



# SCHOOLCHOICE 2019-20

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How does the DPS SchoolChoice enrollment process work?

SchoolChoice is for any student who wants or needs to attend a new school for the following year, particularly “transitioning” students. All incoming ECE and kindergarten students must complete an application. If your student is currently in kindergarten through 11th grade and is staying at his or her current school for 2019-20, you do not have to fill out a SchoolChoice application\*. Here is how SchoolChoice works:

1. First, research DPS schools by reviewing the [Great Schools Enrollment Guide](#), using [School Finder](#), attending one or more of DPS’ Regional School Expos Jan. 15-17, 2019, and visiting schools of interest.
2. Prioritize your student’s top preferences and rank them on the SchoolChoice application. We recommend listing multiple preferences, up to a limit of 12 schools.
3. Submit your SchoolChoice application online during the Round 1 window. The SchoolChoice window for the 2019-20 school year opens on Jan. 15, 2019 and ends on Feb. 15, 2019 at 4 p.m.
4. SchoolChoice combines your student’s top preferences with each school’s admissions priorities and available space. All students are randomly assigned a lottery number that will determine at which school they are awarded a seat. Students will be awarded a seat at their highest-preference school with an available seat. You will be notified in late March. **Rank the schools in the order of your preference.**

*\*In rare cases, a student who wishes to stay at his or her current school will be asked to submit a SchoolChoice application. Families will be notified by DPS before Round 1 if this is the case.*

### Do I have a better chance of getting into a school based on how I rank it?

There is no secret formula! We recommend listing multiple preferences, but the most important thing is to rank them in order of preference. If you don’t get your highest preference, the Choice system will move down to your next-highest preference. It is a common misunderstanding that the system cares about how a school is ranked on an application. Schools do not see what number you rank them and do not have the option to only pick the students that rank them No. 1. So, put your first choice first – you might get it!

Assignments are made based on student lottery rank. Note that it is entirely possible that a student who ranked a school No. 3 on their list is accepted before a person who ranked a school as No. 1, if the first student is in a higher priority group for that school and/or a higher lottery number.

### Do I have a better chance of getting into a school if I submit my application on the first day of SchoolChoice rather than the last day?

No, applications that are submitted during the Round 1 SchoolChoice window are treated identically. There is no priority given for submitting an application earlier in the window.

### How does the Choice process match students to schools?

Following Round 1, when all applications have been submitted, the Choice algorithm will be run at an offsite location to ensure the integrity of the process. This algorithm will randomly assign all participating students a lottery number between 1 and 1 million. Students are also assigned a priority level for each of the schools they selected based on pre-determined priority categories published by each school.

The algorithm will then rank and stack students within each priority category based on their randomly assigned lottery number. This produces an ordered (ranked and stacked) list of students for every grade at every school. The system then allocates seats to students based on the order in which they fall on this list; the system then assigns waitlist numbers to all students who do not obtain a seat in order of how they were ranked and stacked.

### What is School Finder?

School Finder, available at [schoolfinder.dpsk12.org](http://schoolfinder.dpsk12.org), is the online, mobile-friendly school-search tool for DPS families. Here, you can enter the school features that are important to you, and get a list of matching schools that are ranked by how closely they meet your desired criteria. You can also search by address, or by simply using an alphabetical list. Determining the schools that best fit your student’s needs will help you when it is time to rank your preferred schools on the SchoolChoice application.

### What is a “transitioning” student?

A transitioning student is one who has completed the highest grade available at his/her current school or program. For example, a current fifth-grader who is attending an ECE-5 school is considered to be “transitioning” into middle school.



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#### **What happens if my transitioning student does not submit a SchoolChoice application?**

Transitioning students living in a school's boundary who do not submit the SchoolChoice application will be enrolled at their boundary school. Transitioning students in an enrollment zone or shared boundary who do not submit a SchoolChoice application will be assigned to a school based on space availability once an application is received.

#### **Can students in "non-transition" grades, such as second grade, still participate in the SchoolChoice process?**

Yes. Students who are interested in choosing a different school other than the school where they are currently enrolled should submit a SchoolChoice application.

#### **What are the important dates to remember?**

Jan. 15-17, 2019: DPS Regional School Expo Week

Jan. 15, 2019: Round 1 of SchoolChoice opens

Feb. 15, 2019: SchoolChoice closes. All applications are due by 4 p.m.

Late March 2019: Families are notified of school assignments

April 3, 2019: Round 2 of SchoolChoice opens

#### **When will the SchoolChoice application be available?**

The SchoolChoice application will be available online Jan. 15, 2019. More information about SchoolChoice, including how to apply, will be available at [schoolchoice.dpsk12.org](http://schoolchoice.dpsk12.org) as the window approaches.

#### **Where do we submit our SchoolChoice application?**

This will be the second year of DPS' online, mobile-friendly SchoolChoice application. The application will be available at [schoolchoice.dpsk12.org](http://schoolchoice.dpsk12.org). Once the Choice window opens, families can log in using their Parent Portal account credentials or create a new account, fill out their application and submit anytime during the Choice window.

#### **Which schools are included in the SchoolChoice enrollment process?**

Nearly all district schools participate in the SchoolChoice process, including neighborhood schools, magnet schools, innovation schools and charter schools. Pathways schools, sometimes referred to as alternative schools, typically do not participate. Please contact those schools directly for enrollment information.

#### **Are there any extra enrollment steps for certain schools?**

A few schools have extra enrollment steps for qualification beyond simply completing the SchoolChoice form. For example, Denver School of the Arts requires auditions as part of a student's application. These schools are identified in the Great Schools Enrollment Guides and on the SchoolChoice application.

#### **Will all schools have the same timeline?**

Yes. All schools have the same deadline for submitting SchoolChoice applications by 4 p.m. Feb. 15, 2019. Families will be notified of their student's school assignment in late March 2019. Some magnet programs have extra enrollment steps and follow separate timelines for completing these steps. If you are considering a magnet school or program, please contact the school for details about extra enrollment steps.

#### **How does the SchoolChoice matching process work, and how will my child be enrolled in a school?**

Students will be considered for enrollment at each school based on the preferences they list on the SchoolChoice application and the admissions priorities (siblings or Denver residents, for example) established by each school. Admissions priorities for each school may be found at [schoolchoice.dpsk12.org](http://schoolchoice.dpsk12.org). Within each priority group, a random number will be assigned to each student to break any "ties" within the priority group. The SchoolChoice system will consider student preferences, schools' priorities and available seats to determine the order in which students are enrolled.

#### **If we list only one school on the SchoolChoice application, will we have a higher chance of getting into that school?**

No. The number of schools listed on a SchoolChoice form will not affect the likelihood of being assigned to any particular school. DPS strongly recommends that each student lists his or her top preferred schools in order, up to a limit of 12 schools.

#### **What if my student doesn't get assigned to his or her first-choice school?**

If your student is not assigned to his or her first-preference school, he or she will be placed on the waitlist at that school. When and if the school has space available, you will be contacted and offered enrollment. Please keep in mind that waitlists are dynamic and your waitlist position may change based on the applications and statuses of other applicants, including Round 2 applicants.



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#### **Is my child still guaranteed a spot at our boundary school?**

Yes. The SchoolChoice process does not change district policies including a guaranteed spot for grades kindergarten through 12th grade at your boundary school. If your student is accepted via Choice into a school that is not your boundary school, then that school becomes your “home school” and the seat at your boundary school will no longer be guaranteed.

#### **After enrolling in a school other than my boundary school through SchoolChoice, is my student able to return to the boundary school?**

To return to your boundary school, you may submit a Round 2 SchoolChoice form following Round 1 notifications in late March. If your boundary school is not full in your child’s grade after the Round 1 SchoolChoice assignments, he or she will be enrolled right away. However, if your boundary school is full after Round 1, your child will be placed on the waitlist.

#### **My student is on a school’s waitlist. When will I hear if he or she will be offered a seat?**

Waitlists are active until the end of September. Schools will offer seats to waitlisted students when they learn they have a seat to offer, which may be after the school year begins.

#### **If one of my children “choices” into a school that is not our guaranteed boundary school, will my other children be able to “choice” into the same school?**

High priority is given to siblings of current and returning students during Round 1, and most siblings are approved to the same choice school. However, enrollment for siblings at a choice school cannot always be guaranteed due to space limitations.

#### **When will I need to choose between different school offers?**

Once the Round 1 SchoolChoice application is submitted, you are requesting a new school for the next school year. You will need to ensure that you have prioritized your schools appropriately, prior to submitting your SchoolChoice application. In March, your student will be given only one school assignment to his or her “best-match” DPS school.

#### **What if I am not pleased with my student’s school assignment or if I change my mind?**

Round 2 of SchoolChoice begins following Round 1 notifications in March 2019 and runs through Aug. 30, 2019. A Round 2 SchoolChoice application must be submitted with the requested school. Students will be assigned to their desired school on a first-come, first-served basis, contingent upon space availability. A Round 2 school assignment will replace the Round 1 school assignment. Families will be asked to rank all schools to which a student has applied in both Rounds 1 and 2, and any schools ranked lower than the school at which the student is accepted will be cancelled.

#### **Will my child get transportation to his or her assigned school?**

Transportation is not guaranteed. Please visit the DPS Transportation website at [transportation.dpsk12.org](http://transportation.dpsk12.org) for details.

#### **What documents will I need to apply to a school?**

Families will need to submit the following documents:

- **Verification of child's age.** Acceptable documents include copy of child's birth certificate, baptismal record or hospital record.
- **Verification of current address.** Acceptable documents include copy of current lease, proof of home ownership, or utility bill such as gas, electric, water or cable.
- **Verification of one month's income (needed for ECE-4 only).** Acceptable documents include most current pay stub (if paid more than once a month, include all stubs for month), wage statement or tax return.

#### **Who should I contact if I have questions?**

The Office of Choice and Enrollment Services can be reached at 720-423-3493 or [schoolchoice@dpsk12.org](mailto:schoolchoice@dpsk12.org).