

Recommendation of Exam Schools Admissions Criteria for SY21-22

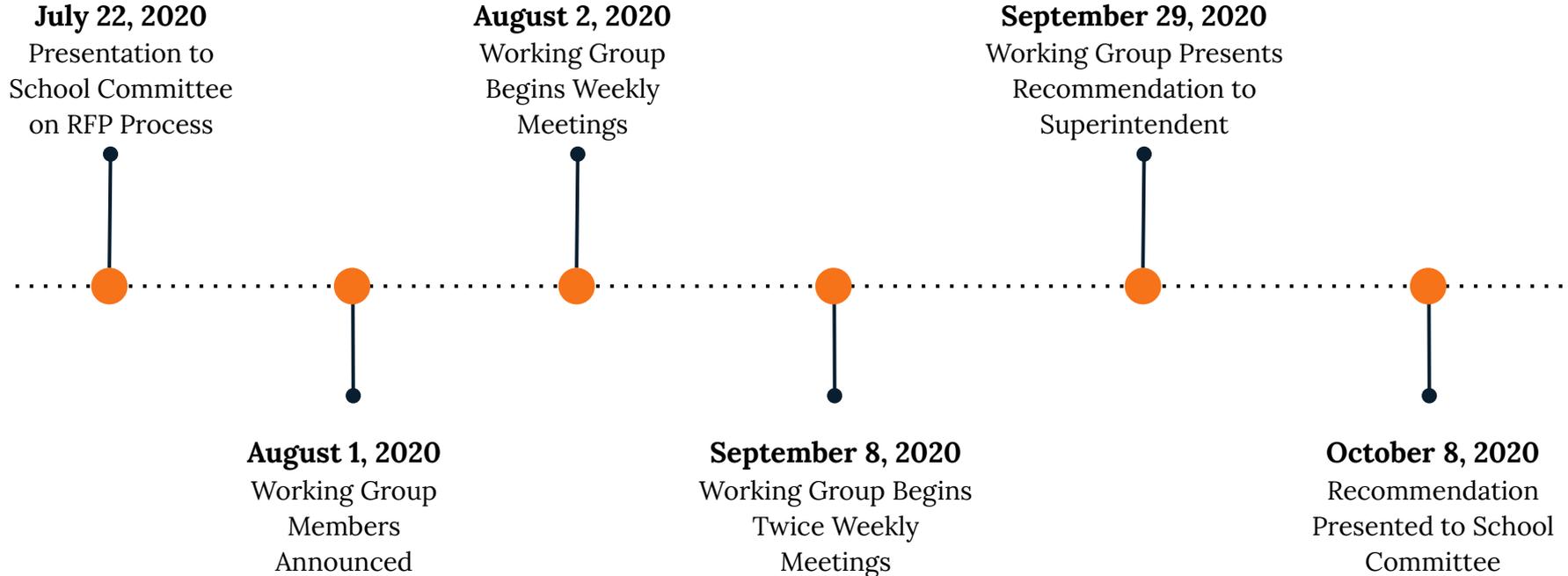
Exam School Admissions Working Group

Michael Contompasis, Former Superintendent

Tanisha Sullivan, President, NAACP Boston Branch

Monica Roberts, Chief of Student, Family and Community Advancement

Timeline



Working Group Members

- Samuel Acevedo, Opportunity and Achievement Gap Task Force Co-Chair
- Acacia Aguirre, John D. O'Bryant parent
- Michael Contompasis, Former Boston Latin School Head of School and Former BPS Superintendent
- Matt Cregor, Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee
- Tanya Freeman-Wisdom, John D. O'Bryant, Head of School
- Katherine Grassa, Curley K-8, Principal
- Zena Lum, Boston Latin Academy parent
- Rachel Skerritt, Boston Latin School, Head of School
- Tanisha Sullivan, President, NAACP Boston

BPS Racial Equity Planning Tool



Working Group Charter

Develop and submit a recommendation to the Superintendent on revised exam school admissions criteria and invitation mechanism for SY 21-22 entrance in light of the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the applicants during the latter half of SY 19-20 and potential impact on SY 20-21.

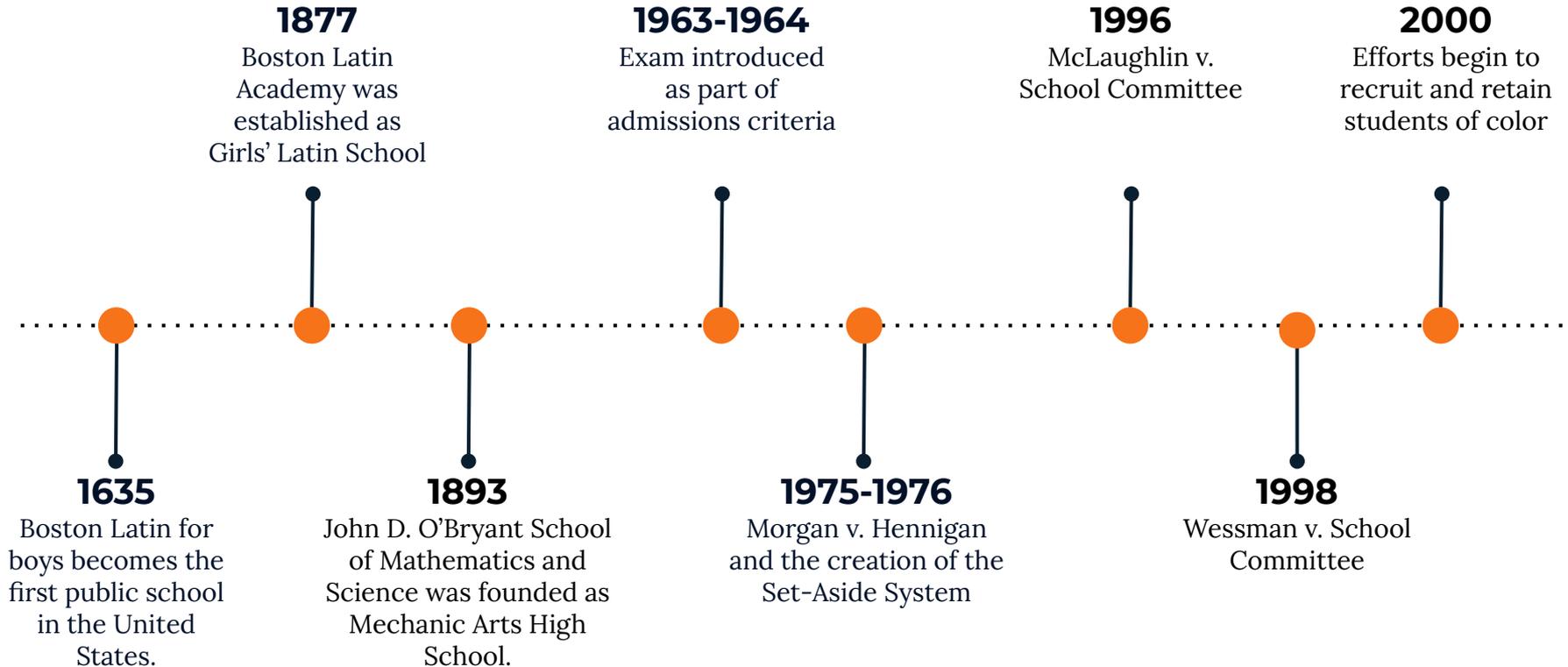
Desired Outcomes for Recommendation

- Ensure that students will be enrolled through a clear and fair process for admission in the 21-22 school year that takes into account the circumstances of the COVID-19 global pandemic that disproportionately affected families in the city of Boston.
- Work towards an admissions process that will support student enrollment at each of the exam schools such that it better reflects the socioeconomic, racial and geographic diversity of all students (K-12) in the city of Boston.

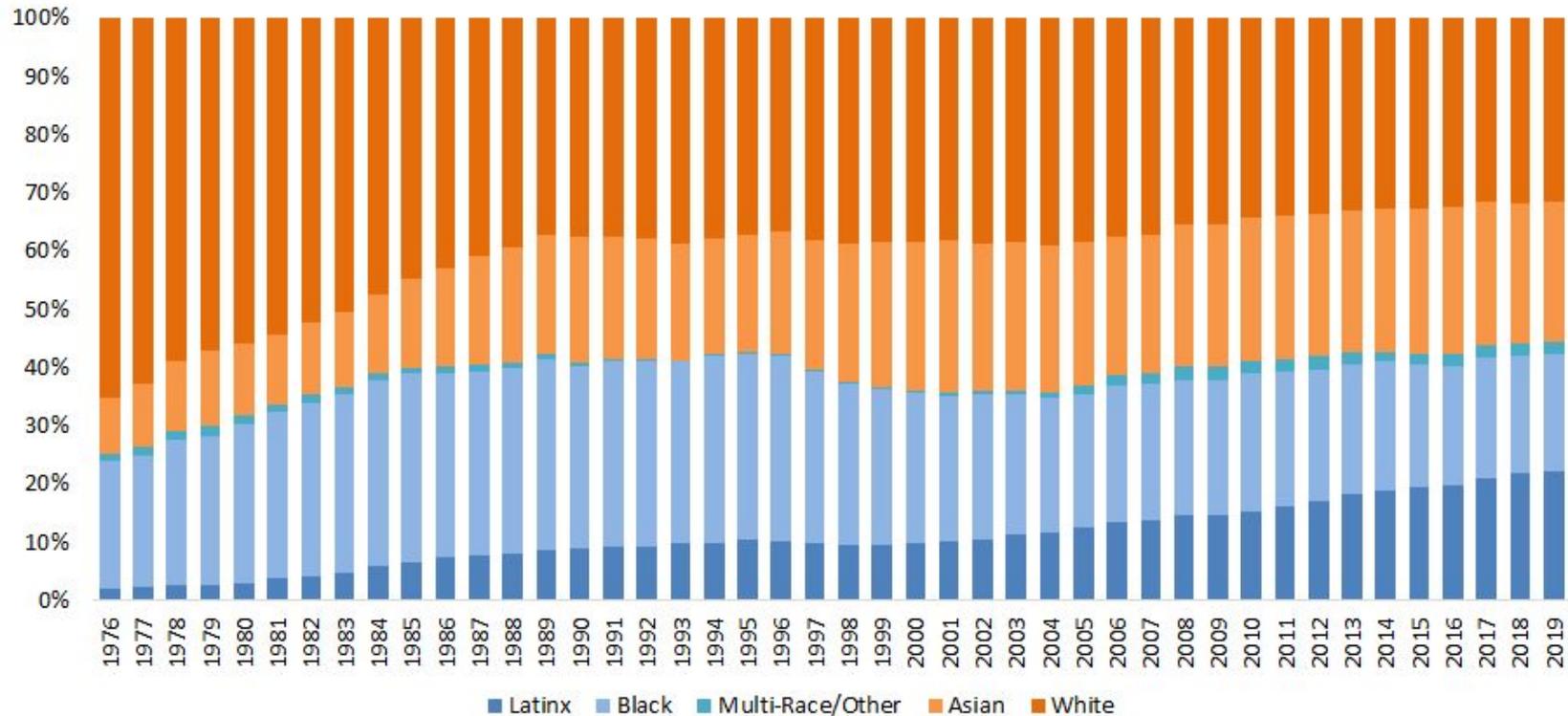
Working Group Process

- Deepen understanding of the current BPS admissions policies and processes, and relevant data trends
- Understand what admission processes look like in other districts, and how other districts are adapting those processes due to COVID-19
- Explore the logistics and availability of admissions criteria and invitation mechanisms for SY21-22 admissions

Exam School Admissions Timeline



Enrollment Trend at Exam Schools by Race



Exam School Enrollment Trends

- Student preference, as defined by ranking of exam schools, show that over 70% of students living in the three zip codes with the highest median household income prefer BLS, while students in the three zip codes with the lowest median household income show preferences for all three exam schools.
- Current BPS students account for roughly two-thirds of incoming students to Boston's exam schools, and about 60% of incoming students at BLS. Half of non-BPS (private, parochial, charter, home-schooled) students who applied to exam schools got into BLS, twice the rate of BPS students.
- Approximately 83% of students in exam schools remain enrolled between 7th and 10th grade. Students admitted with an average GPA of B have high rates of continued enrollment in exam schools, particularly economically disadvantaged (81%) students.

Increasing Equity of Access to Exam Schools

- Increased the number of seats available in the Exam School Initiative (ESI) in summer 2016
- Offered the exam school admissions test during the school day to all currently enrolled BPS students, beginning in Fall 2019
- Engaged in an RFP process for a new exam, which resulted in the selection of a bias tested exam that is untimed and aligned to core standards curriculum (NWEA MAP Growth)

Components of the Admissions Process

Sample Admissions Criteria:

*what is submitted by the student
as part of the application*

Grades, Pre-COVID-19

Fall 2020 Grades

Existing Assessments, Pre-COVID-19

Administration of an Assessment

Qualitative Factors (interview, essay,
recommendation)

Sample Invitation Mechanism:

*the method by which the admissions criteria is used
to determine who gets an invitation*

Straight rank

Percentage of students from sending schools

Percentage of students from zip code

Allocation of seats based on socioeconomic status

Lottery

Current Process

50% Grades
50% Test Score

Straight rank

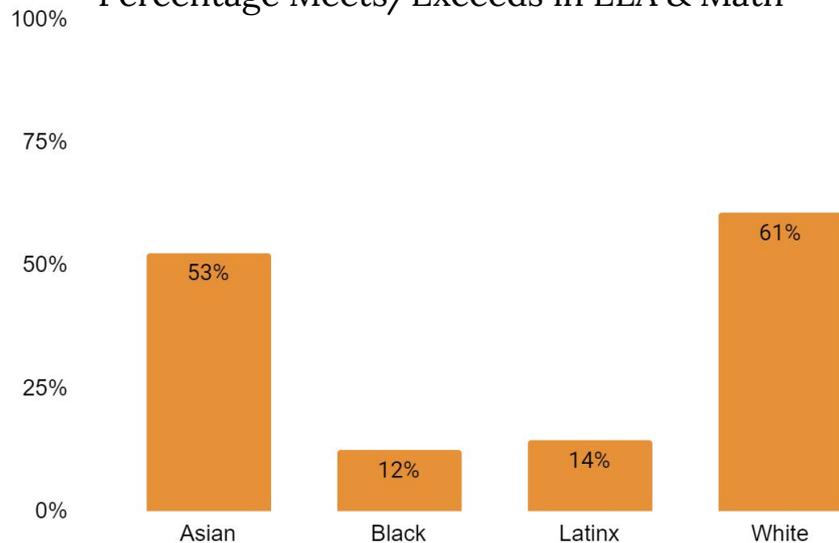
Considerations for Fall 2020 Testing

- Logistics for in-person exam administration, including social distancing, honoring family choice for students to learn remotely, and availability of technology to administer the exam
- Inability to ensure test security in remote test administration
- An exam's ability to assess students' preparedness for exam school classes given the continued educational disruption caused by COVID-19
- Disparate impact of educational disruption on low-income families and families of color
- Contingency plan if Boston's COVID-19 rates escalate this fall

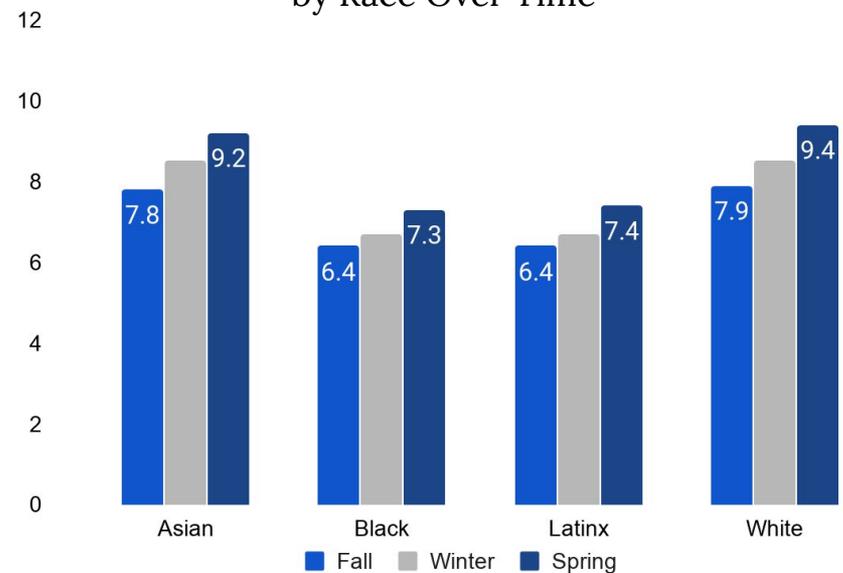
Student Opportunity

- BPS Asian and white students are considered meeting or exceeding expectations at higher rates than Black and Latinx student on state exams and district report cards.

SY18-19 4th Grade MCAS Results:
Percentage Meets/Exceeds in ELA & Math



SY18-19 5th Grade Average GPA
by Race Over Time



Recommendation for SY21-22

- Identify students for the **applicant pool** based on admissions criteria of prior report card grades or prior assessment results. All grades and assessment results would reflect pre-COVID work, and require school district (or equivalent) verification that the student is performing at grade level based on the Massachusetts Curriculum standards.
- **Distribute invitations** to students based on admissions criteria of prior report card grades and invitation mechanism of zip code.
 - Up to 20% of seats at each exam school are reserved for the top ranking students in the city based on GPA.
 - The remainder of invitations are distributed by using a combination of GPA and student home zip code.

Criteria for an Applicant Pool

- To mitigate challenges of COVID-19, disparities in existing achievement data and test administration logistics during a pandemic, students meeting one of the following criteria would be included in the applicant pool:
 - Met or Exceeded Expectations on the 2019 ELA and Math MCAS; OR Earned a B or higher Average GPA during the first two terms of SY19-20; and
 - School district (or equivalent) verification that the student is performing at grade level based on the Massachusetts Curriculum standards
- These criteria were chosen to ensure students would be successful once enrolled at an exam school.

Invitation Distribution

- 20% of invitations at each exam school will be reserved for the top ranking students citywide. Invitations will be extended to the top ranking students based on GPA only and their first choice selection.
 - Create a pool for each school from the identified top 20% of students who ranked the school first.
 - Distribute invitations to students in order of rank, up to the number of seats available. Any ties based on GPA will be resolved using a random number.
 - Students in the top 20% citywide who do not secure a seat at their preferred exam school will be considered for a second opportunity in the next round of invitations by zip code.

Invitation Distribution

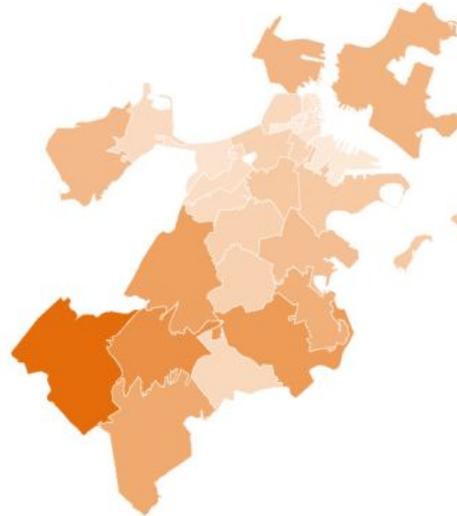
- The remaining approximately 80% of invitations will be extended based on a combination of zip code and GPA.
 - Each zip code in the city is allocated a number of seats based on the percentage of school-aged children in the city of Boston living in that zip code.
 - Eligible students are ranked by GPA in their respective zip code.
 - Invitations are distributed in 10 rounds with 10% of each zip code's seats allocated in each round. Zip codes will be ranked according to median household income, and seats will be allocated to the zip codes with lowest median household income first in each round.

Projected Shift

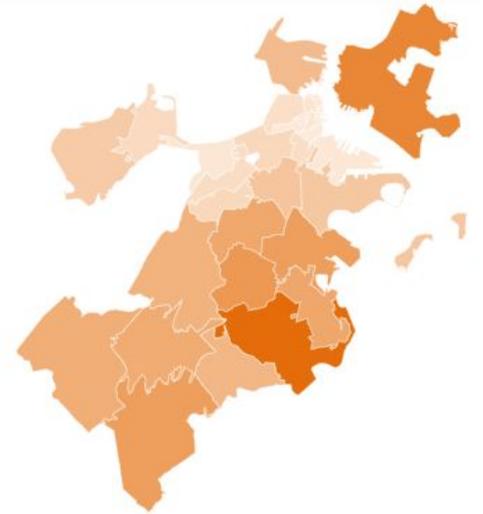
- Projections based on the proposed recommendation indicate greater racial, socioeconomic and geographic diversity, as compared to the invitations sent during the SY20-21 admissions process.



SY20-21 Invitations



Working Group Recommendation



Darker colors indicate more invitations.

Additional Recommendations

- Provide appropriate support – both before and during the school year – for SY21-22 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
- Continue convening a working group to advise on permanent efforts to expand the applicant pool, considering use of the new NWEA test (as noted above) and other factors, based on what can be learned from applying the recommendations to this year's admissions and what the working group has learned in reviewing practices in other districts.
- Secure the additional funds required for implementation from the city, not from the existing budget
- Amend current policy to remove “[non-traditional entry](#)” (approved December 16, 1992) and “[deferral of acceptance](#)” (approved September 16, 1992) provisions.

Equity Impact

Desired Outcomes

- Ensure that students will be enrolled through a clear and fair process for admission in the 21-22 school year that takes into account the circumstances of the COVID-19 global pandemic that disproportionately affected families in the city of Boston.
- Work towards an admissions process that will support student enrollment at each of the exam schools such that it better reflects the racial, socioeconomic and geographic diversity of all students (K-12) in the city of Boston.

Data Analysis

- Considered implications based on the effects of COVID-19
- Looked at past and current data and number of simulations
- Examined other cities and districts
- Most data unequivocally confirmed racial inequity persisting over decades

Stakeholder Engagement

- Working group was the stakeholder engagement team for this process
- Internal Staff, BSAC and various stakeholder groups have engaged in this topic for a number of years

Strategies for Racial Equity

- Considering the fairest measurement of student success across the City while minimizing effects of COVID-19, the group recommends establishing a pool of students who earned a “B” average or better in their English language arts and math classes from the Fall and Winter terms of 2019 OR Met or Exceeded Expectations on both the English language arts and math MCAS in 2019
- Invitations will be based on performance (20%) and performance + zip code (80%)
- Additional recommendations to be considered for long term planning during and post COVID-19

Proposed Vote

- Suspend current policy for admissions for entry in SY21-22
- Amend current policy to remove “[non-traditional entry](#)” (approved December 16, 1992) and “[deferral of acceptance](#)” (approved September 16, 1992) provisions.
- Implement the Working Group’s recommendation for entry in SY21-22 to:
 - Develop an applicant pool based on average GPA of B or higher in ELA and Math for the fall and winter terms of SY19-20 OR a score of Meets/Exceeds Expectations on the 2019 ELA and Math MCAS. All grades and assessment results would reflect pre-COVID work, and require school district (or equivalent) verification that the student is performing at grade level based on the Massachusetts Curriculum standards.
 - Assign up to 20% of seats at each exam school based on a straight GPA rank
 - Assign 80% of seats proportionately by the percentage of school-age children in Boston living in each zip code. Use a GPA straight rank within each zip code, prioritizing zip codes with the lowest median household income first.
- Accept the Working Group’s additional recommendations

Timeline Moving Forward

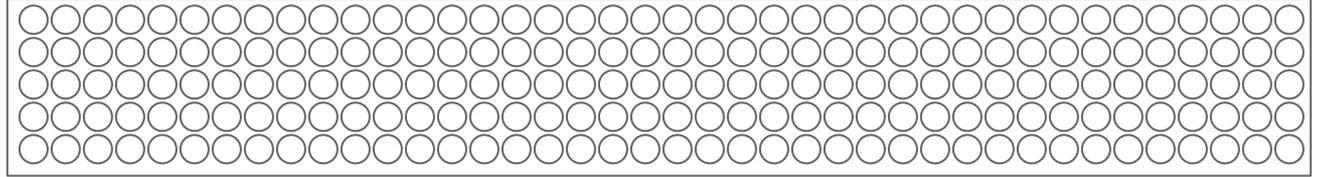
- October 21: School Committee vote on recommendation
- If approved:
 - November & December 2020: Identify students qualified for the applicant pool
 - January 2021: Students in the applicant pool submit school preferences
 - February 2021: BPS determines students who will receive invitations
 - March 2021: Invitations sent
 - April 2021: Supports for invited students begin

Appendix



Illustration of the Proposed Process

200 eligible students are included in the applicant pool. 100 students will receive invitations.



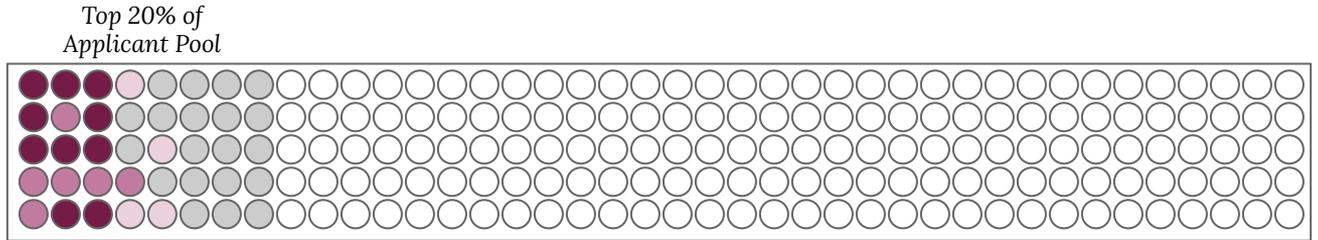
20% of seats at each school are reserved for the top ranking students, based on GPA. In this example, that is 20 seats.

BLS
50 seats
20% = 10 seats

BLA
30 seats
20% = 6 seats

O'Bryant
20 seats
20% = 4 seats

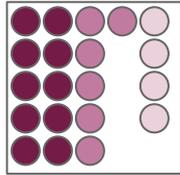
The 40 students in the top 20% of the applicant pool will receive an invitation to their top ranked school, so as long as seats are available.



The colors correspond to the school they ranked first. Gray dots are students who don't receive an invitation because the allocated 20% of invitations at their first choice school have already been distributed.

Illustration of the Proposed Process

20 students received an invitation in the first round of the process.



The remaining 80 students will receive invitations based on a combination of GPA and home zip code.

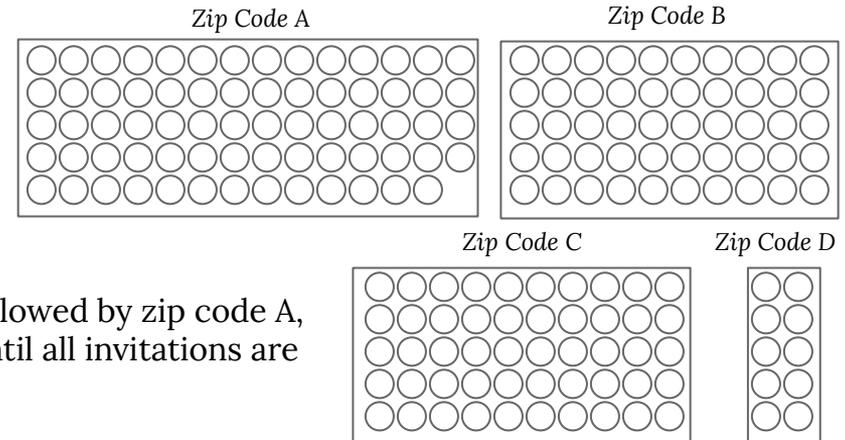
BLS
50 seats
80% = 40 seats

BLA
30 seats
80% = 24 seats

O'Bryant
20 seats
80% = 16 seats

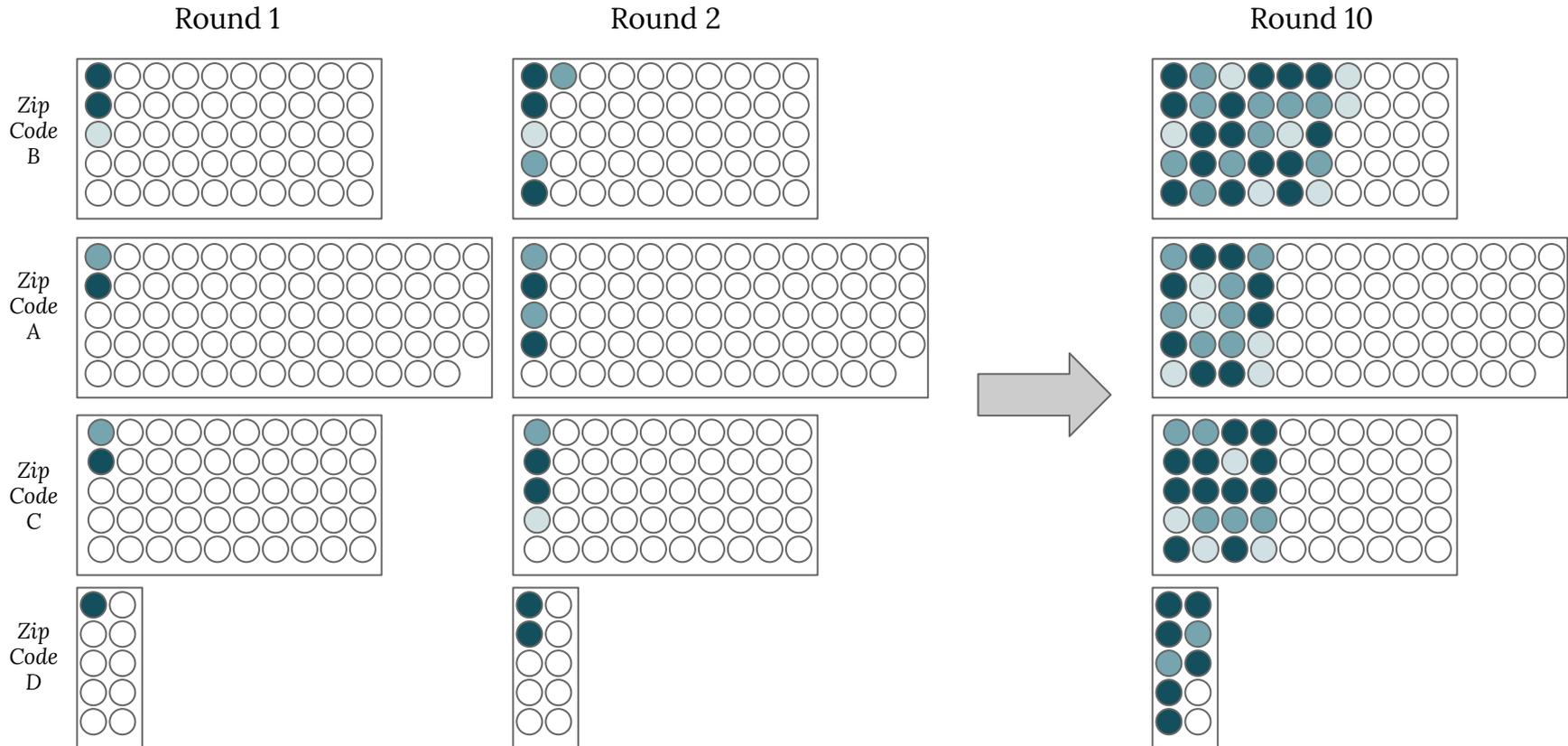
The remaining students in the applicant pool are divided into groups based on home zip code, and ranked by GPA within their zip code. Each zip code is allocated a percentage of the remaining seats according to the percentage of school-aged children in the city of Boston who live in that zip code. Invitations are distributed in up to 10 rounds with 10% of invitations being assigned in each round.

Zip Code	% of School-Aged Children	Number of Seats	Seats Per Round (10%)	Median Household Income
A	25%	20	2	\$50,000
B	40%	32	3	\$30,000
C	25%	20	2	\$70,000
D	10%	8	1	\$100,000



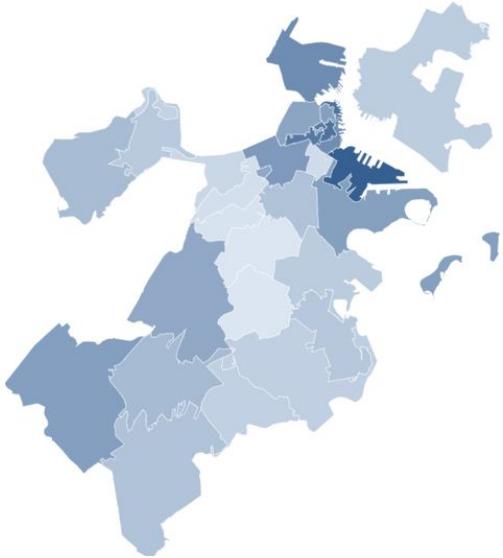
In this example, zip code B would receive invitations first, followed by zip code A, zip code C and zip code D. Invitation rounds will continue until all invitations are distributed, honoring student preference.

Illustration of the Proposed Process



Median Household Income and Percentage of School-Aged Children by Zip Code

Median Household Income by Zip Code



Note: median household income and percentage of school-aged children provided by BPDA Research Division, sourced from 2014-2018 American Community Survey.

Zip Code	Neighborhood	Median Household Income	Percentage of School-Aged Children
02108	Beacon Hill	\$136,667	0.3%
02109	Downtown	\$143,191	0.1%
02110	Downtown	\$116,932	0.3%
02111	Chinatown	\$40,870	0.8%
02113	North End	\$100,063	0.3%
02114	Beacon Hill/West End	\$95,161	0.7%
02115	Longwood/Fenway	\$37,340	1.4%
02116	Back Bay	\$105,559	1.3%
02199	Back Bay	\$91,125	0.1%
02118	South End	\$65,250	3.3%
02119	Roxbury	\$30,551	6.1%
02120	Roxbury	\$33,727	1.5%
02121	Roxbury	\$30,712	8.2%
02122	Dorchester	\$60,474	4.6%
02124	Dorchester	\$53,174	12.4%
02125	Dorchester	\$56,318	6.3%
02126	Mattapan	\$52,474	6.3%
02127	South Boston	\$99,340	4.2%
02128	East Boston	\$55,483	9.0%
02129	Charlestown	\$118,226	3.0%
02130	Jamaica Plain	\$90,813	5.1%
02131	Roslindale	\$73,199	6.5%
02132	West Roxbury	\$100,915	4.8%
02134	Allston	\$58,068	1.2%
02163	Allston	\$49,659	0.1%
02135	Brighton	\$72,009	3.7%
02136	Hyde Park	\$64,784	7.8%
02210	Seaport	\$163,068	0.1%
02215	Fenway/Kenmore	\$45,337	0.4%

Admissions Processes in Other Districts

City	Admissions Test	Standardized Test Scores	GPA	Attendance	Essay	Interview	Recommendations	SES/ Tier System
Baltimore		x	x	x				
Boston	x		x					
Chicago	x	x	x					x*
New York City	x							
Philadelphia		x	x	x	may be requested	may be requested		
DC		x	x	x	x	x	x	
San Francisco		x	x					x**
Detroit	x		x		x		x	x***
Providence	x		x	x			x	
Houston	x		x				x	

Admissions Test = students register for an exam to apply for admission

Standardized Test Scores = district assessment given to all students

*30% seats for top scoring students regardless of SES, tier 1 for lowest SES quartile, tier 4 highest SES quartile

**Band 1 accounts for 70% of seats for top scoring students, Band 2 has minimum score requirements and SES factors, Band 3 has minimum score requirements and Principal nominations

***Bonus points for current Detroit PS Community District students, and students that live in specific catchment area