

2024 DCPS boundary study implementation – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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About the study

1. What is the 2023 Boundary and Student Assignment Study?

Under the Attendance Zone Boundaries Amendment Act of 2022, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) conducted a comprehensive study of DCPS boundaries and feeder patterns and student assignment policies from March 2023 to March 2024. This review focused on solving current and anticipated future challenges relating to clear rights, adequate capacity, and equitable access to public schools for the next 10 years.

DME oversaw the development of recommendations with input from an advisory committee chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Education, Paul Kihn. The advisory committee included a diverse group of education stakeholders from across all eight wards. They worked to identify the study's guiding principles, discuss challenges, propose solutions, and develop system-level and school-specific recommendations informed by data and community feedback. Review the recommendations and related resources at dme.dc.gov/boundaries2023.

Mayor Bowser approved the final recommendations in June 2024. (Read the Mayor's approval letter at dme.dc.gov/node/1728211.) Boundary and feeder pattern changes will be implemented starting in School Year 2025-2026. Families impacted by boundary changes were notified before the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

2. What is the difference between a boundary and a feeder pattern?

A student's **in-boundary school** is a school the student has a right to attend based on their home address. Every home address has an assigned elementary, middle, and high school. To identify a student's in-boundary school, go to enrolldcps.dc.gov/node/41.

Many DCPS schools are part of a **feeder pattern**, meaning that students who complete the terminal grade (the last grade at that campus) in a school have the right to enroll in the entry grade of the next school in the feeder pattern. An elementary school will feed into a middle school. A middle school will feed into a high school.

Please note: **Feeder pattern rights do not extend to students who enroll as in-boundary students and then move out of the boundary or to students who have withdrawn from an out-of-boundary feeder pattern at any point.** Please see the [DCPS Enrollment and Lottery Handbook](#) at enrolldcps.dc.gov for more information.)

Review the feeder pattern of an individual school on the school's DCPS School Profile, profiles.dcps.dc.gov/. To view all feeder patterns, see the [DCPS Enrollment and Lottery Handbook](#) at enrolldcps.dc.gov.

Boundary and feeder changes for School Year 2025-2026

3. What boundary or feeder pattern changes were made as a result of DME's boundary and student assignment study?

Two **boundary changes** were made as a result of DME's 2023 boundary and student assignment study and will go into effect in School Year 2025-2026:

1. Part of the Turner Elementary School (ES) boundary was reassigned to Malcolm X ES. [A letter sent to impacted families](#) in July 2024 is posted to the DC School Planning blog at dcpsplanning.wordpress.com.
2. Part of the Van Ness ES boundary was reassigned to Amidon-Bowen ES. [A letter sent to impacted families](#) in July 2024 is posted to the DC School Planning blog at dcpsplanning.wordpress.com.

Two **feeder pattern** changes were made as a result of DME's 2023 boundary and student assignment study and will go into effect in School Year 2025-2026:

1. Ross ES will feed to only Francis EC (formally School Without Walls @ Francis Stevens) starting in 6th grade. Ross previously had dual rights to both Francis EC and Cardozo EC. [A letter sent to impacted families](#) in July 2024 is posted to the DCPS School Planning blog at dcpsplanning.wordpress.com.
2. Thomson ES will feed to only Francis EC starting in 6th grade. Thomson previously had multiple rights to Francis EC, Cardozo EC, and Jefferson MS. [A letter sent to impacted families](#) in July 2024 is posted to the DCPS School Planning blog at dcpsplanning.wordpress.com.

Outside of DME's 2023 boundary and student assignment study, DCPS is making changes to the Cardozo feeder pattern. [A series of letters](#) sent to impacted communities in June 2024 is posted to the DCPS School Planning blog at dcpsplanning.wordpress.com. Over the next several years, DCPS will implement several changes:

- **Cardozo will phase out middle grades and return to a traditional high school.** In School Year (SY) 2025-2026, Cardozo will not enroll an incoming 6th grade class. By SY 2027-2028, Cardozo will serve only grades 9-12.
- **DCPS will open a new middle school.** In March 2022, Mayor Bowser announced funding for DCPS to open a new middle school at 800 Euclid St NW (the former Banneker High School building) in August 2028. [A letter outlining Capital Improvement Plan funding](#) for the new school was sent to impacted schools in April 2024 and is posted on the DCPS School Planning blog at dcpsplanning.wordpress.com.
- **John Francis Education Campus (formally School Without Walls @ Francis Stevens) will temporarily expand its feeder pattern.** Students who graduate from Cleveland, Garrison, and Seaton Elementary Schools currently have geographic feeder rights to enroll at Cardozo for middle school.
 - Beginning in School Year 2025-2026, students at these three elementary schools will have feeder rights to enroll at John Francis Education Campus for 6th grade. This will continue until the enrollment for the new middle school opens in School Year 2028-2029. At that time, students graduating from Cleveland, Garrison, and Seaton **will have feeder rights only to the new middle school.**

4. My boundary changed. How will this impact my child?

Confirm your in-boundary school for School Year 2025-2026 at enrolldcps.dc.gov/node/41. If your home address is in a boundary change area, the in-boundary school your child has a right to attend has changed. Review one of the letters below for details and phase-in policies. All letters are posted on the DCPS School Planning blog at dcpsplanning.wordpress.com

- Letter to families reassigned from [Turner ES to Malcolm X ES](#)
- Letter to families reassigned from [Van Ness ES to Amidon-Bowen ES](#)
- Letters to [communities within the Cardozo feeder pattern](#) impacted by changes

5. My feeder pattern changed. How will this impact my child?

Confirm your feeder pattern for School Year 2025-2026 at enrolldcps.dc.gov/node/46. If your feeder pattern has changed, then the next school your child has a right to attend may have changed. Review one of the letters below, posted on the DCPS School Planning blog at dcpsplanning.wordpress.com, for details and phase-in policies.

- Letter to families at [Ross ES, which will feed to only Francis EC starting in 6th grade](#). Ross previously had dual rights to both Francis EC and Cardozo EC.
- Letter to families at [Thomson ES, which will feed to only Francis EC starting in 6th grade](#). Thomson previously had multiple rights to Francis EC, Cardozo EC, and Jefferson MS.
- Letters to [communities within the Cardozo feeder pattern](#) impacted by changes.

6. In addition to new boundaries and feeder patterns, other student assignment policies were approved by the Mayor. When will those policies go into effect?

Visit dme.dc.gov/boundaries2023 to review the final recommendations of DME's boundary and student assignment study and the Mayor's approval of the recommendations. DCPS will make an implementation plan available at dcps.dc.gov/page/2023-boundary-and-student-assignment-study.

Phase-in policies for School Year 2025-2026

7. What phase-in policies will DCPS offer to families impacted by a boundary change?

Phase-in policies are outlined in the letters sent to impacted families, available on the DCPS School Planning blog at dcpsplanning.wordpress.com. Overall, DCPS is offering the following phase-in policies to families impacted by a boundary change recommended in DME's 2023 Boundary and Student Assignment Study and going into effect starting in School Year 2025-2026:

Please note: The last school boundary to change was Jackson-Reed when MacArthur HS opened in 2023. Question 10 addresses how updated phase-in policies apply to families impacted by the creation of the MacArthur boundary and feeder pattern.

- No student currently enrolled in School Year (SY) 2024-2025 will be required to change schools in SY 2025-2026 because of a boundary change.
- Students newly enrolling in School Year 2025-2026 will have an in-boundary right to only their new in-boundary school. Sibling phase-in policies will be offered, but the time period differs based on the grades served by the former in-boundary school.
See chart A below.

- Education campus (PK-8): **If the former in-boundary school is an education campus, DCPS will offer sibling phase-in policies for ten years.** If your child is enrolling in school for the first time in SY 2034-2035 or before, while their sibling is at the former in-boundary school, your child will maintain the in-boundary right to enroll at the former in-boundary school.
- Elementary schools (PK-5): **If the former in-boundary school is an elementary school, DCPS will offer sibling phase-in policies for seven years.** If your child is enrolling in school for the first time in SY 2031-2032 or before, while their sibling is at the former in-boundary school, your child will maintain the in-boundary right to enroll at the former in-boundary school.
- Middle schools (6-8): **If the former in-boundary school is a middle school, DCPS will offer sibling phase-in policies for two years.** If your child is enrolling in school for the first time in SY 2026-2027 or before, while their sibling is at the former in-boundary school, your child will maintain the in-boundary right to enroll at the former in-boundary school.
- High schools (9-12): **If the former in-boundary school is a high school, DCPS will offer sibling phase-in policies for three years.** If your child is enrolling in school for the first time in SY 2027-2028 or before, while their sibling is at the former in-boundary school, your child will maintain the in-boundary right to enroll at the former in-boundary school.
- Phase-in policies for a school serving a grade configuration not outlined above will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

8. What phase-in policies will DCPS offer to families impacted by a feeder pattern change?

Phase-in policies are outlined in the letters sent to impacted families, available on the DCPS School Planning blog at dcpsplanning.wordpress.com. Overall, DCPS is offering the following phase-in policies to families impacted by a feeder pattern change recommended in DME's 2023 Boundary and Student Assignment Study and going into effect starting in School Year 2025-2026:

Please note: The last school boundary to change was Jackson-Reed when MacArthur HS opened in 2023. Question 10 addresses how updated phase-in policies apply to families impacted by the creation of the MacArthur boundary and feeder pattern.

- No student will be required to change schools because of a feeder pattern change.
- Once a feeder pattern changes, DCPS will extend phase-in rights for two years to all students starting a transition grade, typically 6th or 9th, to the former feeder school.

Sibling phase-in will be offered, but the time period differs based on the grades served by the former feeder school. (See chart A below)

- Middle school (6-8): **If the former destination feeder school is a middle school, DCPS will not offer sibling phase-in beyond the two years of phase-in rights offered to all students.**
- High school (9-12): **If the former destination feeder school is a high school, DCPS will offer one year of sibling phase-in beyond the two years of phase-in rights offered to all students.**
- Phase-in policies for a school serving a grade configuration not outlined above will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

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Phase-in policies from the past

9. DCPS is approaching phase-in policies differently than in the past. Why?

In January 2015, the Executive Office of the Mayor (EOM) approved the recommendations of DME's 2013-2014 boundary and student assignment study, the first comprehensive review of DCPS boundaries in over 50 years. The resulting boundary changes and feeder patterns touched most parts of the city. Extensive phase-in policies were adopted to ease the transition for families, including sibling phase-in without an end date.

Ten years later, the boundary and feeder changes in DME's 2023 recommendations are more modest. Following DME's study, DCPS reviewed phase-in policies in collaboration with DME and EOM. Going forward, when a change is made to a boundary or feeder pattern, the duration sibling phase-in policies will differ by school type. We believe that a defined end date for sibling policies will increase clarity for families. We believe that streamlining boundary and feeder pattern rights can strengthen neighborhood schools and feeder patterns.

10. DCPS made boundary and feeder changes when MacArthur HS opened in 2023.

What impact does DME's 2023 boundary and student assignment study have on those changes?

In June 2022, families at Hardy and its feeder elementary schools were notified that the opening of MacArthur HS required changes to boundaries and feeder patterns. In the two years since MacArthur HS opened in August 2023, DCPS has offered phase-in policies for students at Hardy, allowing all 8th graders to choose between MacArthur HS and the former feeder high school, Jackson-Reed HS. Aligned with communication from June 2022, those phase-in policies have come to an end.

Following DME's 2023 boundary and student assignment study, DCPS worked with DME to review phase-in policies. Moving forward, DCPS is updating our approach to phase-in policies for siblings at all schools impacted by changes, as outlined in Questions 7 and 8 and Chart A of this FAQ.

DCPS is implementing phase-in policies within the MacArthur feeder pattern to align with this updated approach (See Chart B below). A letter sent to impacted families in April 2025 is posted to the DC School Planning blog at dcpsplanning.wordpress.com.

Chart B: Phase-in policies for students impacted by the establishment of the MacArthur boundary and feeder pattern in SY 2023-2024

School Year	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
Year of implementation	0	new MacArthur boundary	2	3	4
	MACARTHUR HIGH SCHOOL				
Grade of last cohort to enroll before change	9th	10th	11th	12th	
		boundary phase-in for siblings only			
		feeder phase-in for all students	feeder phase-in for all students	feeder phase-in for siblings only	

11. Many families were impacted by boundary and feeder changes implemented in School Year 2015-2016 after DME’s 2013 boundary study. How does the change in approach to sibling phase-in impact those families?

Starting in School Year 2025-2026, DCPS will no longer offer sibling phase-in policies to students impacted by changes made in 2015 to school boundaries and feeder patterns. After the [2013-2014 boundary and student assignment study](#), led by the Deputy Mayor for Education, a comprehensive set of changes were made to the boundaries and feeder patterns of DCPS schools. Learn more about that study at dme.dc.gov/book/student-assignment-and-school-boundaries-review-process. At the time, DCPS offered [extensive phase-in policies](#) (dme.dc.gov/node/1072092). Ten years after the initial implementation, the end of these sibling phase-in policies is expected to impact a small number of our students.

12. Where can I send additional questions?

Please contact the DCPS School Planning team with additional questions and comments at dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov.