized enrollment list (i.e., the waiting list will consider both priority status and the order in which names were drawn at the lottery). UP Academy Boston will maintain an active waiting list for each grade throughout the subsequent academic year. For more more information, see the waitlisted students section.

#### *Public Lottery Process and Notification.*

All lotteries are public and will start promptly at 6:00pm at 215 Dorchester Street, South Boston, unless otherwise publicized. At least one week's notice will be given. Application deadlines will be posted at least 30 days in advance. If UP Academy Boston receives an application two days after an application deadline, the application will be included in the subsequent public lottery if applicable.

UP Academy Boston will hold its lottery each year in accordance with requirements defined by DESE. Applications will be due on Fridays, and the applicable lotteries will take place on the following Wednesdays. Families will be sent notification by the Friday following the lottery (within 48 hours of the lottery), and that notification will clearly indicate the deadline for the return of their Intent to Enroll Form, if applicable.

Immediately following the lottery, each eligible applicant will be assigned a status:

- *Accepted.* Student's name has been drawn and accepted to attend UP Academy Boston via a public lottery
- *Waitlisted.* Student who was not initially admitted via public lottery.

Whether or not the family is present at the lottery, the accepted or waitlisted student and his/her family will be sent a written letter within 48 hours, notifying them of their admissions status.

**Accepted Students.** Upon admission, all students/families will receive an Intent to Enroll form. Families should complete their intent to enroll in writing and return to the school by the applicable deadline, which will be set by the school and noted on the Intent to Enroll form. Families should return their Intent to Enroll form (1) by mail; (2) in-person; or (3) by fax, or (4) through an online application system, such as SchoolMint, if applicable. If a family is not able to complete this form indicating acceptance/rejection of the seat, UP Academy Boston will make a reasonable effort to contact the family and obtain their confirmation. UP Academy Boston may accept verbal confirmation due to extenuating circumstances, but that verbal acceptance must be followed-up with written confirmation in a reasonable time period, to be determined by both parties.

**Waitlisted Students.** All waitlisted students/families do not have to confirm in writing their intent to remain on the waitlist. However, all waitlisted students/families can opt-out of the waitlist at any time.

No student will be admitted ahead of other eligible students who were previously placed on a waitlist during a prior enrollment process, except in cases where enrollment preferences change or as described in 603 CMR 1.05(10)(b) and 603 CMR 1.05(8). Note that if a student stops attending UP Academy Boston or declines admission the next available student on the waitlist for that grade, subject to preferences at the time of admission, will be offered admission until the vacant seat is filled.

To accept admission, families must complete an Intent to Enroll form by the response deadline stated in the admissions offer. The deadline to accept admission will vary by time of year but will be no fewer than 5 days after the notification status is mailed. To accept admission, families must complete an Intent to Enroll form either on paper or through the online application portal and return it to the school. In addition to mailing notification, UP Academy Boston will attempt to contact families via telephone, home visits, etc. in advance of the admission acceptance deadline to ensure that all families are aware of the upcoming deadline. After this deadline, UP Academy Boston will update each applicant's status, as applicable. Any changes in status will be communicated to applicants and their families in writing.

- Enrolled. An accepted student (whether initially accepted or moved off the waitlist) who has confirmed acceptance and/or intention to enroll in and attend UP Academy Boston by returning an Intent to Enroll form.
- Loss of Seat. An accepted student who has not confirmed intention to enroll by the deadline following reasonable follow-up by UP Academy Boston or who has lost his/her seat due to ineligibility.
- Declined Offer. A student (whether accepted or on the waitlist) who informed UP Academy Boston of the decision to not enroll in UP Academy Boston. This includes any waitlisted students who indicated via the Waitlist Opt-Out form that they would like to have their name removed from the waitlist.
- Withdraw. A student may withdraw from UP Academy Boston at any time and enroll in a BPS school, in accordance with BPS Enrollment and Transfer Policies.

Once a student has withdrawn, they would need to reapply for admission in order to enroll at UP Academy Boston.

Students whose status is either Loss of Seat or Withdrew will be considered to have declined an offer of admission to UP Academy Boston (or, in the case of students who returned the Waitlist Opt-Out form, to have declined an offer to be on UP Academy Boston's waitlist). Students and their families will be informed of any changes in their status (e.g., loss of seat) in writing.

UP Academy Boston reserves the right to adjust the timing of when the intent to enroll form is due, as needed, so long as extensions are made uniformly across a single grade level.

UP Academy Boston will not disclose student information, including the public announcement/disclosure of a child's name during the public lottery, without explicit permission from parents/guardians. The school will provide parents/guardians the opportunity to consent or deny to the public announcement/disclosure of a child's name during the public lottery on the UP Academy Boston application. G.L.c71, §89(g) and (n)

*Waiting List Policy.* Waitlisted students will be notified of an offer of admission in a written letter that includes an Intent to Enroll form with an acceptance deadline and self-addressed stamped envelope. Waitlisted students who receive an offer of admission must confirm their acceptance of this offer by returning an Intent to Enroll form to UP Academy Boston by the deadline.

Waitlist rosters do not roll-over from year to year. Therefore, if a waitlisted student is not admitted for a given year, s/he must reapply the following year by the application deadline. These families will be informed of this re-submission requirement by the school. The school will keep accurate records of its waitlist containing the names (first, middle, last), home addresses, telephone numbers, dates of birth, and grade levels of students who entered the lottery but did not gain admission.

**Grade Placement Policy** In most cases, student applications will be processed for the next grade level. In certain circumstances, upon admission the school will conduct diagnostic testing to determine how to best meet student needs, which may result in placement in a different grade. This does not impact the enrollment status of the student.

*Vacancies Policy.* UP Academy Boston will fill all vacancies with the next available waitlisted student for the grade in which the vacancy occurs as per the school's backfilling policy. In the case that there is no waitlist, UP Academy Boston will complete additional student recruitment and will hold an additional lottery to fill these seats.

We will comply with M.G.L. c. 71 § 89; 603 CMR 1.05(10)(c) when attempting to backfill seats for UP Academy Boston. If a student stops attending UP Academy Boston, the school will make every attempt to fill vacant seats in grades 6 and 7 through February 15<sup>th</sup>. If there are vacant seats at the end of the school year, UP Academy Boston will comply with M.G.L. c. 71, § 89; 603 CMR 1.05 (10) (c) when attempting to fill the vacancy in the applicable grade level prior to the beginning of the next academic year. Seats for students who have accepted an offer of admission at UP Academy Boston but have never attended are

exempt. UP Academy Boston may also choose to backfill 8<sup>th</sup> grade seats as determined by classroom size, staffing, and financial needs. In the event we do not have a waitlist, UP Academy Boston will complete subsequent student recruitment and will hold an additional lottery to fill these seats. Again, the required lottery processes (e.g., public notification, deadlines) are strictly followed in all lotteries.

**Confirming Sibling Status** UP Academy Boston defines a sibling, in accordance with state regulations, as “children who share a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption.” To check for any potential inconsistencies with this definition, UP Academy Boston reviews applicant data including address comparison and guardian checks for siblings prior to each lottery and places a follow-up phone call to families as needed if there are questions as to an applicant’s sibling status.

**Confirming Residency (*applies only to applicants who are not currently enrolled at a BPS school*)<sup>4</sup>.** Students must be residents of Boston, Massachusetts by the application deadline in order to enroll in UP Academy Boston. When UP Academy Boston receives an application, UP Academy Boston first checks to determine whether a student is currently enrolled in BPS in order to correctly determine the student’s priority status. This is done by looking the student name up in BPS’s on-line student database to determine if the student has a BPS ID number.

Families of students who are **not currently enrolled in a BPS school (ie, who do not currently have a BPS ID number)** will be notified of BPS’s proof of residency requirements and must prove residency through the BPS registration process.<sup>5</sup> The student’s parents or legal guardian will need to register at one of BPS’s Welcome Centers. At the Welcome Center, they will be required to prove legal residence in the City of Boston in order to comply with BPS’s Residency Policy and Enforcement.

All enrolled students must be registered with BPS, which requires proof of residency. Students who fail to meet residency requirements cannot be enrolled at UP Academy Boston. If a student is found to not meet residency requirements then the offer of admission will be rescinded and/or the student will be unenrolled.

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<sup>4</sup> UP Academy requires proof of residency except in the case of homeless students.

<sup>5</sup> Per BPS policy, photo ID plus any of the following TWO documents (items cannot be from the same category below):

1. A utility bill (not water or cell phone) dated within the past 60 days
2. A deed, mortgage payment dated within the past 60 days, or property tax bill dated within the past year
3. A current lease, Section 8 agreement, or BPS Landlord Affidavit
4. A W2 form dated within the year or a payroll stub dated within the past 60 days
5. A bank or credit card statement dated within the past 60 days
6. A letter from an approved government agency within the past 60 days (Approved government agencies: departments of Revenue (DOR), Children and Family Services (DCF), Transitional Assistance (DTA), Youth Services (DFS), Social Security, and communications on Commonwealth of Massachusetts Letterhead. This residency policy does not apply to homeless students.