



Boston Public Schools  
**Exam Schools  
Admission Policy  
Recommendation**

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December 2024



# Exam School Admissions Policies

Admission Year	Policy
SY20-21*	Citywide Ranking (ISEE + Grades)
SY21-22**	20% Citywide + 80% Zip code (Grades only)
SY22-23	Tiers + Additional (10/15) points (Grades only)
SY23-24	Tiers + Additional (10/15) points (Grades + MAP)
SY24-25	Tiers + Additional (tier-determined/15) points (Grades + MAP)

\*Beginning with the SY20-21 admissions cycle, the admissions exam was offered to BPS students during the school day. Previously the exam was only offered on Saturdays.

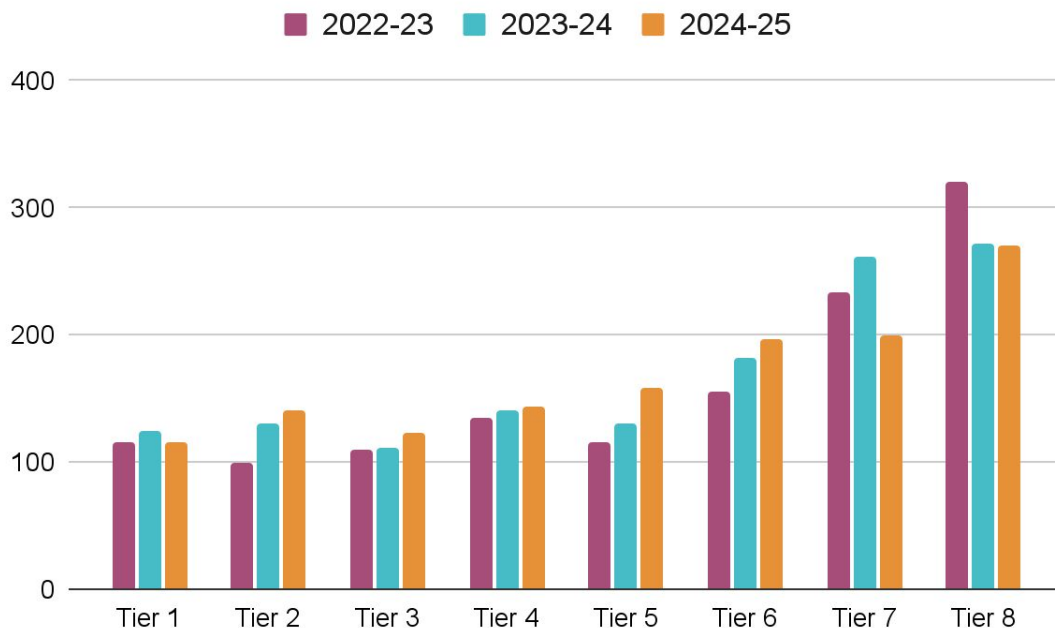
\*\*Beginning with the SY21-22 admissions cycle, students were required to have a minimum B GPA and rank at least one exam school to be considered for admissions.



# Applicant Trends

- Since implementing eligibility criteria, the 7th grade applicant pool has ranged from 1,230 to 1,666 students.
- The proportion of applicants from BPS schools has remained steady (77-78%).
- The number of applicants in Tier 1 has remained relatively steady, the number of applicants in Tiers 2-6 has shown modest growth, and the number of applicants in Tiers 7 and 8 has declined by about 15-16%.

## 7th Grade Applicants by Tier





# Invitation Trends by Student Group

- Over the past 4 years we have seen an increase in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students receiving an invitation.
- We have also seen a smaller increase in the number of multilingual learners and students with disabilities receiving an invitation.
- The percentage of students receiving an invitation in each of these groups remains lower than the district averages.

## 7th Grade Invitations By Student Group Over Time

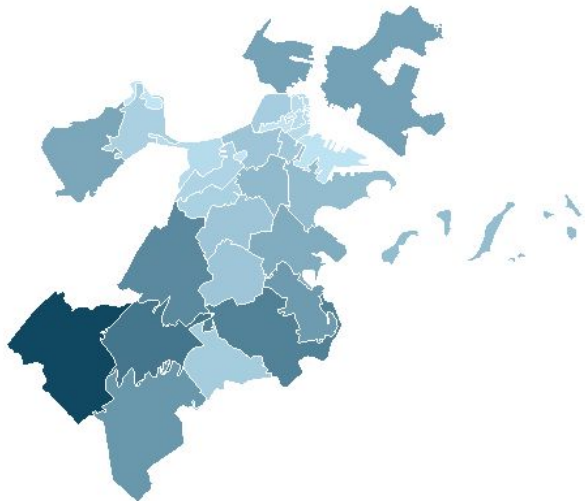




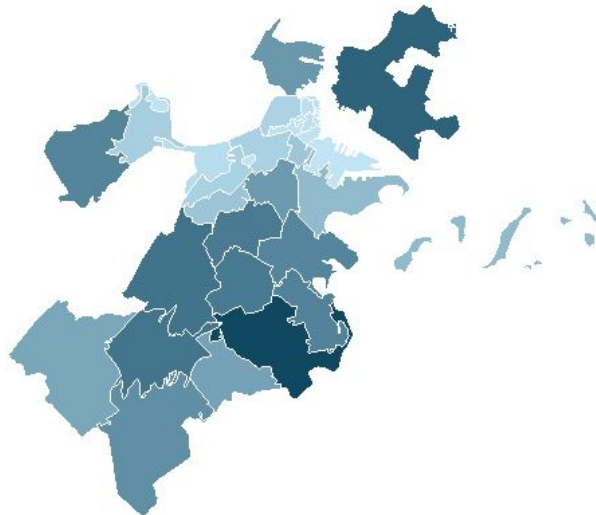
# Invitation Trends by Geography

The policy change has resulted in a shift of the geographic distribution of invitations for 7th grade. The distribution of invitations in SY24-25 is more closely aligned to the distribution of school-aged children in Boston.

SY20-21 7th Grade Exam School Invitations



SY24-25 7th Grade Exam School Invitations



*Darker shades represent a higher percentage of invitations. Shading is done by zip code.*



# Invitation Rate by Tier

## Percentage of 7th Grade Applicants Invited by Tier

Tier	SY23-24			SY24-25		
	Applicants	Invitations	Percent Invited	Applicants	Invitations	Percent Invited
1	125	124	99%	115	115	100%
2	131	128	98%	141	124	88%
3	111	111	100%	123	121	98%
4	141	128	91%	144	124	86%
5	131	128	98%	159	123	77%
6	182	127	70%	197	123	62%
7	262	127	48%	199	123	62%
8	272	127	47%	270	123	46%
All	1355	1000	74%	1348	976	72%



# Last Year's Policy Change

**Last Year's Policy Change:** *Change the number of points that students receive based on the school attended in the previous year based on the tier they live in*

- Last year's shift was intended to ensure that students with composite scores of 100 prior to adding additional points were still able to get an invitation, regardless of if they received additional points on their application.
- During the SY24-25 application cycle, 11 7th grade applicants had a perfect score and all students received an invitation to their first choice school.



# Policy Recommendation

Consolidate the number of tiers from 8 to 4.

- Currently, each tier receives an equal allocation of invitations (12.5%).
- By consolidating the number of tiers from 8 to 4, students will be considered for 25% of invitations, rather than 12.5%.
- This change simplifies the policy, mitigates changes due to minor variability in ACS data, and lessens the disparities in access between students in geographically similar areas.

**About the Tiers:** The socioeconomic tiers are designed to be equally sized based on the number of grades 5–8 children living in the City of Boston, according to the American Community Survey (ACS). Socioeconomic tiers are calculated using five different variables from the ACS (Limited English households; Single parent households; Owner occupied households; Educational attainment; and Poverty).





# Simulation of Policy Recommendation

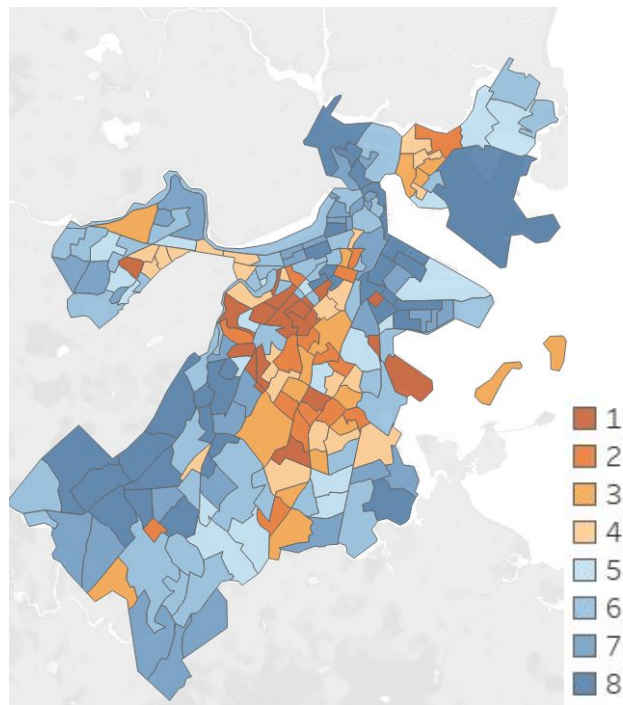
- Simulation uses SY23-24 and SY24-25 7th grade applicant pools.
- Simulation re-coded students in tiers 1 and 2 to tier 1; students in tiers 3 and 4 to tier 2; students in tiers 5 and 6 to tier 3; and students in tiers 7 and 8 to tier 4.
- Simulation assumed the number of points a student received is consistent.

Tier	SY23-24 Grade 7 Applicants	SY24-25 Grade 7 Applicants	Tier	Simulation 1 (SY23-24) Grade 7 Applicants	Simulation 2 (SY24-25) Grade 7 Applicants
1	125	115	1	256	256
2	131	141			
3	111	123	2	252	267
4	141	144			
5	131	159	3	313	356
6	182	197			
7	262	199	4	534	469
8	272	270			

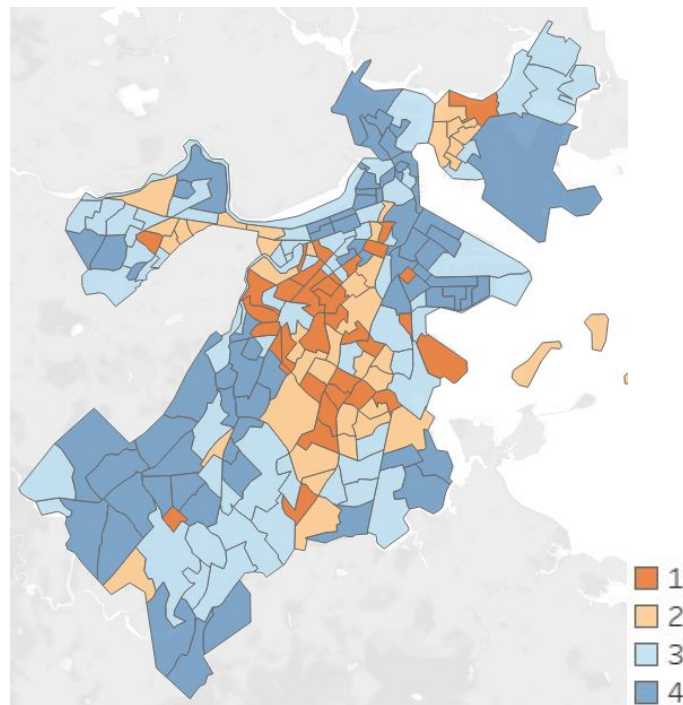


# Simulated Impact of Policy Recommendation

**Map Using 8 Tiers**



**Map Using 4 Tiers**





## Next Steps

- Consider proposed policy change to consolidate from 8 to 4 tiers for vote at January School Committee meeting
- Undertake additional and deeper analysis this spring to better understand the impact of the 2021 policy and consider potential future changes.
  - This current application cycle is the 4th application cycle under the 2021 policy – the policy calls for an evaluation every five years.



# Potential Areas for Additional Analysis

- **Calculation and sizing of socioeconomic tiers:** What are the impacts of sizing tiers based on number of applicants rather than number of children grades 5–8? Can the policy consider individual socioeconomic status?
- **Top Performing Students:** Can the policy ensure the top performing students in the city receive an invitation to the school of their choice?
- **Access for Students with Disabilities and Multilingual Learners:** Can the policy increase access for students with disabilities and multilingual learners?
- **Student Experience:** What is the student experience once they enroll at the exam schools?

# Appendix





# Invitation Trends by Composite Score

## Minimum Composite Score by Tier

Tier	Grade 7					
	SY23-24			SY24-25		
	BLS	BLA	OB	BLS	BLA	OB
1	83.7	68.7	67.8	80.5	65.6	64.6
2	86.1	71.8	64.8	86.6	77.6	76.2
3	73.5	69.1	68	82.3	67.5	63.7
4	83.8	75.7	71.3	86.9	75.9	74.4
5	86	74.2	71.1	89.2	76.1	76
6	94.4	87.8	86.7	97.9	88.9	88.8
7	100.2	97.5	97.2	97.3	91.1	90.6
8	99.1	97.4	97.1	98.8	97.1	96.5

- In 7th grade, students in higher tiers required higher composite scores than students in lower tiers.
- Since the policy changes approved ahead of the SY24-25 admissions cycle, no tier/no student required a minimum score of greater than 100 to receive an invitation to an exam school.



# Simulated Changes to Invitations

The simulation of the policy recommendation did not change 84 – 88% of the invitations sent. Of the remaining invitations, 4–7% of applicants received an invitation to a different school, and 4–5% of applicants newly received an invitation or no longer received an invitation.

	Invited – No Change		Not Invited – No Change		Invite to Different School		Invite to No Invite		No Invite to Invite	
Sim 1 (SY23-24 Applicant Pool)	895	66%	304	22%	54	4%	51	4%	51	4%
Sim 2 (SY24-25 Applicant Pool)	819	61%	304	23%	89	7%	68	5%	68	5%