

Student Assignment and Boundary Glossary of Terms

Attendance zone. A geographic area or boundary assigned to a DCPS school used to determine a student's school of right. (See boundary.)

Boundary. A geographic area or attendance zone assigned to a DCPS school that is used to determine a student's school of right. (See attendance zone.)

Choice set. A group of two or more schools offering the same grade level (e.g., a choice set of elementary schools). Students assigned to a choice set have a right to attend one of the schools in the choice set. Assignment to the schools is based on a lottery and may or may not include student preferences or ranking of the specific schools.

ESEA school index and waiver status classifications. Pursuant to the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the District has developed a statewide accountability system for all public schools. Schools are given a school index score ranging from 1-100 (the higher the index number the better the school is ranked) that reflects the number of students scoring Proficient or Advanced on the DC CAS and the change in DC CAS test performance of students at a given grade level from year to year. Based on the ESEA school index score as well as attendance, high school graduation (if applicable), and DC CAS test participation rates (if applicable), schools are categorized into four ESEA waiver status classifications: *reward, rising, developing, or priority*. Reward is a school with the highest level of student performance and/or growth on the DC CAS; a rising school is a school with good performance; a developing school is a school with moderate performance; and a priority school is a school needing intense support to address low performance. In addition, there are focus schools that are classified as needing targeted support to address large achievement gaps between specific groups of students. Schools in the focus category have varying index scores.

Feeder pattern. A group of schools including one elementary/PK3-8, one middle school, and one high school that students have a right to attend based on their enrollment in one of the schools. Students have this right regardless of whether they live in the attendance zone or boundary of the school.

Feeder school. Within a feeder pattern, an elementary/PK3-8 school that is designated to send its students onto a specific middle or high school, and a PK3-8/middle school that is designated to send its student onto a specific high school.

In boundary. Students who live in the boundary or geographic area of a school and have a right to attend that school.

Out of boundary. Students who live outside the boundary or attendance zone of a school and do not have a right to attend that school but may apply to attend through an out-of-boundary lottery process.

Lottery. A randomized process that determines the placement of new students at a participating school. A student's admittance is based on a randomized drawing of interested applicants. Preferences may be taken into account (e.g., sibling preferences) that gives a student a higher probability of being selected in the lottery.

Neighborhood school. Students have a right to enroll in their grade-appropriate school designated by their attendance zone or boundary. Students can enroll at any time during the year regardless of student qualifications. Also commonly referred to **school of right** or **assigned school**.

Preference. Classifications or characteristics of students used in a lottery application process. Examples of these classifications or preferences include living in an attendance zone or boundary, having a sibling already attending the school, or living in the attendance zone of a low-performing school. (See lottery.)

Proximity. The distance that a student lives from a school that typically reflects a reasonable walking distance. Proximity is sometimes used a preference in lottery application processes for DCPS schools.

School of Right. Students have a right to enroll in a grade-appropriate school at any time during the year regardless of student qualifications.

Selective application school. Schools or programs that have specific admissions requirements and selection criteria. Students do not have a right to attend these schools. Instead students must apply to these schools through a lottery or a criterion-based application process. Sometimes these types of schools are referred to as simply “selective” or “application” schools. These schools do not have boundaries.

Set aside. A percentage of seats at a given school that are guaranteed for a specific group of students. Some set asides are designated for out-of-boundary students who have specific characteristics (e.g., students living in a low-performing designated school).

Specialized school. Schools or programs that offer specific types of educational programming such as International Baccalaureate (IB); dual language; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM); or Montessori.