



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

<p>Charter Actions Requiring a Vote</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Approve a Charter Application (15 yrs)<input type="checkbox"/> Approve a Charter Renewal (15 yrs)<input type="checkbox"/> Approve Charter Continuance (5 or 10 yrs)<input type="checkbox"/> Approve a Charter Amendment Request<input type="checkbox"/> Give a Charter Notice of Concern<input type="checkbox"/> Lift the Charter Notice of Concern<input type="checkbox"/> Commence Charter Revocation Proceedings<input type="checkbox"/> Revoke a Charter<input type="checkbox"/> Board Action, Other _____ <p>Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open a New Policy or Changes to a Policy for Public Comment<input type="checkbox"/> Approve a New Policy<input type="checkbox"/> Approve an Amendment to an Existing Policy	<p>Non-Voting Board Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing Item<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item<input type="checkbox"/> Read into Record
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PREPARED BY: Katherine Dammann – Specialist, Equity and Fidelity Team

SUBJECT: Open Enrollment Policy

DATE: January 25, 2016

Proposal

DC Public Charter School Board (“DC PCSB”) staff recommends that the Board vote to open for public comment from January 25 – February 24, 2016 revisions to the Mystery Caller Policy, now called the Open Enrollment Policy (Attachment A). DC PCSB will hold a public hearing on this matter on February 22, 2016 and will vote on the proposed revisions to the policy on March 21, 2016.

Written comments may be submitted until February 24, 2016 by mail or email to:

DC Public Charter School Board
3333 14th Street NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20010
Public.comment@dcpcsb.org



According to the revised policy, DC PCSB staff may conduct monitoring activities beyond the Mystery Caller initiative, including:

- Review of a school’s student application documents and application intake process
- Review of a school’s lottery procedures and/or observance of the public lottery
- Review of a school’s waitlist procedures including communication with families
- Review of a school’s required enrollment documents (items families must provide upon acceptance to complete the enrollment process)

As stated in the School Reform Act (SRA), §38-1802.06(a) Enrollment in a public charter school shall be open to all students who are residents of the District of Columbia...and (b) A public charter school may not limit enrollment on the basis of a student’s race, color, religion, national origin, language spoken, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or status as a student with special needs. In addition, according to D.C. Code § 2-1402.41(1), a public charter school may not limit enrollment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identification. The now named *Open Enrollment Policy* employs several strategies to ensure schools are in compliance with these laws.

Background

In June 2013, the DC PCSB Board passed the *Mystery Caller Policy* as a tool to monitor open enrollment. Under this policy, DC PCSB staff conducts a sector-wide phone screening each year posing as family members of students trying to enroll their children in school. Staff members ask specific questions about enrolling students with disabilities and English language learners to ensure that students are not being discouraged from enrolling. The proposed revisions to this policy would expand DC PCSB’s oversight of open enrollment beyond the *Mystery Caller Policy*.

The *Open Enrollment Policy* outlines DC PCSB’s expectations for open enrollment for all schools. Schools have the option to participate in the District of Columbia’s common lottery called “My School DC.” For those schools that participate in the My School DC common lottery, DC PCSB staff will coordinate with My School DC staff to oversee monitoring to ensure that schools are not creating barriers, illegal preferences, or otherwise limiting open enrollment. For schools that choose to conduct an open application process independent of My School DC, DC PCSB staff will monitor the school’s process. If DC PCSB finds that any school is in violation of the SRA’s open enrollment requirements, DC PCSB staff may recommend Board action.

Attachment to this Notification

Attachment A: draft Open Enrollment Policy

Date:	11/27/2016
PCSB Action:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Approved with Changes <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected
Changes to the Original Proposal:	<i>[Signature]</i>



ATTACHMENT A

POLICY TITLE: Mystery Caller Policy	Open Enrollment Policy
ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE: June 24, 2013	MOST RECENTLY UPDATED: March 21, 2016

PURPOSE

As stated in the School Reform Act, §38-1802.06(a) Enrollment in a public charter school shall be open to all students who are residents of the District of Columbia...and (b) A public charter school may not limit enrollment on the basis of a student's race, color, religion, national origin, language spoken, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or status as a student with special needs. In addition, according to D.C. Code § 2-1402.41(1), a public charter school may not limit enrollment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identification. The now named *Open Enrollment Policy* employs several strategies to ensure schools are in compliance with these laws.

POLICY

The DC Public Charter School Board ("DC PCSB") staff monitors open enrollment using the tools outlined in the table below. These tools were identified as ways to allow DC PCSB to ensure that schools do not:

- Request information about an applicant's race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identification, language spoken, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or status as a student with special needs¹, prior to enrollment;
- Create exclusionary application submission processes, such as mandatory in-person meetings;
- Admit students off of a waiting list other than in the order designated by the school's lottery policy;
- Request information during the enrollment process that may discourage students or families from enrolling at the school (i.e. requiring a single form of identification); or
- Practice other forms of discrimination.

¹ Pursuant to the Special Education Quality Improvement Act of 2014, with prior approval from DC PCSB, LEAs may request information about students with disabilities to provide an admission preference.

Any school found to be in any way discouraging students from applying, limiting enrollment, or implementing a preference outside of the preferences provided in the SRA shall be issued a notice of concern if the actions are deemed systemic.

Mystery Caller

~~In the Mystery Caller process, schools are called by DC PCSB staff or consultants posing as parents, seeking to enroll their child in the school for the following year. The caller asks several questions pertaining to the enrollment process, including questions about enrolling student with disabilities. If the school answers all questions appropriately, indicating open enrollment for all students, the school has *passed*. When schools give an inappropriate answer, indicating a barrier to open enrollment, a second call is made on another date to see if the first answer was an isolated incident or if a systemic problem could exist. If on the second call another inappropriate answer is given, the school has *failed*.~~

~~In 2012 PCSB implemented the Mystery Caller program. For 2012 and 2013, any school that failed was contacted by PCSB leadership to discuss what the school would do moving forward to ensure consistent open enrollment messaging to parents. Beginning in 2014, a~~
Any school that fails the Mystery Caller process is issued Board Action Charter Warning

Open-Enrollment Component	Monitoring Tools for Schools Participating in My School DC²	Monitoring Tools for Schools Not Participating in My School DC
<p><u>Mystery Caller Initiative</u></p> <p><u>This initiative was developed to monitor open enrollment, and specifically whether schools were intentionally advising students with disabilities or other needs not to apply to a school.</u></p>	<p><u>DC PCSB staff or consultants will call a school posing as a parent of a student who may require special education services or may need English language learning instruction, seeking to enroll their child in the school for the following year. The caller will ask several questions about the enrollment process. If the school answers all questions appropriately, indicating open enrollment for all students, DC PCSB will assess the school as <i>passed</i>. When schools give an inappropriate answer, indicating a barrier to open enrollment, a second call is made on another date to see if the first answer was an isolated</u></p>	

² My School DC is a single, random lottery that determines placement for new students at all participating schools.



Open-Enrollment Component	Monitoring Tools for Schools Participating in My School DC²	Monitoring Tools for Schools Not Participating in My School DC
	incident or if a systemic problem could exist. If on the second call another inappropriate answer is given, DC PCSB will assess the school as <i>failed</i> .	
<p><u>Application Intake</u></p> <p>This initiative was developed to ensure that applications do not ask for information that would prevent a student from applying and that, once submitted, they were maintained in such a way to guarantee a fair and transparent lottery wherein no student's record could get lost and no applicant could apply multiple times.</p>	<p>N/A: My School DC oversees the accurate and complete submission and retention of all applications on behalf of schools participating in the common lottery system.</p>	<p>DC PCSB staff will review application intake materials prior to the enrollment cycle to verify that no information is required that may limit open enrollment.</p> <p>If necessary, DC PCSB staff may also request to observe how the school manages student applications on site. Should DC PCSB staff find that the school has intentionally mismanaged student applications, this may be considered a systemic practice.</p>
<p><u>Lottery</u></p> <p>This initiative was developed to ensure that the lottery, if needed, is random, that only stated preferences are applied, and that they are applied according to the school's lottery procedure.</p>	<p>N/A: My School DC oversees the random selection process on behalf of schools participating in the common lottery system.</p>	<p>DC PCSB staff will collect each school's lottery procedures. Staff may attend a school's lottery to ensure the mechanism for the lottery will result in random selection and confirm that the school is implementing preferences in accordance with the School Reform Act and their stated policy.</p>

Open-Enrollment Component	Monitoring Tools for Schools Participating in My School DC²	Monitoring Tools for Schools Not Participating in My School DC
<p><u>Waitlist Management</u></p> <p>This initiative was developed to ensure that schools are filling open seats from the waitlist in accordance with internal school procedures and open enrollment expectations.</p>	<p>Though My School DC manages a centralized waitlist management system, schools are responsible for contacting parents regarding open seats. Therefore, DC PCSB staff may request to see evidence of the school's communications (attempted and/or successful) with families about their spot on the waitlist.</p>	<p>DC PCSB staff may collect each school's procedures for communicating with waitlisted students. Staff may also request to see evidence of the school's communications (attempted and/or successful) with families about their spot on the waitlist.</p>
<p><u>Enrollment Process</u></p> <p>This initiative was developed to ensure schools are not requesting information that may discourage a student from enrolling.³</p>	<p>DC PCSB staff will collect a list of materials from each school detailing what documents families must provide to complete the enrollment process. Schools asking for documentation (i.e. a single form of identification) that could discourage a student from enrolling may be required to revise enrollment materials. Failure to do so would result in a finding of systemic practice.</p>	

³ <http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2014/05/08/plylerletter.pdf>



Board Approval Acknowledged By:

Darren Woodruff
DC PCSB Board Chair

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