



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE EXAM SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS TASK FORCE

May 4, 2021

The Boston School Committee's Exam Schools Admissions Task Force held a remote meeting on May 4, 2021 at 5 p.m. on Zoom. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/esataskforce>, email feedback@bostonpublicschools.org or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

Exam Schools Admissions Task Force Members Present: Co-Chair Michael Contompasis; Co-Chair Tanisha Sullivan; Samuel Acevedo; Acacia Aguirre; Simon Chernow; Matt Cregor; Tanya Freeman-Wisdom; Katherine Grassa; Zena Lum; Zoe Nagasawa; Rachel Skerritt; Rosann Tung; and Tamara Wait.

BPS Staff Present: Monica Roberts, Chief of Student, Family and Community Advancement; and Monica Hogan, Senior Executive Director of the Office of Data and Accountability.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

[Agenda](#)

[Meeting Minutes: April 27, 2021](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Contompasis called the meeting to order. He announced that simultaneous interpretation services were available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cabo Verdean, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Portuguese, Somali, Arabic, and American Sign Language (ASL); the interpreters introduced themselves and gave instructions in their native language on how to access simultaneous interpretation by changing the Zoom channel.

Ms. Parvex called the roll. Ms. Aguirre, Dr. Freeman-Wisdom, Ms. Lum arrived after roll call.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: APRIL 27, 2021

Approved – The Task Force unanimously approved the minutes of the April 27, 2021 Exam Schools Admissions Task Force meeting.

PRESENTATION

Chris Minnich, Chief Executive Officer; Jeanine Edwards Senior Account Executive of Strategic Accounts; John Barbato, Strategic Account Manager; Beth Tarasawa, Executive Vice President of Research; Jeff Enoch, Executive Vice President of Partner Accounts; Fred McDaniel, Executive Vice President of Assessment; and Sherry DeSimone, Vice President of Strategic Accounts from NWEA were present at the meeting to give an overview of the MAP Growth Assessment.

Mr. Minnich introduced the team and gave a broad overview of the MAP assessment. He explained that MAP may be used as a tool to ensure that students have the ability to show they can be successful in the environments that they're going to be placed in. He said NWEA is at the top of the industry in terms of using the information to mitigate bias in their assessment but he also said they don't believe MAP, or any other assessment for that matter, should be used as the only measure, or even the predominant measure in any admissions decision.

Mr. Acevedo asked the difference between the MAP and ISEE and asked for NWEA's advice on creating a foolproof process. Mr. Minnich explained that MAP growth metrics were the best in the industry and that the district could use growth as part of the metrics they may want to consider. He also said he thought that the Task Force shouldn't rely only on academics to create an admissions process.

Dr. Tung wanted to know what strategies NWEA uses to prevent the test prep industry from developing courses that will increase score disparities and also if the MAP could be used as a test for high stakes assessment at the same time as a low stakes formative assessment. Mr. Minnich gave an overview of the measures NWEA takes to protect their Intellectual Property and said that you cannot game the test and NWEA goes after test prep companies. He also explained that the test was valid for both the purpose of high stakes assessment as well as for low stakes formative assessment.

Ms. Skerritt asked if NWEA felt confident in the MAP test's ability to assess whether a student is doing grade level skills and content in ELA and math as relative to Massachusetts standards. The response was that the MAP assessment is aligned with the MCAS standards.

Mr. Creggor asked how growth could be used, and if a student would have to take the test twice to demonstrate growth. Mr. Minnich said in order to use growth the districts would have to require students to take the test more than once.

Mr. Chernow wanted more information about grading and scaling and Mr. McDaniel explained how they interpret the scores and provide a percentile rank for each student.

Ms. Grassa asked about the MAP growth assessment being a predictor of MCAS and Mr. McDaniel explained their linking study between MCAS and MAP. He concluded that they have a high degree of success predicting where a student would fall relative to their proficiency level in the MCAS.

Mr. Contompassis wanted to confirm if it was possible to determine year-to-year, whether a student is performing at grade level expectation, or above, with the MAP test, and if the district could determine the readiness of the applicant pool assuming they accepted the recommendation that the students must be at grade level or above. Mr. Minnich said this was possible.

Ms. Grassa asked about in what window the district would have to administer the MAP test twice if they wanted to use a growth measure as part of the admissions process. Mr. Minich said there would have to be enough time in between the tests and he encouraged the district to think about using the growth measure as he believed it could be effective, especially for students that were performing or growing faster than other students. He also explained the difference between growth measure and the achievement measure that is used to rank students.

Dr. Tung asked whether NWEA could provide studies of the MAP Growth test's predictive validity for selective school admissions in terms of GPA or on-time graduation, by race, socioeconomic status, gender, etc. Mr. Minnich said NWEA had not conducted those studies, nor did he know of districts that had.

Dr. Tung asked to get more information about the fairness and bias review. Mr. McDaniel explained all the steps they take, such as vetting and training writers in bias in sensitivity and in fairness; training that has been reviewed by external third party specialized agencies; and checklist tools to intentionally, proactively check for biased content. He also explained that they perform statistical analysis to determine if the items are performing differently for different subgroups. They also have a sensitive, unbiased panel made up of external panelists that review the passages that are included in all of their reading items.

Dr. Tung also asked if there was data available to see what opportunity gaps NWEA had documented for the test. Ms. Tarasawa said their collaboration with different entities to look at achievement patterns over time and by different racial groups and performance and gave some other resources NWEA were working on that they would share with the Task Force.

Ms. Sullivan concluded by saying that the goal was to ensure that they had done all they could to minimize the bias and mitigate against the bias.

Mr. Contompassis introduced Mr. Keating, lawyer at Foley Hoag LLP., who gave a short overview of the Appeals Court decision regarding the injunction that was filed by the plaintiffs on *Boston Parent Coalition for Academic Excellence Corp. v. School Committee of the City of Boston, et al.*, and explained the impact that this could have on the work of the Task Force.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- Rachel Miselman, East Boston resident, Boston Parent Coalition for Academic

Excellence (BPCAE), testified regarding the admissions results for School Year 2021-2022, and about the feeder schools.

- Li Cass, Chinatown resident, Josiah Quincy Upper School (JQUS) parent, testified about the academic differences from each school and the admissions results for School Year 2021-2022.
- Joy McDonald, parent, testified regarding the admissions results for School Year 2021-2022 and waitlists for exam schools.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Ms. Sullivan informed the members that the Co-Chairs were hoping to receive information about the offers of admission that had been sent out. She said it would be important for the Task Force to review the data so they can better understand the impact of the interim policy on students across the city.

Mr. Contompasis asked the district to make it clear to everyone that they had been diligent in responding to any concerns regarding the invitations. He also requested that the Task Force receive a blank copy of the invitation letter. Ms. Sullivan questioned the usefulness of receiving the letter but did not object.

ADJOURN

At approximately 7:15 p.m., the Committee voted unanimously, by roll call, to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Lena Parvex
Administrative Assistant