

June Policy Issue List

Policy Area	CONCERNS RAISED about the proposed policies	Final Recommendation	RATIONALES for final recommendation
Capacity studies	More clearly define capacity triggers for when to open new schools, add capacity, or conduct a boundary study.	<p>Recommendation 35: DCPS shall conduct a boundary study when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A zoned DCPS school has been utilized at 90 percent or more and has had an in-boundary percentage of enrollment greater than 75 percent for three consecutive years; or • A zoned DCPS school has been utilized at 60 percent or less for three consecutive years. <p>Recommendation 36: As part of the annual monitoring of school capacity and utilization, DCPS shall undertake a more detailed study of the capacity, utilization, and in-boundary participation for a zoned DCPS school that has enrollment capacity equal to or less than 45 percent of the age-appropriate public school population within the attendance zone.</p> <p>Recommendation 37: As part of DCPS boundary studies, DCPS shall work with the local school and community to secure input into the studies on school capacity, utilization and attendance zones. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating the school specific boundary population, in-boundary participation rates, and charter enrollments in the vicinity; • Obtaining five- to ten-year population projections for the boundary and its adjacent boundaries; • Identifying any school quality barriers that may be affecting school utilization; and • Assessing the walkability and transportation concerns of students and families. <p>DCPS shall then identify whether any action on boundaries, co-locations, consolidations, grade configuration changes, or educational interventions are required to address the utilization concerns coming out of Recommendations 35, 36, and 37.</p> <p>Recommendation 28: A specialized (non-selective) school can be designated a citywide school with no attendance zone only if the grade-appropriate school serving the attendance zone where the specialized school is located is less than 75 percent utilized and has less than 70 percent of their enrollment from within their attendance zones.</p> <p>Recommendation 29: When DCPS needs capacity for in-zone students in a particular attendance zone, then DCPS may require a DCPS city-wide school — lottery or selective — located within the attendance zone to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocate to provide capacity for students in a boundary; • Convert to a neighborhood school and offer a non-specialized strand; • Convert to a neighborhood school and pair with a non-specialized school to offer the traditional grade level program; or • Provide neighborhood priority in citywide lottery. 	In order to clarify the circumstances in which boundary or school capacities should be studied, the Committee added more specific information on what data points should be considered. The Committee also expressed the importance of ensuring adequate capacity for zoned schools and how that should be the priority. The Committee also added a recommendation on the engagement process associated with these studies to ensure transparency in analysis and decision making.

<p>Out-of-boundary minimums</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they based on enrollment or capacity? • How will you determine the grade specific minimum for 6th and 9th grades? • Will this lead to schools not offering more seats than the minimum? • How is this related to the at-risk preference? 	<p>Recommendation 20: Starting in SY 2015–2016, elementary schools shall maintain at least 10 percent of enrollment capacity for out-of-zone students. Middle schools and high schools shall maintain at least 15 percent and 20 percent, respectively, of their enrollment capacity for out-of-zone students. The number and percentage of out-of-zone students shall be based on all enrolled students including those who attend via special education placement, involuntary transfer, feeder rights, or because they opted to attend the by-right alternative to their dual-language zoned school.</p> <p>Recommendation 21: Starting in SY 2018–2019, DCPS shall reserve at least 10 percent of the 6th grade seats in each DCPS zoned middle school for out-of-zone students who do not have a right to attend the school through geographic or programmatic feeder right.</p> <p>Recommendation 22: Starting in SY 2018-19, DCPS shall reserve at least 10 percent of the new 9th grade seats (excluding enrollment of 9th grade repeaters) in each zoned high school for out-of-zone students who do not have a right to attend the school through geographic or programmatic feeder right.</p>	<p>The public expressed their desire for ensuring that options outside of their assigned schools were available. While most DCPS schools have high out-of-boundary enrollments, the Committee wanted to recommend policy that ensured no school could go below certain percentages. This is not meant to establish a ceiling, but meant to ensure that high-demand schools always reserve some space for out-of-boundary families.</p> <p>Families also expressed their frustration with not having access points in middle and high school to high-demand schools. In order to ensure a spot in one a secondary school of choice, parents felt like they had to get their child into a feeder school at PK. This incentivizes parents to opt out of their in-boundary elementary school. For this reason, the Committee recommended ensuring new out-of-boundary sets are made available at 6th and 9th grades. For the past few years neither Deal nor Wilson have opened up seats in these grades in the lottery. The delay in implementing the grade specific set-aside is due to capacity issues at Deal and Wilson which is expected to subside around SY18-19. For the full recommended methodology, see the Data Appendix.</p> <p>The out-of-boundary minimums are a separate policy from the at-risk preference. The OOB minimums are meant to address a broad goal of ensuring a minimum level of access at every school to students who do not live in the attendance zone, and - in the case of middle and high school – to students who also don’t attend the designated feeder schools. The at-risk preference is intended to increase the level of access for at-risk students at the subset of schools that are currently serving relatively low numbers of at-risk students. The percentages in the two policies are completely independent of each other.</p>
<p>At-risk preference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will middle class (non-at-risk) families be shut out of schools? • This can have an unintended impact on schools with high OOB numbers – like Hearst and Stuart-Hobson • Does this apply to citywide and selective DCPS 	<p>Recommendation 23: Starting in SY2016–2017, any DCPS zoned, DCPS citywide (non-selective) and public charter school that has a student body consisting of 25 percent or less at-risk students shall give priority to “at-risk” students for 25 percent of available seats in the lottery for a given year. Implementing this recommendation for public charter schools will require a change in law and engagement with additional stakeholders.</p> <p>Recommendation 24: Starting in SY2016–2017, DCPS selective schools shall provide a priority for at-risk students who meet the admissions criteria for the selective school. Prior to implementation, DCPS should convene appropriate stakeholders, including community members, parents, students, and school staff (including those from selective schools) to determine the details of this policy.</p>	<p>The concerns expressed by families and the public raised important issues that the Committee needed to consider regarding unintended consequences. As a result, the Committee changed the June proposal to:</p> <p><u>Only offer this preference for 25% of available seats, instead of all seats</u></p> <p>This adjustment to the proposed policy was an effort to 1) maintain some level of OOB access at these schools for non-at-risk families, and 2) to ensure that schools with high numbers of OOB seats don’t have large swings in their number of at-risk students from one year to the next <u>Expand the policy to public charter schools, DCPS citywide and selective schools</u></p> <p>The Committee felt strongly that increasing access to high-demand schools for the most vulnerable populations was an important value for the city’s student assignment policies, and should be the shared responsibility of all public schools.</p>

	<p>schools?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At-risk preference will not benefit at risk students due to transportation challenges 		
Walkability and transportation	<p>Is one-mile too high a threshold for the proximity preference?</p>	<p>Recommendation 31: Provide students who live greater than a half mile walking distance from their zoned DCPS elementary school with a proximity priority for out-of-zone placement to a DCPS elementary school that is a half mile or less walking distance from their home.</p> <p>Recommendation 32: Provide parents or guardians of PK3 through 5th grade students residing one mile or greater walking distance from their zoned DCPS school with free passage on Metrobus to accompany the elementary grade student to their zoned school.</p> <p>Recommendation 33: Provide free passage on Metrorail to 9th through 12th grade students for travel to and from a public school.</p> <p>Recommendation 34: DME shall work with Metro, Metro Police, Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), DC Department of Transportation, and public school parents and students to review bus routes and other Safe Routes to School services and ensure that bus routes and services are maximized to support safe and efficient public school travel by DCPS and public charter school students.</p>	<p>Throughout this process, the Advisory Committee, parents, and community members expressed a strong desire to locate and sustain DCPS zoned elementary schools that can be reached safely by walking. The Committee developed a deeper understanding for the varying walkability and transportation issues across the city. It was clear that we could not measure the ease of walking and transportation based solely on distance, but that geographic barriers, public transit routes, and the safety of the neighborhood are also important factors to consider.</p> <p>In an effort to better align education planning with city planning practices – the Committee changed the one mile threshold for the lottery preference to a half mile.</p>
Phasing-In Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider phasing in current charter and OOB students, so that they maintain current geographic rights in the same way that current DCPS IB students do. Consider extending phasing beyond current proposal to ensure new middle schools are opened within the phasing in period - in an effort to promote parent investment in new middle school. Consider providing a preference in OOB lottery for families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting in 2015-16, students who have been enrolled in their in-boundary school, but have been re-zoned to another school, shall maintain in-boundary rights at their current in-boundary school until they complete that school. Siblings of students defined in the previous sentence also maintain their current in-boundary rights if they have a sibling attending the school at the time of their entry to that school. Starting in 2015-16, students who have been rezoned to another school may attend their newly zoned school, by right. Starting in 2015-16 all NEW students shall be assigned to the newly zoned school. NEW students are defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students moving into an area that has been assigned to a different school; Charter school students or out-of-boundary DCPS students who wish to return to their DCPS neighborhood school from their charter school or out-of-boundary DCPS school; or Students who are attending a school for the first time (e.g., at the entry grade) who live in an area that has been rezoned and who do not have siblings currently attending the former assigned school. Students who are enrolled in the 3rd through 5th grade for the 2014-15 school year at an elementary school whose feeder pathway changes shall have the right to continue to their former destination school OR to their newly designated feeder pathway beginning in the 2015-16 school year. 	<p>The concerns expressed from families about the potential changes were seriously considered by the Committee. The Committee ultimately decided that the phasing-in policies proposed in June provide adequate continuity and transition time for families, and that extending them further would unacceptably delay the necessary changes. To address the concerns around parents being confident in the new middle schools, the Committee added Recommendation 39 in an effort to ensure that communities were actively involved in the planning of new schools.</p>

	<p>whose geographic rights are changing, in an effort to further support transition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students who are in PK3 through 2nd grade as of the 2014-15 school year shall feed into the newly designated feeder pathway, unless they have a sibling attending the former destination school at the time of transition.• Students enrolled in the 6th through 8th grades for the 2014-15 school year at a school whose high school feeder pathway changes shall have the right to continue in their former feeder pathway OR the newly designated pathway beginning in the 2015-16 school year.• Students whose new feeder pathway relies on the opening of a new school shall retain their current feeder pathway and geographic rights until the new school is open.	
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