

# Parents cheer as students score charter school seats

## The 'in' crowd

By Marie Szaniszlo | Thursday, March 12, 2009 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | [Local Coverage](#)

For weeks, Mary Perry prayed that her 15-year-old daughter would be accepted to City on a Hill Charter School in Roxbury. But there were 519 students competing for 100 slots.

So when the 88th name was picked from a purple vase filled with folded slips of paper yesterday at the high school, Perry clenched her fists and whispered an ecstatic "Yes!"

"My cousin goes here, and he has learned so much from the small setting," Perry said of the 280-student school - which boasts a 100 percent college attendance rate.

"The teachers here are very nice. And if you have any problems, they have an after-school program that will work with you one-on-one," Perry said.

All 13 Boston charter public schools held their annual lotteries yesterday. And with more than 4,000 students vying for fewer than 1,000 openings, the stakes for youngsters and parents were high.

"I'm disappointed, but at least she's on the waiting list, Tyhisha Owens of Roslindale said after her daughter's name was the 243rd to be called at City on a Hill.

"It is difficult to have to turn people away," said Jessen Langley, one of the school's administrators.

Langley and other advocates say the lotteries illustrate the need for more charter schools, which currently are prohibited from taking more than 9 percent of a school district's total enrollment.

Gov. **Deval Patrick** recently proposed lifting the cap, but only in underperforming districts, including Boston.

His proposal is before the state Legislature, as is a bill filed by Sen. Jack Hart and Rep. Eugene L. O'Flaherty, both Boston Democrats.

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