

City of Boston

In School Committee

November 5, 2025

EXAM SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS POLICY REVISION

ORDERED, that the Boston School Committee hereby approves the following revision to the Policy Regarding Exam School Admissions in the Boston Public Schools. The attached policy will be in effect immediately, beginning with the invitations sent during spring 2026 for the 2026-2027 admissions cycle. This policy replaces the current Exam Schools Admissions policy, originally approved on July 14, 2021 and revised on January 10, 2024 and February 5, 2025, as well as the October 4, 2017 policy on Deadline for Residency Verification for Exam Schools.

This revision has been recommended by the Superintendent and is reflected in the attached policy document.

On roll call, the order was approved by the following vote:

YEAS - Rachel Skerritt; Quoc Tran; Vice Chairperson Michael D. O'Neill; and Chairperson Jeri Robinson - 4

NAYS - Stephen Alkins; Rafaela Polanco Garcia - 2

ABSTAIN - 0

ABSENT - Brandon Cardet-Hernandez - 1

Attest:



Lena Parvex
Executive Secretary

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BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS EXAM SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS POLICY

In order to promote equitable, city-wide access to the district's exam schools and to generate a student body that better reflects the socioeconomic, geographic, and racial diversity of all students in the City of Boston, the exam school admissions policy in the Boston Public Schools shall be as follows:

1. For entry starting in the 2026-2027 school year, and every year during the duration of this policy thereafter, the entrance requirements will be fully implemented as follows:
 - a. Any 6th grade student residing in Boston (or otherwise served by Boston Public Schools) is eligible for admission into the 7th grade at Boston's exam schools; any 8th grade student residing in Boston (or otherwise served by Boston Public Schools) is eligible for admission into the 9th grade at Boston's exam schools; and any 9th grade student residing in Boston (or otherwise served by Boston Public Schools) is eligible for admission into the 10th grade at the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science if they meet each of the following:
 - i. A GPA of B or higher in ELA and Math in the last marking period of the year prior to application, and ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies in the first two quarters/first trimester of their 6th, 8th or 9th grade year.
 - ii. A representative for the attending school/district shall verify that the student is enrolled in grade level courses based on the Massachusetts Curriculum standards.
 - iii. A complete assessment result on the district-identified assessment for the exam school entrance. Students will have the opportunity to take the assessment twice, once in the spring prior to the application year and once in the fall/winter of the application year, with the higher score being used for admissions.
 - iv. Students who are not currently enrolled in Boston Public Schools will be required to complete the residency verification and school choice process as part of the admission process. The specific residency deadline for each application year will be announced by August 1 on the Boston Public Schools website.
 - b. Eligible applicants will receive a composite score, ranging from 1-100, made up of their GPA and assessment result. The assessment shall be weighted at 30% and the GPA shall be weighted at 70%. Ten (10) additional points shall be added to a student's composite score if they meet any of the following criteria:
 - i. Students experiencing homelessness
 - ii. Students in the care or custody of the Department of Children and Families
 - iii. Students living in traditional public housing that is federally or state funded and owned by the Boston Housing Authority.
2. Invitations will be distributed in the following manner:
 - a. The district shall assign 20% of seats at each exam school based on a composite score rank citywide.
 - i. Students with identical composite scores will be assigned a random number to determine which will precede first.
 - ii. During the citywide round, students will only be considered for their first choice exam school. If during the citywide round the allocated 20% of seats at the

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student's first choice exam school are filled, the student will be considered for an invitation to their first choice school within their socioeconomic tier.

- b. The district shall assign 80% of seats evenly across four tiers of census tracts grouped together based on socioeconomic factors.
 - i. For the 80% of seats assigned by tier, each tier will be awarded approximately the same number of exam school invitations. Within each tier, students will be ranked based on their composite score plus any additional points described above.
 1. Boston Public Schools will group census tracts into tiers based on socioeconomic score. The socioeconomic score is based on the following socioeconomic factors, as provided by 5-year averages from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey: percentage of persons below poverty, percent of households not occupied by the owner, percent of families headed by a single parent, percent of households where English is not the primary language spoken, and educational attainment.
 2. Tiers will be of relatively equal size based on the number of school-aged children in grades 5-8, according to the 5-year average from the American Community Survey.
 3. Invitations will be distributed in ten (10) rounds with 10% of available seats within each tier distributed in each round. The tier with the lowest socioeconomic score will go first in each round, followed by the remaining tiers in order from lowest to highest socioeconomic score.
 4. Students with identical composite scores within a socioeconomic tier will be assigned a random number to determine which will precede first.
 5. Invitations to each exam school will be awarded based on students' preference. If all the seats at a student's first-choice school are already allocated, the student will receive an invitation to their second-choice school, unless all of the seats at the student's second-choice school are already allocated. In this case, the student will receive an invitation to their third-choice school until all seats are filled.
- c. Each exam school will maintain a waitlist. Waitlists at exam schools will expire on the same date as other BPS schools.

Following the approval of this policy, the accompanying Superintendent's Circular will be updated.

Additionally, the district will implement the following recommendations:

- Explore ways to expand the Exam School Initiative including serving students in grade 4, in addition to students in grades 5, 6, and 8.
- Design and implement additional enrichment programs in grades 4 to 6 to increase rigor and academic readiness for all students.
- Conduct and publish an analysis of student invitations annually, and after at least three years of consistent data collection, evaluate the admissions policy for any potential changes.
- Explore ways to increase access and awareness for students with disabilities and multilingual learners to the exam schools. Report findings to the School Committee by fall 2026.