



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
Personnel Office
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Marie Altieri

Director of Personnel and Administrative Services

To: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee
Date: April 24, 2015
Re: Enrollment Update: Kindergarten Lottery and Possible School Choice Options

The kindergarten lottery was held on April 15, 2015. The attached chart shows the distribution of students by school and all day program.

Lottery and Class Size

We have placed 275 students in 16 classrooms with a current average class size of 17.2. We expect 12-18 more students to enroll between now and August, which would result in an average class size of 18. The School Committee policy specifies a guideline of 18-20 students in kindergarten classrooms.

Of the 275 students enrolled, 91.6% were placed in their first choice school. Twenty-four students (8.7%) did not receive their first choice. Eleven students (4%) received their second choice school and thirteen students (4.7%) received their third choice or lower. The two schools that had lotteries are Blanchard and Conant. Both of these schools have two kindergarten classrooms whereas the other four schools have three kindergarten classrooms. Some of the students on the waitlist should be able to move into their first choice school between now and September.

All Day Kindergarten

We have been working hard over the past few years to make more all day k seats available. We are still restricted by space at Merriam and Gates. However, all four of the other schools are now able to offer two all day kindergartens, meeting the needs of all families in those schools. McCarthy-Towne and Douglas are offering two all day kindergartens and one half day kindergarten. Blanchard is continuing with the model they have been using for several years, where each class has all day and half day students and the half day students go home in the middle of the day. This model allows all requests to be accommodated, and students can move from half day to all day in the middle of the year. Conant is going to try this same model this year, where both of the Conant classes will be all day and the half day students will go home in the middle of the day. In total, 161 of the 191 students who requested all day have been placed in all day (84.3%). We are not able to honor 30 of the 191 requests for all day (15.7%). This is an improvement from about 30% not getting into all day K a few years ago. The requests for all day have also grown from about 50% to 70%. In another year we will have a classroom open up at Merriam, which will allow us to have a second all day k at Merriam.

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Hometown Guarantee

As new Acton students enroll, we will place them in half day at Gates, Merriam, and McCarthy-Towne, each of which has 6 seats available until we get to 18 students in all Acton classrooms. New Boxborough students who prefer to attend Blanchard will still need to be placed at Blanchard according to the hometown guarantee in the Regional Agreement. Unfortunately, Blanchard already has 20 students enrolled in each classroom for next year's kindergarten. Thirty-seven of the 40 students enrolled in Blanchard live in Boxborough, and 3 are siblings of Acton students who are already enrolled at Blanchard. With the home town guarantee, any additional students who live in Boxborough and enroll for kindergarten will need to be placed at Blanchard. A similar situation exists in Blanchard's current kindergarten (next year's first grade), where we have 43 students enrolled in two classrooms. The language from the Regional Agreement states:

During the period July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2019, pre-school to grade 6 students who reside in Acton will have first option for attending an elementary school in Acton while pre-school through grade 6 students who reside in Boxborough will have first option for attending an elementary school in Boxborough. Exceptions to this may be made for special education purposes or for other reasons which the Superintendent finds compelling. As of July 1, 2019, the "first option" described in the preceding two sentences will continue unless the option is altered by the Regional School Committee. In any event, any student who began his or her attendance in a particular elementary school, as well as any younger siblings of that student, will be given a preference in terms of continuing to attend at that school.

Out of Town School Choice

One possibility that the School Committee and the School Administration could explore is accepting some choice students for next year's kindergarten and/or first grade. We receive \$5,000 for each school choice student, plus money for any additional special education costs incurred. We could accept a few students in the smaller half day classrooms in some of the Acton schools. If we enrolled at least 15 students, we could pay the costs associated with adding a third kindergarten classroom at Blanchard. We could then give more families their first choice and reduce the class sizes in the Blanchard kindergartens.

Please see the school choice memo for more information about school choice in preparation for your vote. Please see the attached chart for details about the kindergarten and all day enrollments. We will review these numbers at your April 30 meeting and we will be happy to answer any questions.

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School	Type of Classroom	Total # Of Students	All Day Students	Half Day Students	School Waitlist	All Day Waitlist
Blanchard	2	40	29	11	6	0
Blanchard #1	All Day/ Half Day	20	15	5		
Blanchard #2	All Day/ Half Day	20	14	6		
Conant	2	36	24	12	18	0
Conant #1	All Day/ Half Day	18	12	6		
Conant #2	All Day/ Half Day	18	12	6		
Douglas	3	53			0	0
Douglas #1	All Day	18	18			
Douglas #2	All Day	18	18			
Douglas #3	Half Day	17		17		
Gates	3	49			0	14
Gates #1	All Day	18	18			
Gates #2	Half Day	16		16		
Gates #3	Half Day	15		15		
McT	3	49			0	0
McT #1	All Day	18	18			
McT #2	All Day	18	18			
McT #3	Half Day	13		13		
Merriam	3	49			0	16
Merriam #1	All Day	18	18			
Merriam #2	Half Day	16		16		
Merriam #3	Half Day	15		15		
Total Placed	16	275	161	114	24	30
Total Requests		275	191	84		
Percentage Requests			70%	30%		
Percentage Placed					91.3%	84.3%
Percentage of requests on Watlist					8.7%	15.7%

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