

Public School Lottery Waitlists Explained Part 1

Almost half of all students in SY2018-19 declined their initial matches and waitlist offers to enroll

This Edsight describes how My School DC lottery applicants can enroll in a school based on lottery results and the rates at which they do so. My School DC is a single online application used by students to apply to attend DC Public Schools (DCPS) where they do not have a right to attend, and public charter schools. Students can apply to as many as 12 schools and rank the schools by preference.

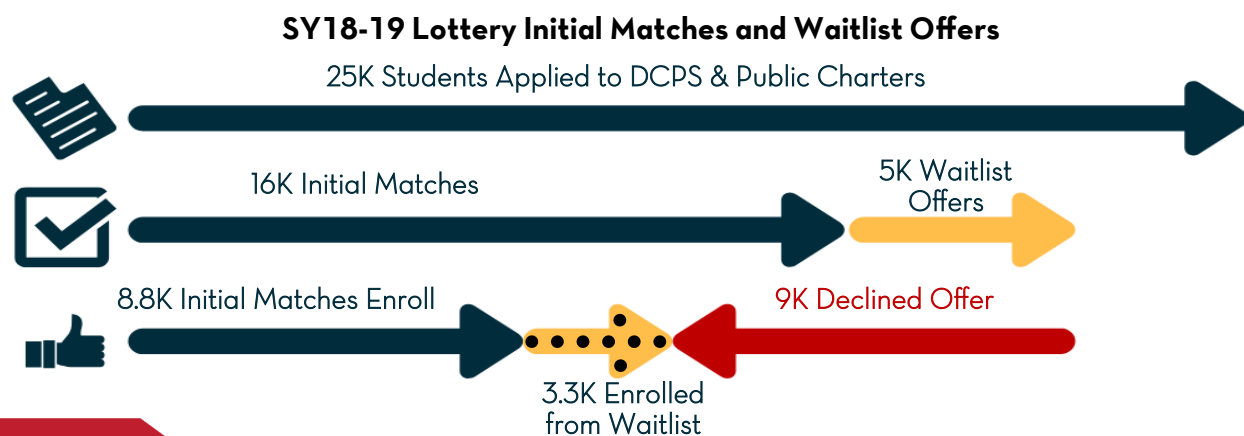
After students submit applications, they learn if they have a “match” (i.e., opportunity to enroll) on Results Day; they also learn whether they are placed on waitlists for schools in order of student-listed preference. Some students receive both an initial match *and* are placed on waitlists for schools they ranked higher than where they received their initial enrollment match.

Initial Matches and Waitlist Offers

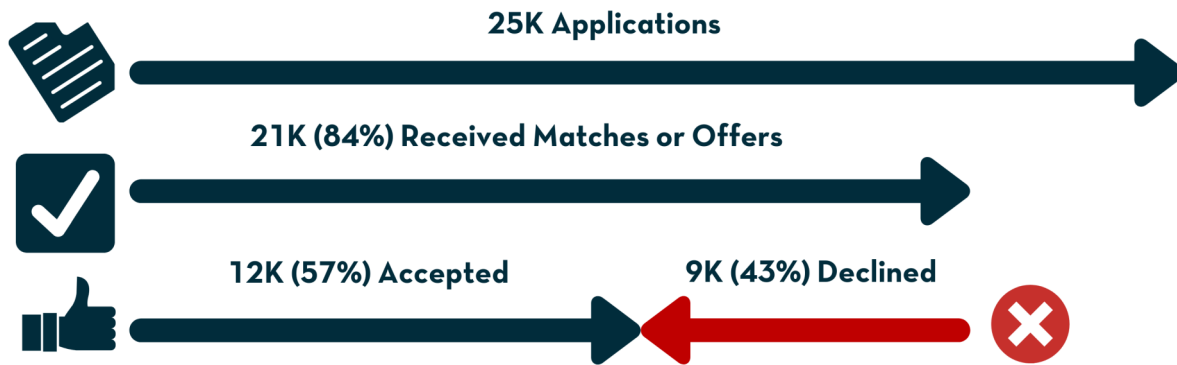
In SY2018-19, approximately 25,000 students participated in the common lottery. Of those students, roughly 16,000 received a match on Results Day for DCPS and public charter schools.

Students also receive offers to enroll in schools off of school waitlists. Schools will contact students in order of the waitlist when a seat becomes available due to previously enrolled students not returning, students initially matched not enrolling, or students leaving after the start of school. In SY2018-19, approximately 5,000 students received an offer from school waitlists.

continued



SY18-19 Lottery Overall Acceptance Rates



Enrollments from Lottery Results

Not all students who receive an opportunity to enroll from the lottery actually do so. In SY2018-19, approximately 8,800 out of the roughly 16,000 initially matched applicants enrolled in the school where they received a match.

Also, approximately 3,300 students enrolled in a DCPS or public charter school based on a waitlist offer. These students could have also received an initial match that they later declined.

A remaining 9,000 students declined an opportunity to enroll, whether that enrollment offer stemmed from an initial match or a waitlist offer.

Overall Acceptance Rates

Regardless of whether enrollments were the result of initial matches or from waitlist offers, of the approximate 25,000 applications in SY2018-19, 84% received matches or offers, 57% accepted the offers, and 43% declined the offers, meaning that they either remained at their existing school, enrolled in their in-boundary school or feeder (that does not require the common lottery), or opted not to enroll in the public school system.

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When trying to understand demand for public schools using common lottery application information, it is important to understand that aggregate application and waitlist numbers are imperfect measures and likely overstate actual demand.

For more information visit:

My School DC www.myschooldc.org

Feedback: Email Edsight.DME@dc.gov