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Student Assignment and DCPS School Boundaries Review Process

POLICY EXAMPLE A

Policy Example A includes elementary *choice sets* based on a geographic boundary; a focus on specialized program feeder patterns between elementary, middle, and high; and a citywide lottery for high schools with a proximity **preference**.

How would this policy affect where my children go to school?

For Early Childhood Pre-K 3/4 Students

Currently District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is not required to provide early childhood education by right in the neighborhood schools. Example A assumes that this does not change, so parents seeking to enroll PK3 or PK4 year-olds would have to apply to get into DCPS early childhood seats in the Common Lottery, even for their in-boundary neighborhood assigned school. DCPS would allocate its PK3/4 seats according to the following preferences:

- Boundary-based (geographical) choice set with sibling preference. Families would get this preference at all schools within their choice set where a sibling currently attends school.
- Boundary-based (geographical) choice set. Families would get this preference at all schools within their choice set.
- Out-of-boundary choice set with sibling preference.
- Proximity to home.

There would be no change to the way families' access charter schools for PK3 and PK4. Charter schools would continue to be citywide schools with lottery-based enrollment.

Elementary School Students

All families would have the right to enroll their children at one of the elementary schools within a designated geographical choice set. Parents would rank each of the schools in the choice set and would be guaranteed a spot in one of the schools. Preference according to sibling enrollment is granted when choosing schools within your geographical choice set. At least one school within each choice set must offer a specialized program (International Baccalaureate, Montessori, dual-language, STEM).

There would be no change to the way families' access charter elementary schools. Charter schools would continue to be citywide schools with lottery-based enrollment.



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DCPS would invite and incentivize charter schools to join a choice set, especially in an area where there are fewer DCPS schools in a particular choice set. Charter schools who opt-in to be a part of a DCPS neighborhood choice set would function as a neighborhood school and provide the same rights as the other DCPS schools in the choice set.

Students from a geographical choice set where the schools are low performing, as defined by the ESEA school index, would have a greater chance to get into schools outside of their choice set because these families would have a preference in the out-of-boundary lottery. The out-of-boundary lottery would have the following preferences:

- A Sibling is already enrolled in the school
- Low performing schools designation for your DCPS schools of right (choice set)

Schools with specialized programming (International Baccalaureate, Montessori, dual-language, and STEM) would have 10% of their total number of seats set-aside for out-of-boundary families, to ensure out-of-boundary access regardless of in-boundary demand.

Middle School Students

Families would have a right to one of two closest DCPS PK-8 or stand-alone middle schools based on the home address of the student. DCPS would place students based on their preference, but would not guarantee families a seat at any one option. Sibling preference would be given. Middle schools with specialized programming may have designated feeder elementary schools that offer the same specialized program. Students who attend an elementary school with a specialized program that has a designated middle school would have a right to attend that school. This could result in families having a right to more than one middle school.

DCPS middle schools with specialized programming would set aside 15% percent of its total enrollment for out-of-boundary students. Students with low-performing schools (as defined by the ESEA school index) in their choice set would have a greater chance to get into schools outside of their two options because these families would have a preference in the out-of-boundary lottery. The out-of-boundary lottery would have the following preferences:

- A Sibling is already enrolled in the school
- Low performing school designation for your DCPS school of right

There would be no change to the way families' access charter middle schools. Charter schools would continue to be citywide schools with lottery-based enrollment.



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High School Students

All rising 9th graders would be required to enter a lottery for high school. The lottery would have the following preferences:

- A Sibling is already enrolled in the school
- Proximity - In an effort to not have families over-burdened by travel logistics a proximity preference would be given

However, a DCPS high school with a specialized program (International Baccalaureate, dual-language, STEM) could also be designated a destination school for a middle school with the same program, in an effort to provide continuity of programming for students. High school would only have programmatic feeder schools and students would only have a right to attend a particular high school if they attend a designated feeder middle school.

There would be no change to the way families' access charter high schools. Charter schools would continue to be citywide schools with lottery-based enrollment.

What changes are needed to best support this system?

This policy example holds at its core the belief that increasing quality is accelerated by building strong connections between schools and neighborhoods. Recommendations are:

- Ensure rich programmatic offerings as part of the basic grade level program and instruction at every school.
- Create an OOB set aside for children from low quality neighborhood schools, in an effort to increase equitable access to high quality schools.
- Create and support more specialized (International Baccalaureate, Montessori, dual-language, STEM) and selective schools and programs at middle and high schools located throughout the city, with a focus on neighborhoods with limited programming.
- Create and support high school academies and/or magnet programs within each comprehensive high school throughout the city.
- Promote one city at the high school level to allow students to connect with schools they are interested in programmatically, and find the school that is right for them.