PAVE Choosing Your School Survey Results
Fall 2023
Choosing Schools in DC

DC has a system of choice – meaning all DC students have a right to their in-boundary school, but can enter MySchoolDC lottery to attend an out-of-boundary DCPS school or a public charter school.

Majority of DC parents participate in MySchoolDC:

- Almost three-quarters of DC students do not attend their neighborhood public school, opting instead to apply through the common lottery to attend a traditional public school, a citywide school, or charter school.
- On average, in-boundary enrollment is higher in wealthier areas.
What is the goal of the survey?

Opportunity to hear from 126 parents and caregivers across the District on their experiences with school facilities to answer the following questions:

- What factors do parents prioritize when choosing a school for their children?
- How often do students move and/or change schools?
- What are parents still looking for in the DC school system?
Survey Participants
Race & Ethnicity

Survey Respondents | DC School Population

Black/African American: 76.30% | 62.90%
Hispanic/Latinx: 19.70%
White: 10.20% | 12.60%
Prefer not to answer: 3.40% | 2.50%
Asian/Pacific Islander: 2.50% | 1.40%
Ward of Residency

- Survey Respondents
- DC School Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Survey Respondents</th>
<th>DC School Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ward 1</td>
<td>9.20%</td>
<td>5.70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward 2</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
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<td>Ward 3</td>
<td>2.90%</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward 4</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
<td>16.90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward 5</td>
<td>9.20%</td>
<td>18.60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward 6</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>6.60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward 7</td>
<td>22.90%</td>
<td>19.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 8</td>
<td>32.80%</td>
<td>22.50%</td>
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</table>
Where Students Attend School

- **Survey Respondents**
- **DC School Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>DC School Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ward 1</td>
<td>7.80%</td>
<td>3.90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward 2</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
<td>3.90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward 3</td>
<td>7.80%</td>
<td>2.90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward 4</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
<td>16.90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward 5</td>
<td>19.20%</td>
<td>21.90%</td>
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<td>Ward 6</td>
<td>7.90%</td>
<td>13.70%</td>
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<td>Ward 7</td>
<td>15.90%</td>
<td>14.60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward 8</td>
<td>16.90%</td>
<td>21.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
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</table>
52% of DC students attend a DCPS school vs. 48% of DC students attend a public charter school.
Comparatively:
About 48% of DC students are considered “at-risk”

Note: A student is considered at-risk if they are experiencing homelessness, are in the foster care system, quality for TANF and/or SNAP, and/or are at least one year older than the high school grade for which they are enrolled.
Parents Who Entered Child in School Lottery

- Yes: 73.7%
- No: 26.3%
Factors Influencing Choice
What Influences Parents’ Decisions?

Parents were asked to rank various factors on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being “this was one of my top priorities” and 4 being “I didn’t consider this factor”, when choosing to send their child(ren) to their current schools.

These factors included:

- Results from the school lottery
- Public transportation options
- Distance from home
- Distance from parent/guardian job
- In-school program/curriculum options
- OST programs
- Special education services
- Wraparound services and supports
- Safety in and around the school building
- Quality of school building and facilities
- School culture and climate
- Feeder pattern
- Diversity of school of community
- School academic results
- School’s reputation/what has been heard from other parents
- Class size/student-teacher ratios
- Teacher and staff retention and experience
Top Influential Factors

Survey respondents ranked the following factors as their most influential (ranked 1st):

1. **Safety in and around the school building** - traffic, sidewalks, locks on doors, etc (65.3%)
2. **In-school program/curriculum offerings** - specialized school programs (64.8%)
3. **School culture and climate** (63.2%)
4. **School academic results** - PARCC, DC School Report Card, graduation rates, college acceptance rates (55%)
5. **School’s reputation** (53%) and teacher & school staff retention and experience (53%)
## Top Influential Factors by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black/African American Respondents</th>
<th>Hispanic/Latinx Respondents</th>
<th>White Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In-school program/curriculum offerings (65.9%)</td>
<td>1. In-school program/curriculum offerings (66.6%)</td>
<td>1. Distance from home (72.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Safety in and around school building (65.9%)</td>
<td>2. Safety in and around school building (66.6%)</td>
<td>2. School culture and climate (68.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. School culture and climate (61.6%)</td>
<td>3. Diversity of students (66.6%)</td>
<td>3. In-school program/curriculum offerings (54.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. School’s reputation (55.1%)</td>
<td>4. School facilities (61.1%)</td>
<td>4. Diversity of students (54.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Class size and student/teacher ratios (55.1%)</td>
<td>5. School culture and climate (61.1%)</td>
<td>5. Safety in and around school building (45.4%)</td>
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*Note: The sample of Asian/Pacific Islanders was too small for comparison (N = 5)*
### Top Influential Factors by Income (Services Received)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receives Govt Services &amp; Supports</th>
<th>Doesn’t Receive Govt Services &amp; Supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Safety in and around school building (74%)</td>
<td>1. School culture and climate (69.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In-school program/curriculum offerings (62%)</td>
<td>2. In-school program/curriculum offerings (66.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teacher retention (62%)</td>
<td>3. Safety in and around school building (52.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. School’s academic results (60%)</td>
<td>4. Distance from home (47.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. School’s reputation (59%)</td>
<td>5. Diversity of students (47.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Moving Schools
Besides your child’s transitions from elementary, middle, and high school, has your child ever moved schools?

- No: 42.8%
- Yes: 57.2%
Besides your child’s transitions from elementary, middle, and high school, has your child ever moved schools?
Number of times child has moved schools

- 1 Time: 48.90%
- 2 Times: 20.20%
- 3 Times: 20.20%
- 4 or More Times: 10.60%
Child's age when moving schools

- 3-5 Years Old (PreK): 25%
- 5-10 Years Old (Elementary): 48%
- 11-14 Years Old (Middle School): 18%
- 15-18 Years Old (High School): 10%
Main Reasons for Moving Schools

Parents listed these factors as the top reasons for moving schools (outside of transitions):
1. School culture and climate (38.7%)
2. Teacher and school staff retention (32%)
3. Safety in and around the school building (29.3%)
4. School academics (26.7%)
5. Special education services and supports (26.7%)

To explore: What are the academic and emotional/developmental impacts of moving schools?
Sibling Factors
Understanding Siblings as an Influential Factor

- A majority of parents (62.5%) reported that they sent at least one of their children to the same school as another one of their children.
- 37.5% of parents reported that they did not send their child to the same school.

Why parents sent their children to the same school(s):
- Good experience with school (82.9%)
- School relationships (74.3%)
- Availability of school offerings (45.7%)
- Transportation (25.7%)

Why parents did not send their children to the same school(s):
- Majority cited differing needs for their child (45.5%)
- Availability of school offerings (31.8%)
- They moved (27.3%)
- Didn’t have good relationship with other child (22.7%)
Creating a Stronger Education System
Creating a Supportive & Stronger Education System

Parents were asked: What are you still looking for in an education system to help your children thrive? for their children?

Top responses:

1. **Culturally relevant curriculum** that is based in best practices (i.e. science of reading) and **strong instruction** in every classroom at every grade level (56.1%)
2. Expanded access to **college credit, career certifications, and/or workforce programs** (apprenticeships, job training, internships, etc.) (46.2%)
3. Schools that provide **wrap-around services** (mental and physical health care, meals, laundry, connections to other community-based organizations for family services, etc. (45.5%)
4. Attracting and retaining a **strong teacher workforce** (41.7%)
5. **Exposure to other cultures and places** around the world/study abroad programs (40.9%)