



## **Boston Examination Schools: Frequently asked questions**

*July, 2016*

**Q: Is there a wait list for the exam schools?**

A: No, there is no wait list for the exam schools.

**Q: If invited students do not accept their seats, can my child be considered again?**

A: There is no second round of consideration. BPS over-invites students to the exam schools with the knowledge that a percentage of students will decline their invitation. This practice removes uncertainty about September school plans.

**Q: How does the BPS calculate the GPA?**

A: The Grade Point Average is based on final marks in English and Math from the previous school year (grade 5 or 7) and the first two marking periods of the current year. Grade information must be in letter form and will be entered as submitted by the student's current school. For candidates with fifth grade academic records from the Boston Public Schools, the Spring term marks will be used. Parents may contact their child's school directly regarding grades before submission to Enrollment Planning & Support.

**Q: When are applicants to the exam schools notified?**

A: Decision letters are mailed home to families in mid-March.

**Q: Will I know how my child performed on the entrance exam?**

A: Yes. The decision letter will include the student's Independent School Entrance Exam (ISEE) scores, Grade Point Average (GPA), and the cut-off rank for invitation to each school. To be invited to an exam school, students must perform (rank) **below** the cut-off for the school or schools that they have selected.

**Q: Can I obtain my child's test scores before invitations are mailed in March?**

A: Parents may contact the Educational Records Bureau at 1-800-446-0320 to obtain a copy of the ISEE score report. Please be advised you may only obtain an ISEE score report if you send your child's score to other ERB member schools. In addition, there is a fee for this service.

**Q: Does the BPS use an essay, interview, or recommendations as part of the admission process?**

A: No. The criteria for the exam school admissions process consists only of the ISEE scores and Grade Point Average, which equally account for 50%.

**Q: How does the order of my choices between the three exam schools affect my child's application?**

A: The admission process is based on student academic performance. The acceptance process serves to invite students to their highest ranked school choice based on candidate rank, which is a composite score of a student's ISEE score and GPA. This allows parents and students to choose a school based on their true order of preference. Acceptance into any of the exam schools is neither improved nor hindered based on the order of preference.

**Q: Do I have to take the BPS November ISEE?**

A: No. Families may decide to take a national test administration with the Educational Records Bureau and send the scores to BPS. The deadline for students to sit for a national test administration is November 19, 2016. Please contact the Educational Records Bureau at 1-800-466-0320 to register for a national test. There is a fee for this service.

**Q: Is there a minimum ISEE score required for invitation?**

A: There is no minimum ISEE score required for invitation. The benchmark for invitation varies for each exam school and changes every year depending on the pool of applicants.

**Q: How many seats are available at the exam schools?**

A: Seat availability at the exam schools can vary each year due to total school enrollment in the current school year. Retentions in grade and the number of students who actually accept invitations each year can affect total enrollment. In general, each school seeks to enroll the maximum number of students that can be reasonably accommodated in each building.

**Q: Are the four sections of the ISEE weighted differently for each exam schools?**

A: No. Each section carries the same weight.

**Q: How do I interpret my child's ISEE scores?**

A: The ISEE is scored on a scale range of 760-940, with 940 being the highest score possible. The median score according to the scale range is 850. If a student receives scores above 850, the student is performing above average on the exam.

**Q: When is the next ISEE test administration?**

A: BPS will administer the ISEE on November 5, 2016.