

Public School Lottery Waitlists Explained

Part 2

Nearly 2,500 K-12 students were waitlisted at 3+ STAR schools who had access to only lower-rated schools

This Edsight provides information about unduplicated students who were waitlisted through the [My School DC](#) common lottery for SY2019-20. Our analysis looks at:

- Unique students rather than combining multiple schools' waitlist information because students may be waitlisted at more than one school.
- Unique students whose opportunity to a highly-rated school was only through the common lottery. We want all students to have access to quality schools and these students require our greatest attention.

Unique Students on Waitlists and by STAR Rating

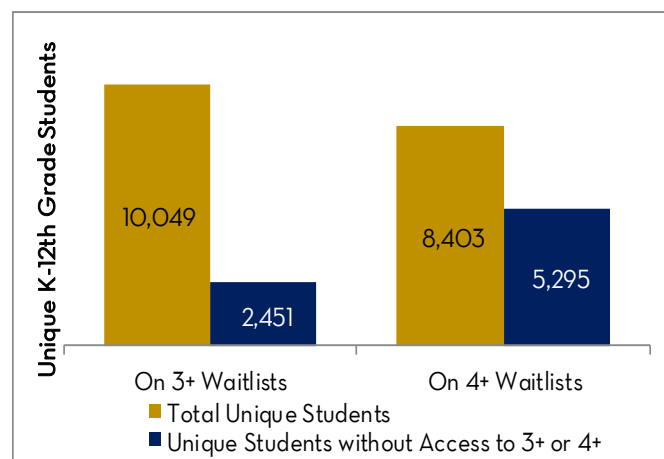
During the lottery cycle for the 2019-20 school year, school waitlists on Results Day for grades PK-12 totaled to 54,183. This number is reduced to 15,661 unique PK-12 grade students, who may have been waitlisted at one or multiple DCPS and public charter schools.

We then combined the unique student waitlists with each school's state level accountability rating from the 2018 School Transparency and Reporting (STAR) Framework. Schools receive 1 through 5

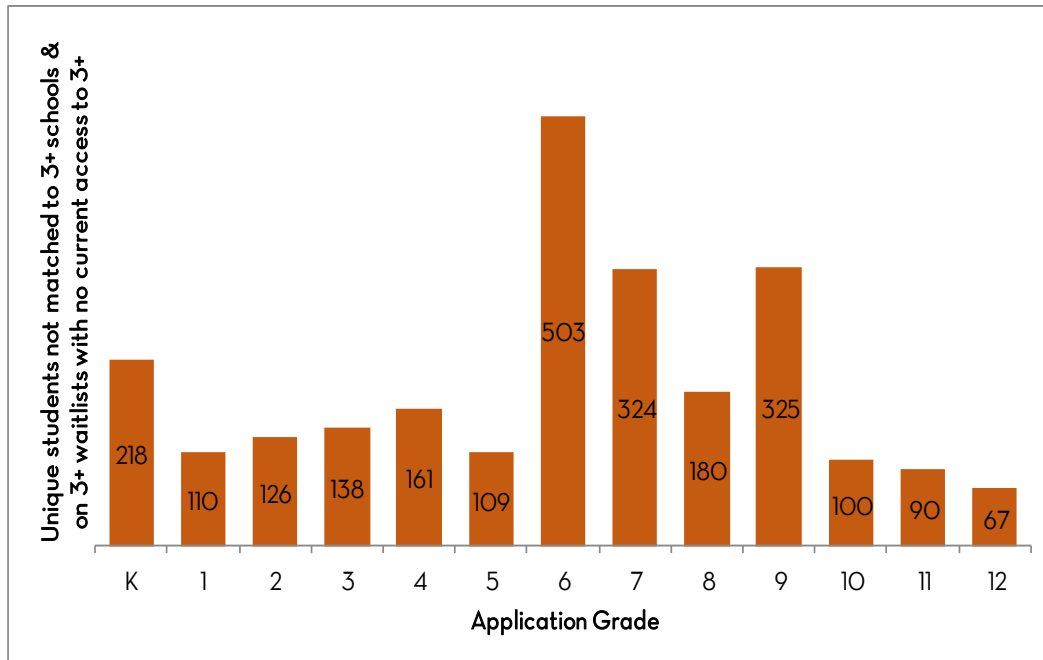
STARs depending on their overall score: 1 STAR is the lowest rating level and 5 STAR is the highest. STAR ratings were also combined with each student's current school, feeder school, and neighborhood boundary school. This allows us to differentiate between those who had access at the time of the lottery to 3, 4, or 5 STAR schools (3+ STAR) and those students who did not.

There were 10,049 unique K-12 students* not matched to a 3+ STAR school and on DCPS and public charter school waitlists rated as 3+ STAR. Of those students, 2,451 of them did not have access to a 3+ STAR school because neither their current school, their neighborhood boundary school, nor their feeder school was rated 3+. Instead,

Unique K-12 Students on 3+ and 4+ STAR Waitlists, 2019



Unique K-12 Grade Students on Waitlists without Access to 3+ Schools by Grade, 2019



they had access to only 1 or 2 STAR schools at the time of application.

If we look at unique students waitlisted at 4+ STAR DCPS and public charter schools, there were 8,403 unique K-12 students on the waitlists. The number of unique students on waitlists for 4+ STAR schools who only had access to 3 or below STAR schools was 5,295 students.

Grade Level of Students without Access

By grade level, the number of unique students on 3+ STAR DCPS and public charter school waitlists who only had access to 1 or 2 STAR schools without relying on the common lottery was greatest at 6th, 7th, and 9th grades at 503, 324, and 325 students, respectively.

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When trying to understand demand for schools using common lottery waitlist information, one should understand that adding together school waitlists will inflate the number of students. The number of K-12 students without access to a 3+ STAR school without relying on the common lottery is significantly reduced from 10,049 students to 2,451 students. Also, as we know from [Public School Lottery Waitlists Explained Part 1](#), a sizeable portion of students who receive offers to enroll from the waitlists actually declined the offer, resulting in them either remaining at their existing school, enrolling in their in-boundary or feeder school, or opting not to enroll in the public school system at all.

*Note: analysis of the unique students without access to 3+ and 4+ STAR schools excludes PK3 and PK4 waitlisted students because they do not have a guaranteed right to an early childhood seat (these are non-compulsory grades). The number of unique K-12 students on any waitlist (1 through 5 STAR) was 10,891.