

COMMON LOTTERY BOARD MEETING
MAY 6, 2019
1050 First Street NE
3rd Floor Conference Room
1:30PM – 3:00PM

MINUTES

I. Call to Order at 1:35PM

Board Member (Designee)	Organization	Voting Status	Roll Call	Jan Min	Data Request
Paul Kihn	DME	Voting Member	x	Y	Y
Susan Schaeffler	KIPP DC	Voting Member	x	Y	Y
Claudia Lujan	DCPS	Voting Member	x	Y	Y
Colin Taylor	DCPS	Voting Member	x	Y	Y
Hilary Darilek	E.L. Haynes	Voting Member	x	Y	Y
Juliana Herman (via phone)	DCPS	Voting Member	x	Y	Y
Daniela Anello (Alina Thouyaret)	DC Bilingual	Voting Member	x	Y	Y
Lenora Robinson Mills	DC PCSB	Non-Voting Member	x	N/A	N/A
Hanseul Kang	OSSE	Non-Voting Member	x	N/A	N/A
Catherine Peretti	MSDC	Non-Voting Member	x	N/A	N/A

Tori Hawkins-Plummer (Ward 8) and Alexandra Simbana (Ward 4) from the Parent Advisory Council also joined the meeting. The meeting began with a quorum, and Board members Schaeffler, Taylor and Lujan arrived at 1:40pm.

II. January Minutes

January 26, 2019 minutes were approved unanimously.

III. Year 6 Lottery Results for 2019-20

Board member Peretti gave an overview of the six-year trends and 2019 lottery results reviewing the data slides posted publicly on www.myschooldc.org. 2019 boasted the largest total of school participants to date. The pool also showed the largest Ward 8 applicant number to date, hopefully due to enhanced outreach in that Ward. Grassroots efforts annually are robust and citywide, with priority given to Wards 7 and 8 and Wards 1 and 4 where language minority communities largely reside. The 2019 lottery had 25,588 applicants and the overall match rate for all grades, including non-entry grades, was 65% (up from 64% last year). In PK3, the match rate was 87% and in 9th grade it was 84%. As always, there were long waitlists for some school/grades and unfilled seats in others. Board member Kihn asked if My School DC had a target for applications or match rate. My School DC does not set goals around those because students can find a best fit school at their in-boundary option, which does not always require an application. The goal is to facilitate learning about options and making our deadline if that option is accessed through the lottery. We set other application goals, such as proportional parity between applications and where public school students live. Those proportions by Ward were all within 2% of each other.

The staff shared some of the outreach strategies employed to ensure families know about the lottery and the deadlines.

Board Member Taylor thought it would be good to look for data as a potential signal for where students were looking for schools nearby or further away by comparing matches inside and outside of Ward of the applicant's residence. Ward 4 had the highest proportion of matches to schools inside their Ward. Several Board members wanted to see the match rates by Ward also broken out by sector; My School DC will follow up on that request.

There was a surplus of seats offered in the lottery in PK3 and 9th grade – common entry grades for schools. There is no typical entry grade for middle school, though the most common is 6th grade by a slim margin. The Board would also like to see these data broken out by sector; My School DC will follow up on that request.

Alina Thouyaret of DC Bilingual asked if these data indicate that a 6th grader would have more trouble finding a school. Board member Peretti explained that the data show that there is not a seat for every applicant in 6th like there is in PK3. However, having a surplus of seats doesn't mean that a PK3 applicant would go anywhere there is a seat available. There are short waitlists and long waitlists in 6th grade just as there are in PK3, but there is a spectrum of imbalance between where there is supply and where there is demand.

My School DC shares the number of unique applicants on waitlists, and further reduces that number to show students on waitlists that were not matched anywhere else. A student can be matched and can also be on multiple waitlists. These figures are better signals of unmet demand than adding up students on waitlists.

Special Education – Board member Schaeffler asked whether MSDC has any data on special needs students that apply, especially to selective schools. Board member Peretti said that the application does not collect special education status except to implement the preference for applicants to Bridges PCS. During the 2019-20 audit where we run a comparison between lottery applicants who have IEPs and enrolled students with IEPs. Board member Schaeffler Susan asked if selective high schools know an applicant’s special education status during their review process. Board member Peretti answered that they do not receive this information from My School DC; however, the schools’ selection criteria may result in fewer applicants on their rosters who have special needs because of correlations to GPA and test scores. She added that schools are permitted to review IEPs at enrollment time to best plan to serve the student. Board member Lujan confirmed that selective high schools have a policy to enroll special needs students, which then triggers an evaluation to assess whether the school can adequately serve them if the student has an IEP that requires over 20 hours of support.

Short Waitlist Page – My School DC has published the 2019-20 Short Waitlist page on MySchoolDC.org, which provides families who still seek to apply to public schools with a list of schools that have a waitlist of 10 students or less.

Location Unstable Schools – there were four schools in the lottery this year (Lee Montessori, Statesman Academy, Digital Pioneers, and AppleTree Southwest) that did not have a secured location by the February deadline set in My School DC policy. Waitlists were collected for all grades at each school but, per My School DC policy, no matches were assigned. Lee Montessori, Statesmen, and Digital Pioneers have since secured locations and made offers from their waitlists on the same day they signed a lease. AppleTree Southwest still does not have a location so cannot make offers until one is secured. The policy was effective in preventing students from matching to a school without a building and losing opportunity if that school never secures one, and My School DC recommends it should continue; no one disagrees. The policy would be enhanced by establishing a second date after which a school must decide to close or delay initial opening so the option can be removed from the application and closure specialists can assist any students in need.

IV. Year 5 Audit Results for 2018-19

Board Member Peretti explained that each year My School DC hires a third party vendor to conduct an audit of My School DC. The vendor has varied in years past, but AIR conducted the

audit this year for the third time. AIR populated the slides for the audit results and representatives were present for Board member questions. The auditor performs data comparison to identify students enrolled in a school without the proper application and waitlist offer process in the Centralized Waitlist Management System (CWMS). Schools are given the opportunity to respond, and anomalies that cannot be resolved are counted as errors. LEA leaders received letters if they had errors enrolling students outside of the My School DC process and are required to send a response back to My School DC by June 30th.

Errors in Enrollment

Schools reduced enrollments outside the process for the fourth year running, though there were still some needs for resolution and 316 erroneous enrollments. My School DC tried to identify highest need for resolution by looking at waitlist lengths with the auditor and determining that 144 of those errors were at schools that had waitlists longer than five students at two points in time. While it isn't perfect enough comparison to say with certainty that students were displaced, having a consistent waitlist does make it likely that the enrollment displaced another student. Board member Lujan explained that her team is still resolving some of these errors because they couldn't chase down the explanations before the audit was complete, and that has driven the number down even further. Board member Schaeffler asks what the common scenarios are that result in an error? Board member Lujan says it is generally school staff errors in not looking up the student's address to confirm in-boundary status, or a lack of familiarity with grandfathering rules after the 2014 boundary changes that create a false error (e.g., Eaton siblings are out-of-boundary but still have a right to attend Deal in 18-19 due to grandfathering). Board member Peretti notes that DCPS front office staff have more complexity in the rules to abide by than charters do because if you are a new student at a charter, you need an application. At DCPS, there are rules and data sets that come into play when determining who needs an application.

Board member Schaeffler asked if these unresolved errors are indicators of schools intentionally enrolling students outside the process. Board member Lujan replied not really revealing the issue of gaming, residency fraud or even boundary cheating because families that tend to do that will have documents for the false address. What these errors are showing is that there is a complicated web of avenues into a DCPS school like boundaries, siblings, feeder rights, housing instability and student placements. Board member Darilek says this seems like a small number, less than 1% of the applicant pool. Should we be worried and is there a floor that we should expect to stay above as applications grow? Board member Peretti says that we want to continue to get the number of errors lower, even as applications rise, and we have some new strategies moving forward. Board member Kang says the process can help us spot the training needs.

Grade Mismatches

There were more students that applied to a different grade from where they enrolled in 18-19. Board member Kihn suggested he would expect that number to have gone up due to tighter credit

recovery measures. Board member Peretti agrees and suggested that there were also students coming out of schools that would later close, and they did not accumulate enough credits to be promoted. Board member Robinson Mills would like to see these data broken out by sector, both where the students were applying from and where they eventually enrolled in a lower grade.

Students Making the Deadline

61% of our at-risk applicants submitted their application before the deadline – a 4% improvement over last year when we started tracking it, which is great. Alina Thouyaret of DC Bilingual has noticed the improvement at their school and surmises it is probably a larger improvement since the inception of My School DC. Board member Kang asked if we do outreach with DHS. Yes, My School DC has partnerships with the DHS service centers and shelters. There will always be a gap between those who make the deadline, despite our work with agencies and direct service because there is more involuntary moving in the at-risk community. It would be great to offer more personalized help if My School DC can do that and still maintain neutrality and refrain from recommending individual schools.

Offer Rate

84% of students that applied using My School DC for the 18-19 school year either received a match in the initial results, or eventually received a waitlist offer by October 5th. Not all students accept that match or offer. Instead they stay in their current school or feeder pattern, go to their in-boundary school in Kindergarten through 12th grade, or leave the DC system.

The Board discussed how many offers resulting in enrollments an applicant can have in the same lottery cycle. It is theoretically unlimited and we have never looked at those data because the median number of school selections is only four. Board member Darilek suggests My School DC take a look to see how many times a family is taking their enrollment paperwork to one school, only to receive an offer from a new school a few weeks later. Board member Schaeffler concurs, noting that the data show a good chunk of students are enrolling from a waitlist offer. Board member Lujan says the data show that another good chunk of people plays the lottery but end up at in-boundary or current schools even when they get a match or offer, and this is why DCPS is hesitant to use lottery applications as sole demand signals. It makes the data harder to use for planning. Board member Peretti says that the decision where to enroll has a lot of layers like whether siblings can be together, commute, programming, and before and after school care. The lottery data should be used but not as the sole driving factor in planning decisions – it has to be used alongside actual enrollment, population and facilities data.

V. Research Request

The DC PCSB made their annual request for several cuts of charter school demand data. Board member Darilek said the key question in her review of the request was how PCSB will use these lottery data and making sure it would not be a proxy for school quality. Board member

Schaeffler said it shouldn't be used to close schools or prevent schools from opening because My School DC is a tool for parents and for enrollment purposes. Board member Robinson Mills confirmed that to date, the product of this request has not been used for those purposes. Approved unanimously.

VI. Policy Development for 2020 Lottery

Deadlines – My School DC remains an opt-in program, and when we make policy changes we ask all LEAs to acknowledge and sign on each year. The deadlines of February 1 and March 1 fall on weekends next year. My School DC will discuss the options for moving or keeping the deadlines with the Parent Advisory Council.

Closing Schools – My School DC felt the impact of closures acutely this year and was especially concerned for families that did not have much time to apply out of a closing school. For discussion, the staff proposes that students from a closing high school have at least 30 days to apply out if that extension falls before March 1st. Board member Lujan says this is a big proposal with many implications for the selective high schools and would like to discuss it further. Instead, can PCSB move their closing decisions earlier in the year? Board member Robinson Mills expected the question and explained that the closure decisions can only be initiated in November at the earliest due to when PARCC scores and adjusted cohort graduation rates become available. Then, a school is afforded due process which can take the final decision into December or beyond after the My School DC application process begins. My School DC, DCPS and the Parent Advisory Council will discuss any next steps and whether an extension is still worthwhile even if it excludes the selective high schools.

VII. Program Updates

Enrollment Saturday – it took place last weekend and was a hit for its second year. Over 150 schools stayed open on Saturday to enroll new families and re-enroll current families (up from 117 last year), giving families a bit more convenience to deliver the needed documentation to register. My School DC incentivizes and promotes the event, but it is not mandatory. DCPS paid overtime for school staff who worked on Saturday.

Board transitions - DC PCSB will administer the election of one charter member of the Common Lottery Board in June, as Susan Schaeffler's second term comes to an end. Board members Darilek and Anello have another year, and the Chancellor appoints DCPS representatives.

Adjourned at 3:02pm.