



Office of the Superintendent

Mary Skipper, Superintendent

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street, 5th Floor
Roxbury, Massachusetts 02119

617-635-9050

superintendent@bostonpublicschools.org
www.bostonpublicschools.org

To: Boston School Committee
From: Mary Skipper, Superintendent
Date: December 18, 2024
Subject: Exam School Admissions Update and Policy Recommendation

Tonight we are sharing some data related to the outcomes of the Exam School Admission Policy changes and bringing forward a recommendation for your consideration.

The policies in use for the last five years are outlined in the table below:

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)

In January 2024, the School Committee approved a change in the Exam School Admissions Policy to differentiate the number of additional points allocated to some students, depending on the school they attended in the previous school year, based on their socioeconomic tier. The intention of the policy change was to address the fact that some students who did not receive additional points could not receive an invitation to their first choice school, because the minimum composite score to receive an invitation was over 100 ([December 2023 presentation](#) and [memo](#)). The implementation of this change in the SY24-25 admission cycle resulted in no student requiring a composite score greater than 100 to receive an invitation to an exam school.

We have heard that the socioeconomic tier calculation creates undue tension among neighbors. In some extreme cases, students from a household on one side of the street have a significantly lower chance of receiving an invitation than a student from a similar household across the street, even if their academic performance and schooling backgrounds are comparable.

We have worked to carefully balance our desire to be responsive to feedback we have heard from community members with our responsibility to move cautiously, driven by the data, as we conduct further analysis of the policy changes' impact. As we head into the fifth year of implementation, we must ensure that any additional changes to the policy adhere to the spirit of the 2021 policy changes, and given that we are in the midst of the application cycle for SY25-26 admissions, are modest in scope.



With this in mind, **I am recommending a change to the admissions policy to consolidate from 8 to 4 tiers.** This change simplifies the policy, mitigates changes due to minor variability in American Community Survey data, and lessens the disparities in access between students in geographically similar areas. More information on the methodology for calculating socioeconomic tiers can be found [here](#).

We will present this policy recommendation tonight for consideration and ask the Committee to vote on the policy recommendation at a School Committee meeting in January 2025.