

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<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"/> Approve a Charter Agreement<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 Revisions 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 – Senior Manager, School Performance Department
Rashida Young – Chief School Performance Officer

SUBJECT: Open for Public Comment - At-Risk Preference Approval and Monitoring Policy

DATE: March 15, 2021

Proposal

The DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) staff recommends its Board open for public comment the At-Risk¹ Preference Approval and Monitoring Policy (Attachment A). Public comment will remain open until April 19, 2021, with a public hearing also on that date. The Board is scheduled to vote on the proposal at its meeting on May 17, 2021.

Summary of Purpose and Proposal

The purpose of this policy is to implement the Expanding Equitable Access to Schools Amendment Act of 2020, granting at-risk students and their families greater access to the schools that they want to attend, and ensuring that those schools are prepared to serve higher numbers of at-risk students.

To this end, the At-Risk Approval and Monitoring Policy outlines how DC PCSB will approve public charter schools to offer, renew, or discontinue an admissions preference for students who are at-risk (at-risk preference). To offer an at-risk

¹At-risk, for the purposes of this policy, means that a student is homeless, under the care of the District’s foster care system, qualifies for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or that the high school student is overage. See DC Code § 38-2901(2A).

preference for the first time, schools will submit a plan to adjust programming to meet the needs of more at-risk students. This plan will respond to prompts developed by DC PCSB and will be evaluated according to criteria developed by DC PCSB. The prompts will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The school's rationale for wanting to implement an at-risk preference.
- How the school plans to adjust its current program to ensure the academic and social-emotional success of at-risk students (including how it will identify and address areas where it has historically struggled to support at-risk students).
- How the school will adapt outreach and recruitment strategies to attract at-risk families.
- How the school has engaged its community (e.g., current families and staff) about the decision to offer an at-risk preference.
- For multi-campus Local Education Agencies (LEAs), whether the at-risk preference will apply to all campuses and why.

All schools, regardless of past performance, will be eligible for consideration to offer an at-risk preference. To renew an at-risk preference, LEAs must meet certain baseline criteria for performance in several areas, including but not limited to, academic outcomes, exclusionary discipline, and attendance. Requests to discontinue an at-risk preference after two years of implementation will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

On June 1 of each year, DC PCSB will release an application and corresponding rubric for schools to apply for approval to offer an at-risk preference. In 2026, DC PCSB will also release standards for renewal of an at-risk preference. On July 15 of each year, schools will either submit an application to offer an at-risk preference or notify DC PCSB whether they want to continue offering the preference. Schools will then be notified by August 15 whether they have been approved or denied to offer, or continue to offer, the preference.

DC PCSB staff will read into the record at a public Board meeting the list of schools approved or denied to offer, renew, or discontinue an at-risk preference for the upcoming school year. This memo to the Board will explain the rationale for approving or denying each school's request.

Background

Beginning in School Year (SY) 2022-23, DC public charter schools may offer an admission preference to students who are at-risk, with prior approval from DC PCSB.² An at-risk preference shall remain in effect for five years and may be renewed an unlimited number of times, each time for an additional five-year period.

Attachments

Attachment A: At-Risk Preference Approval and Monitoring Policy

² DC Code § 38-1802.06(c-3).