



LINK STRATEGIC PARTNERS

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Community Meeting Summary

The following information provides feedback derived from the three community meetings held in January, 2017, focused on cross-sector student transfer policy. While attendance was low, engagement was rich, and further expanded the findings from the focus groups.

Location	Dates	Attendees
Bellevue (William O. Lockridge) Neighborhood Library	1/10/17	4
Mt. Pleasant Neighborhood Library	1/17/17	9
Northeast Neighborhood Library	1/18/17	10

Community Meeting Summary

Mid-Year Enrollment Process

There was general support for systematizing the mid-year entry and transfer policy designed to assist hardship (vulnerable/at-risk) students, if done equitably.

- The majority of respondents largely agreed that set-aside seats (especially for hardship students) should be held open for the entire academic year
- Stakeholders were generally against the idea that schools (DCPS or DCPCS) could opt-out of the set-aside seats initiative
- Attendees questioned how updating transfer policy would help the transfer students and their families
- Some participants voiced concerns that a centralized process would add additional steps to the lottery initiative

Community Meeting Summary

Mid-Year Enrollment Process (continued)

- Some stakeholders insisted that the definitions for hardship transfers, out-of-state transfers, and expulsion policy must be created transparently and dependably.
- Many participants felt that the Deputy Mayor's Office of Education and My School DC should watch out for potential loopholes families and students could use to “game” the system, especially regarding issues surrounding residency.

Community Meeting Summary

Mid-Year Enrollment Process (continued)

Stakeholders strongly agreed with the need to aggregate additional data to further determine *why* students are moving mid-year ('high churn' students).

- Some attendees expressed a need for the policy proposals to address reducing city-wide mobility instead of dispersing transfer students more equitably throughout the city.
- A few stakeholders questioned if the money and time to create additional bureaucracies could, instead, provide direct aid to 'high churn' schools.
- Stakeholders voiced that while practical in concept, the proposed policies made the transfer process easier for administrators by placing the burden on the students.

Community Meeting Summary

Mid-Year Enrollment Process (continued)

There were various levels of support voiced in regards to optional, third-party counseling programs:

- Such a program could aid families struggling to navigate the entire online mid-year enrollment process
- Participants feared that counseling would further complicate the My School DC portal
- The success of such counseling programs is contingent upon sector neutrality and accurately serving the needs of the student

Community Meeting Summary

Feedback On Goals and Purpose of Proposal (Hardship Set-asides)

Most stakeholders suggested that hardship transfers should be prioritized over out-of-state transfers and wait list transfers:

- Participants emphasized that their acceptance of the proposed policies rests upon the clarity and transparency of the definition of hardship
- There was stakeholder agreement that a voluntary change-of-residence should not be considered a 'hardship'

Community Meeting Summary

Feedback On Goals and Purpose of Proposal (Out-of-State Set-asides)

Most participants were against the idea that out-of-state transfers could have priority over DC students:

- Attendees felt that out-of-state 'set-asides' undermine the purpose of the waitlist process
- Stakeholders feared that this policy was the easiest to manipulate and felt that stricter residency verification policies should be adopted

Community Meeting Summary

Feedback on Goals and Purposes of Proposal (Waitlist Changes)

Most participants agreed that the waitlist process should include an 'opt-in' component that requires families to actively engage with the transfer (waitlist) process:

- Participants at one meeting expressed that waitlists increase student mobility and transfers, which potentially complicates the system, and should be removed from the enrollment process
 - Stakeholders feared that requiring families to actively show interest in staying on waitlists would unfairly disadvantage low-information families

Community Meeting Summary

Additional Feedback from the Community

- Stakeholders agreed the Deputy Mayor's Office of Education and My School DC should work to increase DC parents' general trust in and access to the enrollment process, as well as the information presented along with it
- Stakeholders voiced a general concern around the potential of families to game the system (DME should anticipate when creating these policies)
- Attendees fear that these policies will slow the enrollment process down by requiring students to use the My School DC lottery system for in-boundary schools