

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

Staff Proposal	School Request
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter Application Approval (Full)	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrollment Ceiling Increase
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter Application Approval (Conditional)	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in LEA Status
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter Application Denial	<input type="checkbox"/> Lift Board Action
<input type="checkbox"/> Charter Continuance	<input type="checkbox"/> Approve Accountability Plan
<input type="checkbox"/> Proposed Revocation	<input type="checkbox"/> Operate in a New Location
<input type="checkbox"/> Revocation	<input type="checkbox"/> Charter Amendment
<input type="checkbox"/> Lift Board Action	<input type="checkbox"/> Approve E-Rate Plan
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Action, Charter Warning	
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Action, Notice of Concern	
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Action, Notice of Deficiency	
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Action, Notice of Probation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Proposed Revisions to PCSB Existing Policy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New PCSB Policy—Open for Public Comment	
<input type="checkbox"/> New PCSB Policy—Vote	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other—Discussion Item	

PREPARED BY: Scott Pearson

SUBJECT: Charter Participation in *My School DC*

DATE: October 3, 2013

Proposal/Request

DC Public Charter School Board (“PCSB”) staff requests that its Board vote to open the proposed Charter Participation in *My School DC* Policy for 30-days of public comment.

Policy

Beginning with student recruitment and enrollment for School Year 2014-15, all public charter Local Education Agencies (“LEAs”) and their constituent campuses which participate in the citywide common lottery system, called *My School DC*, will be participating in a common open enrollment process that is consistent with the District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995 (“SRA”) and with the provisions of their charter.

Background

In past enrollment cycles, each charter LEA has operated an independent random selection process for students, with unique applications and deadlines. To facilitate access for parents to schools of choice by simplifying the application process, *My School DC*, a joint effort of LEA’s governed by an executive committee comprised of 8 LEA representatives and the Deputy Mayor for Education, will operate a common lottery for DCPS and all participating charters. Parents will submit applications for participating schools via the *My School DC* website. Schools will provide *My School DC* with the number of open seats in each grade, and *My School DC* will run an algorithm to match students with open seats. When the number of applicants exceeds the number of seats at a given school, the algorithm will

assign students by random lottery number. The only exceptions will be legally permissible preferences, such as a preference for siblings. A further description of the lottery process may be found at the Appendix.

Date: _____
PCSB Action: _____ Approved _____ Approved with Changes _____ Rejected
Changes to the Original Proposal/Request: _____

APPENDIX



My School DC is a unique opportunity for DC Public Schools and DC Public Charter Schools to engage in cross-sector collaboration by creating a new common lottery system for the SY14-15. The aim of *My School DC* is to:

- **facilitate parent access** to public school options by simplifying the application process,
- **better educate families about school options** through a citywide community outreach campaign, and
- **allow schools to better plan** by decreasing roster shuffling and reducing the number of students who are enrolled at multiple schools.

Benefits for Participating Schools

- **Save staff time:** Charters will save staff time on receiving applications and running the lottery. The *My School DC* team will provide each LEA with regular, detailed demand reports tracking applications by grade during the entire application window (Round 1: Dec 16th – March 3rd and Round 2: March 4 – mid-May, exact date TBD.).
- **Likely increase in applications:** The PR and parent outreach campaigns will inform more parents about the school choice process than ever before, drawing in new charter school applicants. Parents will go to one website to apply to all participating schools, increasing the likelihood that they will check out other schools that are included in the common lottery.
- **Less roster shuffling:** The common lottery will reduce the number of students enrolled at multiple schools. In the current system, students get accepted to multiple schools in April and then have to decide where they will enroll. Families can choose to enroll in multiple schools and make a final decision after school starts. In the new system, students will ONLY get admitted to one school in the lottery, reducing duplicate enrollments. And, since a school's waitlist will only contain students who ranked them higher than the school to which they were matched, schools will see a higher conversion rate from their waitlists.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **How do families apply?**
 - ✓ *My School DC*'s application will launch on **December 16th, 2013**.
 - ✓ Families will apply online and select up to 10-15 participating schools, including DCPS and charter options, in order of preference.

- ✓ The deadline for families to submit an application is **Feb. 3, 2014 for high school applicants**, and **March 3, 2014 for Preschool – 8th grade**.
- ✓ Once a family submits an application, they will be able to change their rankings at any time before the deadline.
- **When do schools have to decide how many seats to offer?**
 - ✓ Participating schools will decide how many spots they want to give away in the lottery by **March 15th**. Schools will have complete autonomy to decide how many spots to offer in each grade. To assist them in making that decision, the *My School DC* team will provide participating schools with detailed demand reports, including application numbers by grade, during the application window.
- **Which schools are included in the application?**
 - ✓ The high school process will include ALL DCPS specialized high schools, ALL DCPS out-of-boundary high school seats, and the charter high schools that elect to join. The Preschool – 8th grade process will include ALL DCPS Preschool and Prek programs, ALL DCPS out-of-boundary elementary and middle school seats, and the charter early childhood, elementary, and middle schools which elect to join.
- **Who is running the lottery? And have they done this before?**
 - ✓ The *Institute for Innovation in Public School Choice (IIPSC)* will build and run the lottery algorithm, in partnership with *My School DC*. IIPSC designed the lottery process for New York, New Orleans, and Denver. They are the leading expert in lottery algorithms for public schools across the country and are independent of any system or network. The Dell Foundation is funding their participation in *My School DC*.
- **How does the lottery process assign students? How many schools will families be matched with and can they be waitlisted?**
 - ✓ Before the lottery is run, schools will have an opportunity to verify sibling status for applicants who indicated that they have a sibling who is currently enrolled at that school. Applicants will then be given a sibling preference as appropriate.
 - ✓ Each applicant will be given a unique random number. The algorithm will assign students to their best preferred school using the random lottery number to break ties when there are more students than seats available.
 - ✓ Each student will be matched with no more than one school and waitlisted at any schools they ranked higher than their match. For example, if they are matched to their 4th choice, they will be waitlisted at their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices.
- **How will schools know who is on their roster?**
 - ✓ Participating schools will receive an Excel file with their rosters of admitted and waitlisted students by grade. Schools which use Infosnap for enrollment will be able to upload their rosters to their Infosnap account and rely on Infosnap to communicate with admitted families and receive online enrollment forms.
- **If a family misses the first round, can they still get a seat in the lottery?**

- ✓ A second round of the lottery will follow in May. Date TBD. Families who did not participate in the first round will be eligible to participate in Round 2. Families who did not get *matched* in the first round will also be eligible to participate in Round 2.
- ***Which schools will be included in the second round?***
 - ✓ All participating schools are *included* in the second round. Schools which did not fill in the first round will be able to accept additional applicants for open spots in Round 2, and schools which are already full will accept applicants for their waitlists.
- ***What happens after Round 2?***
 - ✓ After Round 2, the *My School DC* website will advertise available openings, and schools will collect their own applications which will be added to their waitlist or their roster, if seats are still available.
- ***Who is designing the lottery?***
 - ✓ A working group of 39 charter LEAs and DCPS, staffed by the Project Management Team, makes recommendations to the Executive Team, which has final approval. The Executive Team is chaired by Deputy Mayor for Education Abigail Smith, and includes equal representation from DCPS and charter leaders. The charter representatives are from Achievement Prep, KIPP and Friendship.
 - ✓ *My School DC* is also forming a Parent Advisory Council, with a diverse group of parents from each ward in the city, to provide feedback through the first year of implementation.
- ***Is DC the first city to do this?***
 - ✓ Washington, DC will be the fourth major city to implement a common lottery system. New Orleans, Denver, and Newark have all recently implemented similar systems and the *My School DC* team has consulted with the project management teams as well as participating schools in those cities to leverage lessons learned and best practices.
- ***Who is paying for this project?***
 - ✓ *My School DC* is fully funded for the first year from private foundations, including NewSchools Venture Fund, the Dell Foundation and the Walton Foundation. The first year budget is approximately \$1.5M with the largest expenses on communications and parent outreach to ensure families across the city are aware of *My School DC* and the deadlines.
- ***Which schools are participating?***
 - ✓ DCPS has committed to participate. The *My School DC* team is currently reaching out to charter schools to invite them to participate. The deadline is 9/30/13 to sign up to participate for the first year.
- ***Additional questions?***
 - ✓ Email Sujata Bhat, Project Manager, at sujatabhatdc@gmail.com