



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

**June 28, 2021**

The Boston School Committee's Exam Schools Admissions Task Force held a remote meeting on June 28, 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](mailto: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; Samuel Acevedo; Rachel Skerritt; Rosann Tung; and Tamara Waite.

Exam Schools Admissions Task Force Members Absent: None.

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: June 24, 2021 meeting](#)

[Exam School Task Force Simulations, June 28, 2021](#)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Contompasis called the meeting to order. He announced that simultaneous interpretation services were available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Cabo Verdean, Somali, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Arabic; the interpreters introduced themselves and gave

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instructions in their native language on how to access simultaneous interpretation by changing the Zoom channel.

Ms. Parvex called the roll. Mr. Acevedo, Ms. Aguirre, Mr. Chernow, and Ms. Sullivan arrived after roll call.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: JUNE 24, 2021**

**Approved** – The Task Force unanimously approved the minutes of the June 24, 2021 Exam Schools Admissions Task Force meeting with minor modifications from Mr. Cregor.

**DISCUSSION**

Ms. Hogan started her presentation by making some corrections to earlier simulations. Subsequently, she presented twelve new simulations requested by the members:

Weighting of Composite Score	Mechanism		
	20% Citywide Rank, 80% Tiers Rank	100% Tiers Rank	20% Citywide Rank, 40% Tiers Rank, 40% Tiers Lottery*
50% GPA, 50% Assessment, +10% high poverty school indicator	Simulation 3A	Simulation 4A	Simulation 5A
60% GPA, 40% Assessment, +10% high poverty school indicator	Simulation 3B	Simulation 4B	Simulation 5B
70% GPA, 30% Assessment, +10% high poverty school indicator	Simulation 3C	Simulation 4C	Simulation 5C
80% GPA, 20% Assessment, +10% high poverty school indicator	Simulation 3D	Simulation 4D	Simulation 5D

These were presented by economic status, zip code, and race with a high poverty indicator. Ms. Sullivan pointed out that the most significant impacts from a weighted standpoint seemed to be in socioeconomic diversity. In relation to a possible grade point average (GPA) inflation, she said she believed that the vast majority of classroom educators graded with integrity.

Dr. Tung asked if there was a simulation for a 100% lottery selection mechanism. Ms. Hogan explained the complications of simulating the lottery selection mechanism, as they would need to have a cut-off eligibility to do so. Mr. Contompassis added that the Task Force would not be able to reach consensus if they included a lottery and he urged the members to not take a position on a lottery. He suggested that they use the eligibility requirement of 30% assessment and 70% GPA. He also recommended a 20%-80% split for seat allocation: 20% straight rank citywide and 80% straight rank by tier.

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Ms. Sullivan said that she did believe that qualified lottery would be the fairest mechanism for the seat allocation but based on the data that she had seen, she would support an eligibility based on 30% assessment and 70% GPA split, with a seat allocation of 100% straight rank within socioeconomic tiers. In her view this would continue to address the concerns that had been raised and make sure that the top performing students in the city had an opportunity to select a seat. She thought that the impact of doing the 100% in a straight rank would solidify opportunities for some of the most vulnerable children in the city. She concluded that she would be willing to accept the 20% straight rank city-wide, and a 80% tiers ranked within for seat allocation if the members decided on a 80% GPA and 20% assessment for the eligibility.

Dr. Tung asked the Task Force to still consider the lottery. Mr. Contompasis said implementing a lottery would send the wrong message to the families of Boston.

Ms. Skerritt said the lottery didn't feel transparent and was potentially confusing. She expressed she would be more comfortable with retaining a composite score that had the high poverty advantage and she would support a 50%-50% or 40%-60% split between the assessment and GPA. She said that even though she trusted the integrity of the educators she was aware of the differences between schools and that with a 80%-20% GPA and assessment they might see more subjectivity across different school types and neighborhoods. She said she supported either a 20%-80% split or 100% by tiers for seat allocation. She also wondered if the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and homeless set aside could be done differently than the other tiers due to its size.

Ms. Grassa said a qualified lottery made sense if they wanted the process to be simple and clear. Otherwise, she would be more in favor of a 40% assessment and 60% GPA. She also wanted to know about the implementation of the DCF, homeless and Boston Housing Authority (BHA) factors in the tiers.

Ms. Lum wondered how the concentration of school-age children would impact neighborhood diversity if they decided on lottery, as the neighborhoods with more school-aged children would get a higher representation in the invitation process than if going by a more prescribed formula.

Ms. Sullivan said that due to the high interest in the lottery, she thought the Task Force should discuss that option.

Mr. Chernow said he supported the lottery. Dr. Freeman-Wisdom said she was not in favor of the lottery and in regards to the assessment and GPA she preferred the 40%-60% split and any of the breakdowns for seat allocation.

Ms. Nagasawa said she would like to see a simulation for the lottery. She also said she was more inclined for the 30%-70% split in assessment and GPA, and for seat allocation she preferred a 20% citywide rank, 40% tiers rank, and 40% tiers lottery.

Mr. Acevedo said he opposed the lottery. He agreed with 30% assessment and 70% grades, and the 100% straight rank in tiers for seat allocation.

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Dr. Tung said referring to members not deciding on the 20%-80% vs. 100% seat allocation that choosing 20% set aside would not bring them closer to equity and that in a city with roots in colonialism and with intractable residential and educational segregation, a level playing field was generations away if they keep to short term reforms and incremental policy changes. She also said that reserving 20% city wide seats for white and privileged students was certainly better than reserving 100% of city wide seats but they would still be setting aside seats for those who already benefit the most from structural racism and capitalism.

Ms. Lum said she was leaning against the lottery and because of its randomized selection process she felt it would not ensure diversity. Mr. Chernow explained that the lottery would take place in tiers so that it would not have an impact on the diversity.

Mr. Contompasis read from the opinion editorial page from the June 24, 2021 *Boston Globe* article that spoke against the lottery and in favor of a 20%-80% split for seat allocation. He also added that the 20% highest achieving students were not all white privileged students. He asked the Task Force to focus on the two proposals and to reach consensus. He said he supported the 30%-70% assessment and GPA, and the 20%-80% for seat allocation without lottery.

Ms. Skerritt said that if they went with a lottery, they could inadvertently affect economically disadvantaged students. Ms. Sullivan repeated that the lottery wouldn't be city-wide, it would be within socioeconomic tiers, so it wouldn't have an adverse impact on socioeconomic diversity.

Mr. Gregor agreed with Ms. Skerritt, and said that in the 20%/40%/40% model even in the neighborhoods of lower socioeconomic status, the students with higher socioeconomic status would disproportionately be getting the first seats and the lottery would not further help. He also wanted to know how the mechanics of the BHA piece would work in the tiering. Ms. Sullivan explained it would be the same mechanism as the zip code, as there would be a specialized tier for DCF, homeless students and BHA.

Mr. Contompasis suggested discussing the two main proposals on the table; 30%/70% assessment, GPA split with 100% straight rank or with a 20% city-wide and 80% straight rank within the tiers. Ms. Sullivan reiterated that she would only be comfortable with a 30%-70% split if they also did 100% straight rank within the tiers. Ms. Skerritt said she opposed the 20%-80%. Ms. Aguirre was also opposed to the 20%-80% split but was open to any of the options for seat allocation. Ms. Grassa didn't support the 20%-80% split but agreed with the 100% straight rank in tiers. Mr. Gregor supported 100% seat allocation. Ms. Nagasawa, Ms. Lum, Mr. Chernow, and Mr. Acevedo supported the 30%/70% assessment, GPA split and 100% seat allocation. Dr. Freeman-Wisdom and Ms. Skerritt supported the 30%/70% proposal and the 100% straight rank if no lottery was involved. Ms. Waite agreed with the 30%/70% proposal.

Ms. Aguirre asked if they could discuss the 40%/60% split for assessment and GPA. Ms. Sullivan said she did not support this option and asked the members to give their opinion. Ms. Aguirre said she would be in favor of the option of 40%/60% with 100% straight rank for seat

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allocation. Ms. Grassa, Ms. Skerritt, and Dr. Freeman-Wisdom all agreed with the 40%-60% option.

Ms. Sullivan said they should put the option of 40%/60% to rest and asked the members to discuss the option of a qualified lottery. Mr. Chernow suggested a 100% qualified lottery within tiers. Dr. Tung and Ms. Grassa supported this option. Ms. Sullivan suggested that they should take this option off the table as there was no more support. She then suggested discussing the 30% assessment and 70% GPA on eligibility composite score, with the 10% factor for students who attend high poverty schools. Students would be put into socioeconomic tiers and ranked by their composite score, and seats would be allocated accordingly. She suggested they use the same process to allocate the seats as during the interim policy, which was 10 rounds with 10% of the seats allocated each round, and students in the lowest socioeconomic tier choosing first.

The Task Force took a recess from approximately 7:16 p.m - 7:37 p.m.

Ms. Grassa asked for a one-pager with all their decisions for the members to have for the next meeting. Ms. Lum asked that any outstanding decisions also be included in the one-pager.

#### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Sung-Joon Pai, Jamaica Plain resident, Curley K-8 parent and Charlestown teacher, testified in support of the work of the Task Force and in favor of a qualified lottery.
- Mary Battenfeld, Jamaica Plain resident, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST) member and former BPS parent, testified in favor of a qualified lottery.

#### **CLOSING COMMENTS**

Ms. Sullivan thanked the speakers and the Task Force members.

#### **SUSPENSION OF MEETING**

At approximately 8:00 p.m., Ms. Sullivan entertained a motion to suspend the meeting to continue the next day, on June 29, 2021. After a short discussion on the difference between suspension and adjourning, the Committee voted by majority, by roll call, to suspend the meeting. Mr. Acevedo, Ms. Aguirre, and Ms. Skerritt abstained. All other members voted yes.

Attest:



Lena Parvex

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Administrative Assistant