At-Risk Working Group: Meeting 9 (Task Force Meeting 16)

Date: July 25th, 2017

Goals for meeting:

- Understand lottery preferences
- Prepare to present to the Task Force on our work thus far
- Determine next steps

Meeting Summary:

Cat Peretti, Executive Director of My School DC, presented about at-risk preferences to the Task Force (Slides 5-35). Key points and task force member questions from the presentation:

- Clarification that there are some preferences that are allowable/enumerated
- No preference is required, even by DCPS
- If a student has multiple preferences, they get the best preference
    - DCPS is the only LEA that does combo preferences (i.e. in-boundary with sibling)
- The preference order also applies to the waitlist order
- Schools have to validate "sibling" based on their own definition
    - DCPS definition is laid out by DCMR
- How many charters have "children of staff" preference?
    - Almost 2/3?
    - DCPS does not have an equivalent preference
- Weighting is another option rather than a preference
    - Don't have any weighting for preferences currently
- We can't identify PK at-risk students
    - Possibility of using a non-UPSFF at-risk definition
    - Leverage Early Stages
- Would an at-risk definition identify so many students that it would nullify itself?
    - Schools with <25% at-risk would qualify for an at-risk preference; schools would still need to opt in
        - These schools serve a range of at-risk students (they're not all 0%)
        - Concern about the ability of some of those schools to serve at-risk students
        - We would need to consider what resources to provide schools to prepare them to serve the at-risk students
- A couple hundred students lose their match with an at-risk weighting/preferences
- Might see a greater distribution of at-risk students across schools
- Weighting does have a lot of impact, mostly due to sibling preferences
- Q: What would a new school look like?
    - A: They haven't had any enrollment, so they cannot be classified as "<25" and therefore are not automatically eligible for an at-risk preference.
        - Is it possible to require that new school to fill __% of their seats as at-risk?
- Are these schools being presented even getting at-risk applicants? How would an at-risk preference change the make-up of the applicants to some of those schools that would qualify for the preference?

- If no preference, schools would need to be more proactive in recruiting students and providing transportation/programs/supports
- Concern that the people with the most money talk the loudest (those that might lose their match) and it would be difficult to get this passed
- In boundary recommendations, there was the recommendation for set-aside seats rather than a preference
- Offer at-risk seats at those grades where school see a lot of student attrition between school years
- Schools would set their own order, if it's a preference – might not have that much of an impact (less than already modeled) if the school's don't rank it high
- An at-risk weighting/preference would push back the timeline for schools to get their lottery results
- Rather than at-risk seats or a preference (or in conjunction with), open citywide schools that are specifically meant to serve at-risk students(NW, center of the city)
    - Might alleviate overcrowding in some areas