

2016-17 DPS SchoolChoice Process Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How does the Denver Public Schools (DPS) SchoolChoice Enrollment Process work?

A: SchoolChoice enrollment will follow five steps for any student who wants or needs to attend a new school in 2016-17, particularly “transitioning” students.

1. Research DPS schools by reviewing the SchoolChoice Enrollment Guide; utilizing online resources, such as <http://schoolmatch.dpsk12.org>; and visiting schools of interest.
2. Prioritize your student’s top five preferences and list them in order on the SchoolChoice form.
3. Complete any extra enrollment steps and submit them to your schools of interest if they are required. Submit your SchoolChoice form by 4 p.m. on Jan. 29, 2016.
4. SchoolChoice will combine your student’s top five preferences with each school’s admissions priorities and available space. For schools with more interested students than available space, students will be randomly assigned a lottery number that will determine the order in which they are enrolled with a school.
5. Students will be awarded a seat at their highest-preference school with an available seat no later than March 18, 2016.

Q: What is SchoolMatch?

A: SchoolMatch is a school-search website found at <http://schoolmatch.dpsk12.org>. Here, you can enter the features that are important to you, and get a list of matching schools that are ranked by how closely they meet your desired criteria. For example, you can search for a school that serves sixth grade, has achieved “Meets Expectations” on the School Performance Framework, offers world languages and has after-school programming. SchoolMatch will then show a list of schools with a “match strength” of up to 100%.

Q: What is a transitioning student?

A: A transitioning student is one who has completed the highest grade available at his/her current school or program. For example, a current 5th-grader who is attending an ECE-5 school is considered to be “transitioning” into middle school.

Q: What happens if my transitioning student who lives in a shared boundary doesn’t submit a SchoolChoice form?

A: Transitioning students in an enrollment zone or shared boundary who do not submit a SchoolChoice form will be assigned to a school based on space availability.

Q: Can students in “non-transition” grades (e.g. 2nd) still participate in the SchoolChoice process?

A: Yes. Students who are interested in choosing a different school other than the school where they are currently enrolled should submit a SchoolChoice form.

Q: What are the important dates that I need to remember?

A: **Jan. 5, 2016** – Round One of SchoolChoice opens
Jan. 29, 2016 – SchoolChoice forms are due
No later than March 18, 2016 – Notification letters delivered to families

Q: When will the SchoolChoice form be available?

A: The SchoolChoice form will be available on Jan. 5, 2016. SchoolChoice forms will be available at <http://schoolchoice.dpsk12.org>, in each DPS school and via the DPS Parent Portal <http://myportal.dpsk12.org/>.

Q: Where do we submit our SchoolChoice form?

A: We strongly recommend that families submit their SchoolChoice form online. Forms can also be submitted to the office staff at either their current school or the school they would most like to attend. All district schools will accept forms through Jan.29, 2015 at 4 p.m. SchoolChoice forms may also be submitted to the Central Enrollment Center at 3131 Eliot St. or to the Far Northeast Enrollment Center on the Evie Dennis Campus, located at 4800 Telluride St.

Q: Which schools are included in the SchoolChoice enrollment process?

A: Nearly all district schools participate in the SchoolChoice process, including neighborhood boundary schools, magnet schools, innovation schools and charter schools. Intensive Pathways (sometimes referred to as “alternative”) schools typically do not participate. Please contact those schools directly for enrollment information.

Q: Are there any extra enrollment steps for certain schools?

A: A few schools have extra enrollment steps for qualification beyond simply completing the SchoolChoice form. For example, Denver School of the Arts requires auditions as part of a student's application. These schools are identified in the SchoolChoice Enrollment Guide, at <http://schoolmatch.dpsk12.org> and on the SchoolChoice form.

Q: Will all schools have the same timeline?

A: Yes. All schools have the same deadline for submitting SchoolChoice forms on Jan. 29, 2016. Families that submit their SchoolChoice application online will receive notification of their school assignment via email, earlier than families that submit their application using the paper form. Some magnet programs have extra enrollment steps and follow separate timelines for completing these steps (usually in the fall leading up to the January enrollment deadline). If you are considering a magnet school or program, please contact the school for details about extra enrollment steps.

Q: How does the lottery work, and how will my child be enrolled with a school?

A: Students will be considered for enrollment at each school based on the preferences they list on the SchoolChoice form and the admissions priorities (i.e. siblings, Denver residents, etc.) established by each school. Admissions priorities for each school may be found at <http://schoolchoice.dpsk12.org>. Within each priority group, a random number will be assigned to each student to break any "ties" within the priority group. The SchoolChoice system will consider student preferences, schools' priorities and available seats to determine the order in which students are enrolled.

Q: If my student only lists one school on the SchoolChoice form, will we have a higher chance of getting into that school?

A: No. The number of schools listed on a SchoolChoice form will not affect the likelihood of being assigned to any particular school. DPS strongly recommends that each student lists his/her top five preferred schools.

Q: What if my student doesn't get assigned to his/her first-choice school?

A: If your student is not assigned to his/her first-preference school, he/she will be placed on the waitlist at that school. When/if the school has space available, you will be called and offered enrollment.

Q: Will my student have to re-apply every year?

A: No. Starting in kindergarten, once a student is enrolled in a school via the SchoolChoice process, he/she will be expected to return to that school until he/she completes the highest grade available. The exception to this rule is Advanced Kindergarten, which is a one-year program and does not continue at the same school into first grade. Advanced Kindergarten students will be expected to attend their boundary elementary school for first grade, or must follow the SchoolChoice process to request a different school.

Q: Is my child still guaranteed a spot at our boundary school?

A: Yes. The SchoolChoice process does not change district policies including a guaranteed spot for grades kindergarten through 12th grade at your boundary school. Once a student has "choiced out" of the boundary school, then a seat at the school is no longer guaranteed. The "choice school" then acts as the "home school" and is where the student has a guaranteed spot. If, at a later date, the student wants to return to his/her boundary school, the student will need to complete a SchoolChoice form to be considered for admission.

Q: After enrolling in a school other than my boundary school through SchoolChoice, am I still guaranteed a seat at my boundary school?

A: No. To return to your boundary school, you may submit a Round Two SchoolChoice form. If your boundary school is not full in your child's grade after the Round One SchoolChoice assignments, he/she will be enrolled right away. However, if your boundary school is full after Round One, your child will be placed on the waitlist.

Q: When will I need to choose between different school offers?

A: In March, your student will be given only one school assignment to his/her "best match" DPS school. You will need to ensure that you have prioritized your schools appropriately in January, prior to submitting your SchoolChoice form.

Q: What if I am not pleased with my student's school assignment or if I change my mind?

A: Round Two of SchoolChoice begins March 16, 2016 and runs through Aug. 31, 2016. A Round Two SchoolChoice form must be turned in at the requested school. If a student wants to be considered at multiple schools during Round Two, a separate form must be turned in at each school. Students will be assigned to their desired school on a first-come, first-served basis, contingent upon space availability. A Round Two school assignment will replace the Round One school assignment. However, a Round Two assignment will not remove a student from any waitlist placements from Round One.

Q: Will my child get transportation to his/her assigned school?

A: Transportation is not guaranteed. Please visit the DPS Transportation website at <http://transportation.dpsk12.org> for details.

Q: Who should I contact if I have further questions?

A: The Office of Choice and Enrollment Services can be reached at 720-423-3493 or schoolchoice@dpsk12.org