



## 2016 Background on Public Charter Schools in Washington, DC

As DC’s public school enrollment in all grades and adult and alternative schools continues to grow—increasing by an annual average of 2,500 students for the past five years—the demand for high-quality education options increases as well. This overview provides useful context to all applicants seeking to open a new public charter school. While the DC Public Charter School Board (DC PCSB) continues to be interested in charter applications across all grades, locations, and program offerings, applicants should consider relevant supply and demand information as they prepare their applications. The overview begins with a look at traditional grades of pre-kindergarten to grade 12, followed by adult and alternative schools.

### 1. Pre-kindergarten to grade 12 schools, supply and demand

#### Supply of public charter and DCPS seats, pre-kindergarten to grade 12

The supply of public charter and DC Public Schools (DCPS) seats presents expected growth in the student population and spaces available in public schools by examining current and historical enrollment, population forecasts, approved growth, and availability of quality seats. Applicants can use this information to evaluate how their program may address a mismatch between students and available spaces.

#### *Current enrollment, pre-kindergarten to grade 12*

In school year (SY) 15-16, 42.4 percent of DC’s public school students in pre-kindergarten to grade 12 were enrolled at public charter schools, with the remainder enrolled in DCPS. Over half of DCPS students choose to attend an out-of-boundary<sup>1</sup> DCPS school, which means school choice in DC applies to DCPS as well as public charter schools.

SY15-16 Audited Enrollment, pre-kindergarten to grade 12

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Pre-kindergarten</b>	<b>Kindergarten to grade 5</b>	<b>Grade 6 to 8</b>	<b>Grade 9 to 12</b>	<b>Special education schools<sup>2</sup></b>
Charters	34,688	6,477	15,154	6,861	5,945	251
DCPS <sup>3</sup>	47,073	5,832	23,243	6,655	11,218	125
<b>Total</b>	<b>81,761</b>	<b>12,309</b>	<b>38,397</b>	<b>13,516</b>	<b>17,163</b>	<b>376</b>
<b>Percent in charters</b>	<b>42.4%</b>	<b>52.6%</b>	<b>39.5%</b>	<b>50.8%</b>	<b>34.6%</b>	<b>66.8%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Out-of-boundary school is any DCPS school that is not the student’s in-boundary school, which every student has the right to attend based on where the student lives.

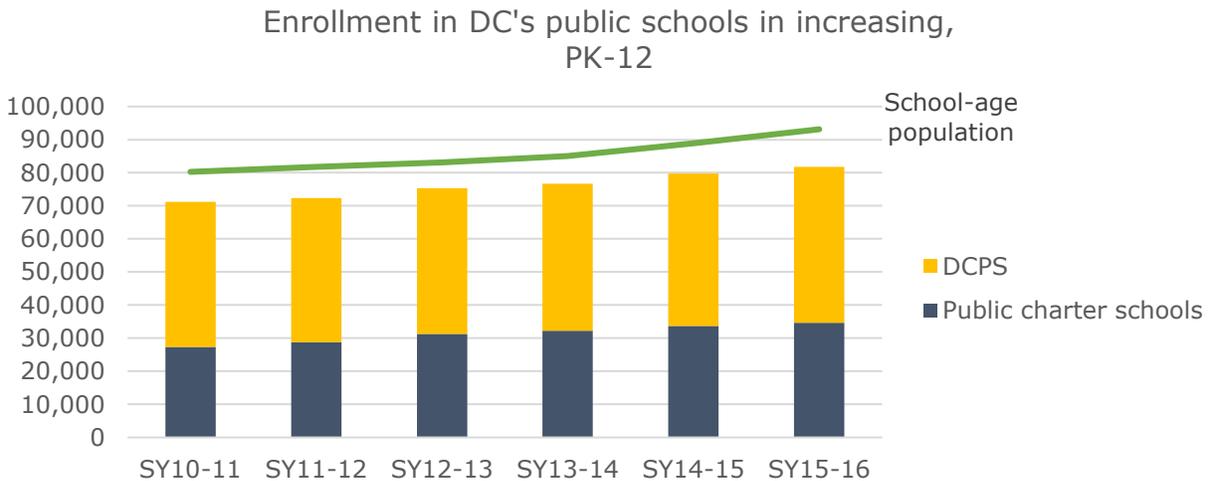
<sup>2</sup> Two public schools (St. Coletta Special Education PCS and River Terrace ES) exclusively serve students with high special education needs. All other public charter and DCPS schools with students aged 3-21 are open to students with special education needs of all levels.

<sup>3</sup> To compare enrollment consistently across sectors, DCPS adult and alternative enrollment includes all students at Adult Education and Youth Engagement schools. DCPS high school enrollment includes all students at traditional high schools.

### Historical enrollment, pre-kindergarten to grade 12

Over the past five years, DC’s public charter schools’ enrollment in pre-kindergarten to grade 12 has grown by approximately 7,400 students, or 1,500 per year.

Including this public charter school enrollment increase, pre-kindergarten to grade 12 enrollment in all public schools (public charter and DCPS) has increased by more than 10,000 students, or 2,000 per year.



### Forecasted growth, pre-kindergarten to grade 12

#### Forecasted population growth, pre-kindergarten to grade 12

DC’s school-aged population is forecasted to grow by 25,000 through SY20-21, or approximately 5,000 students annually, according to the DC Office of Planning’s estimates. If pre-kindergarten to grade 12 students continue to enroll in public charter schools at a constant rate as the population grows, public charter school enrollment may grow by 9,700 students through SY20-21, or 1,900 per year.

#### Forecasted school-aged population growth (ages 3-17)<sup>4</sup>

Growth	Total	PK3 to PK4	Kindergarten to grade 5	Grade 6 to 8	Grade 9 to 12
Total five-year forecasted population growth through SY20-21	25,036	2,169	15,879	4,731	2,257
Percent of population that is currently enrolled in public charters	37%	36%	39%	43%	29% <sup>5</sup>
Total five-year estimate of growth in public charter school enrollment	9,700	788	6,153	2,061	698

<sup>4</sup> When DC Office of Planning (OP) forecasts are compared to the most recent year of US Census data (2014), OP estimates for the school-aged population were very close to the US Census actuals (difference of 75 more people in OP estimates).

<sup>5</sup> The proportion of the population enrolled in public charter high schools is less than other grades in part because some high school-aged students attend adult and alternative public schools or other non-traditional education programs. In addition, some of the high school-aged population may not be enrolled in any traditional or non-traditional education program.

*Approved future growth, pre-kindergarten to grade 12*

Approved public charter school growth

The Mayor's budget projects an increase of 1,972 pre-kindergarten to grade 12 students in public charter schools in SY16-17, with three new schools approved to open in SY16-17.

Public charter schools opening through SY16-17

<b>New public charter school</b>	<b>Opening year</b>	<b>Planned capacity</b>	<b>Description</b>
Breakthrough Montessori PCS	SY16-17	405	Montessori school for pre-kindergarten through grade 6 students
Rocketship DC PCS	SY16-17	1,300	Elementary school with blended learning model
Washington Leadership Academy PCS	SY16-17	420	High school with an emphasis on service learning and blended learning

In addition, many existing public charter schools have enrollment ceilings<sup>6</sup> that increase over time and allow them to expand in the future – including by adding more classrooms, grades, or facilities. Together, these growth plans mean that the total enrollment capacity of public charter schools will continue to increase.

DCPS schools opening in SY16-17

The Mayor's budget projects a pre-kindergarten to grade 12 enrollment increase of 1,516 students<sup>7</sup> in SY16-17 for DCPS, with two new schools opening in SY16-17 (see table below).

New DCPS schools in SY16-17

<b>School</b>	<b>Description</b>
Ron Brown HS	All-male high school in Ward 7 opening with 150 9 <sup>th</sup> graders
MacFarland MS	Dual Language program in Ward 4 opening with 6 <sup>th</sup> grade

<sup>6</sup> An enrollment ceiling is the maximum number of students for whom a school can receive payment.

<sup>7</sup> To be consistent with enrollment calculations in SY15-16, all projected enrollment aside from DCPS Adult Education Schools and DCPS Youth Engagement Schools has been included in this projection.

### *Supply of quality seats, pre-kindergarten to grade 12*

In addition to approved growth in public charter school seats and forecasted population growth, program quality<sup>8</sup> is another factor to consider when evaluating supply of public charter school seats. Gaps in quality seats were identified by comparing the total number of seats offered to the number of quality seats offered in a particular Ward or grade.

- At the Ward level, the greatest number of quality seats are needed in Ward 8. High numbers of quality seats are also needed in Wards 5, 6, and 7.
- Quality seats are needed equally across grades. However, for DCPS high schools, enrollment remains concentrated at a few selective high schools that require applications for admission and Wilson HS (located in Ward 3).

### *Public charter school demand, pre-kindergarten to grade 12*

Demand for public charter schools identifies areas of high demand by grade, ward of the city, quality, and program offering. The analysis uses My School DC's common lottery data, and therefore is limited to participating public charter schools offering pre-kindergarten through grade 12<sup>9</sup>. Applicants can use this information to determine whether their program meets an area of unmet demand.

#### *Demand by program offering*

Applications to expeditionary learning or dual language/language immersion programs have the lowest match rates, followed by Montessori and International Baccalaureate programs. Consequently, these programs are in the highest demand.

#### *Demand by grade*

By grade, pre-kindergarten to grade 5 have the highest levels of excess demand when comparing seats offered to the unique applicants to public charter schools.

#### *Demand by student ward*

Comparing ward of applicant to seats offered by public charter schools, there is excess demand for seats close to where students live in Wards 4, 6, 7, and 8.

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<sup>8</sup> Quality is measured for this analysis by DC PCSB's Performance Management Framework (PMF) for public charter schools and an estimated equivalent for DCPS schools.

<sup>9</sup> Over 90 percent of public charter schools offering pre-kindergarten to grade 12 participated in the SY16-17 common lottery.

### *Demand by student ward and grade*

Comparing ward and grade of student to seats offered for each ward, a few patterns of high excess demand emerge, especially for students in PK3 to grade 5.

- Excess demand is highest for PK3-PK4 from students living in Wards 1, 4, 6, and 7.
- Excess demand is highest for kindergarten to grade 5 from students living in Wards 4, 6, 7, and 8.
- Excess demand tapers for upper grades.
  - Demand is relatively higher for grades 6 to 8 from students living in Wards 4 and 8.
  - Demand is relatively higher for grades 9 to 12 from students living in Wards 1, 4, and 8.

### *Demand for quality*

Match rates show demand for higher quality public charter schools as measured by DC PCSB's Performance Management Framework (PMF). Applications to Tier 1 schools have a lower likelihood of a successful match.

## 2. Adult and alternative schools, supply and demand

### *Supply of public charter and DCPS seats, adult and alternative schools*

The supply of public charter and DC Public Schools (DCPS) seats presents expected growth in the student population and spaces available in adult and alternative public schools by examining current and historical enrollment, population forecasts, and potential growth. Applicants can use this information to evaluate how their program may address a mismatch between students and available spaces.

### *Current enrollment, adult and alternative schools*

In school year SY15-16, 75.5 percent of DC's public school adult and alternative students were enrolled at public charter schools, with the remainder enrolled in DCPS.

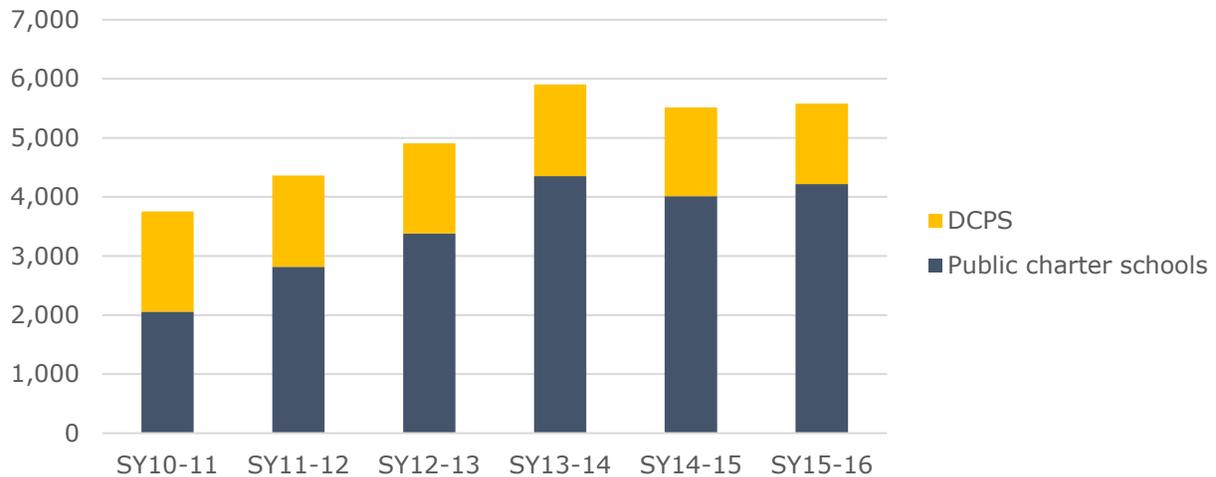
SY15-16 Audited Enrollment, adult and alternative

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Adult and alternative enrollment</b>
Charters	4,217
DCPS	1,366
Total	5,583
Percent in charters	75.5%

### Historical enrollment, adult and alternative schools

Over the past five years, DC’s public charter schools’ enrollment at adult and alternative schools has grown by approximately 2,100 students, or about 400 per year. In parallel, enrollment in all public adult and alternative schools (public charter and DCPS) has increased by around 1,800<sup>10</sup> students, or 360 per year.

Enrollment in adult and alternative schools has increased since SY10-11



### Forecasted growth

#### Approved future growth

#### Approved public charter school growth in adult and alternative schools

The Mayor’s budget projects an increase of 76 adult and alternative students<sup>11</sup> in public charter schools in SY16-17, with one new school approved to open in SY16-17 and another school planned to open in SY17-18. In addition, many existing public charter schools have enrollment ceilings<sup>12</sup> that increase over time and allow them to expand in the future – including by adding more classrooms, grades, or facilities. Together, these growth plans mean that the total enrollment capacity of adult and alternative public charter schools will continue to increase.

#### Public charter schools opening through SY17-18

New public charter school	Opening year	Planned capacity	Description
Goodwill Excel Center PCS	SY16-17	360	Competency-based alternative high school for students older than 16
Sustainable Futures PCS	SY17-18	288	Competency-based alternative high school serving youth ages 14 to 21

<sup>10</sup> Enrollment at DCPS’s adult and alternative schools has declined slightly since SY10-11.

<sup>11</sup> In addition, Goodwill Excel Center PCS is projected to enroll 244 students in SY16-17, but these students count as high school students for funding purposes.

<sup>12</sup> Enrollment ceiling is the maximum students for whom a school can receive payment.

### Expected growth in DCPS adult and alternative schools in SY16-17

The Mayor's budget projects an adult and alternative enrollment increase of 61 students<sup>13</sup> in SY16-17 for DCPS, with no schools opening in SY16-17.

### Public charter school demand for adult and alternative schools

The eight adult public charter schools do not participate in the common lottery, so other sources of data are necessary to evaluate demand, or how many adult learners choose to enroll, and need, or how many adults do not have a high school education regardless of interest in re-enrolling. To give the broadest sense of need for adult education, an estimated 10.1% of DC's adult population (or 55,000 adults) did not have a high school diploma as of 2014.<sup>14</sup>

However, the current demand for adult education is less than the total need because not all adults without a high school diploma return to school. Future demand for adult and alternative education can be estimated as the share of ninth graders who currently do not finish high school within four years, or 35 percent,<sup>15</sup> and the share of these non-graduates who currently enroll in GED or other non-traditional school programs, or 13 percent.<sup>16</sup> As context, there were 6,175 ninth graders in public schools in SY12-13 who would be eligible to graduate in 2016. Efforts are underway citywide to improve high school graduation rates and the number of adults with a high school education.

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<sup>13</sup> To be consistent with enrollment calculations in SY15-16, enrollment at DCPS Adult Education Schools and DCPS Youth Engagement Schools have been included in this projection.

<sup>14</sup> Source: American Community Survey, one-year estimates.

<sup>15</sup> Source: LearnDC, District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE).

<sup>16</sup> Source: DC Graduation Pathways Project Summary, prepared for the Deputy Mayor for Education.