Section D2. **Special Education Enrollment Preference**

Prior to beginning this request, schools are required to reach out to Laterica Quinn at lquinn@dcpcsboard.org or (202) 328-2660. Further, schools that use My School DC for their lottery must get input from My School DC prior to applying for this preference.

Pursuant to the Special Education Quality Improvement Amendment Act of 2014 (DC Act 20-488), DC public charter schools may institute a preference for applicants with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or applicants who have an IEP and their disability is in one or more specific disability category as defined by IDEA.

All schools seeking this preference must: (a) not limit enrollment on the basis of a student’s race, color, religion, national origin, language spoken, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or status as a student with special needs pursuant to the School Reform Act, D.C. Code § 38-1802.06(b); and (b) ensure that this preference is not used for the purpose of creating a school designed to exclusively serve a particular subset of students. Note that this preference can help a school increase its number of students with disabilities (SWD), but cannot be used to limit or set a specific number of SWD.

**Standard for Approval**

There are four primary elements DC PCSB will consider when approving special education enrollment preference applications: (1) the nature of the preference and demonstrated need for such a preference; (2) program implementation, including capacity of the school’s staff and systems; (3) historical performance, including academic and operational performance, as well as history of legal compliance with applicable laws; and (4) community input. In addition to the written application, DC PCSB will gather evidence from a capacity interview, a site visit, a public hearing, and existing qualitative and quantitative data, as described below.

The approval for these special education enrollment preferences must be renewed by DC PCSB every 5 years, or during its next high-stakes review, whichever comes first.

**Application Process**

**A. School Submission**

1. Describe your school’s objective or rationale for offering a special education preference.

2. Describe how the special education preference would be applied to applicants in the lottery. This may include:
   - What number or percentage of seats would be reserved for SWD;
   - What weight would be applied to applicants with disabilities; and
   - What specific criteria (e.g., disability type, service hours per week, hours outside the general education setting) would make an applicant eligible for the preference.

3. List any other admissions preferences (e.g., founder, staff) that the school currently offers or plans to offer in the future.
4. What is the proposed timeline for implementation of the special education preference?

5. How will the school ensure that it will be able to provide a high-quality special education continuum of services, in the short- and long-term?

6. What special education model is currently implemented at the school? Will offering the proposed preference in admissions impact this model? If so, how? Include in your response any of the following:
   - Changes in organizational structure or staff responsible for special education compliance and instruction;
   - Professional development for staff; and
   - Any anticipated contracts with third-party service providers or management organizations.

7. What input have you sought and received from parents, staff, and other community members regarding offering a special education preference in admission?

8. Please describe how the school’s special education preference will affect the school’s finances. What are the anticipated changes in expenses and revenues? You are invited (but not required) to submit a 5-year Operating Budget.

9. Please discuss any facility-related considerations that may affect the implementation of a special education preference. Address any necessary facility renovations, expansions, or acquisitions.

10. Please discuss any current or recent (within 3 years) pending litigation, OSSE findings, or other potential concerns related to your school’s special education services.

B. Additional Information to be Considered

DC PCSB will review additional qualitative and quantitative information, including but not necessarily limited to:

- Reviews and compliance monitoring evaluations conducted by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education or DC PCSB;
- Special education subgroup performance on state assessments, and in behavioral rates (e.g., attendance, discipline, mid-year withdrawals);
- Prior submissions of the school’s Child Find Policy and Discipline Plan; and
- If requested by DC PCSB, a site visit.