

Background on public charter school context in Washington, DC

Charter school supply and demand

As the District of Columbia’s public school population continues to grow—increasing by 2,000-3,000 students per year over the past three 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 the relevant census and city data on enrollment, projected growth, population forecasts, availability of quality seats, and areas of high demand for public education in DC as they prepare their applications.

1. Charter school supply

Current supply of public charter and traditional public schools¹ seats

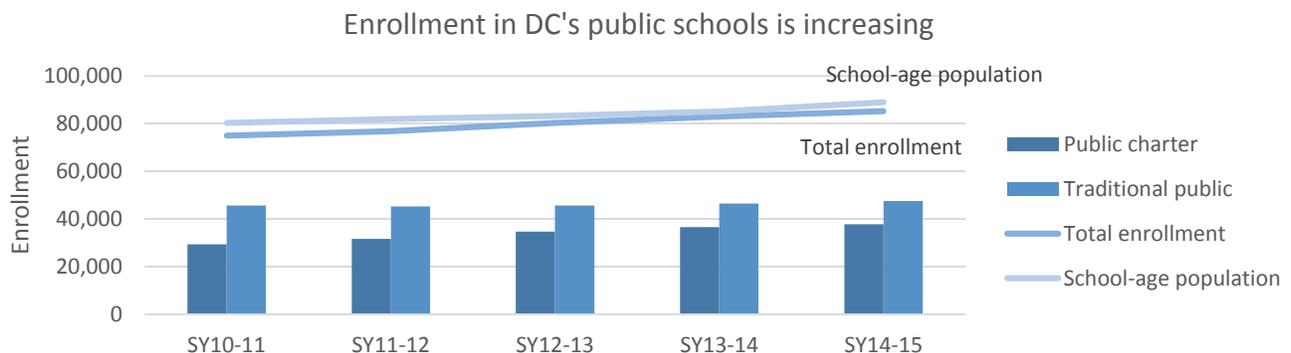
In school year (SY) 2014-15, 44 percent of DC’s public school students were enrolled at public charter schools, and 28 percent of students attended their assigned in-boundary traditional public school.

SY14-15 Audited Enrollment

Sector	Total	Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4	Kindergarten to Grade 5	Grade 6 to 8	Grade 9 to 12	Alternative and Adult	Special Education Schools ²
Public charter schools	37,684	6,425	14,698	6,466	5,831	4,012	252
Traditional public schools	47,548	5,615	22,116	7,068	11,346	1,342	61
Total	85,232	12,040	36,814	13,534	17,177	5,354	313

Public charter school and traditional public school growth

Over the past five years, enrollment in DC’s public charter schools has grown by more than 8,000 students. In parallel, enrollment in all public schools (public charter and traditional) has increased by more than 10,000 students.



¹ Traditional public schools refers to DC Public Schools.

² A few schools in DC (St. Coletta Special Education PCS, Mamie D. Lee School, and Sharpe Health School) exclusively serve students with high Special Education needs.



Forecasted Population Growth

DC’s population of school-aged children is forecasted to grow by about 19,000 through 2019, according to the DC Office of Planning’s forecast of population growth. Historically, 80 to 90 percent of DC children attend public schools. Current charter market share by grade band is shown below:

Forecasted Population Growth ³	Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4	Kindergarten to Grade 5	Grades 6 - 8	Grades 9 - 12	Alternative & Adult
DC Population Forecast Growth through SY18-19	3,544	11,739	2,686	1,028	2,445 ⁴
Charter Market Share SY14-15	47% ⁵	40%	48%	34% ⁶	75%

Approved Growth

Approved public charter school growth

Four new public charter schools opened in SY15-16, three of which focus on serving students in the foster care system, have learning disabilities, or difficulties managing behavior. DC PCSB has also approved four new schools to open in SY16-17 (see table below). In addition, many existing public charter schools have enrollment ceilings that increase over time and allow them to expand by adding more classrooms, grades, or facilities in the future. Together, these approvals mean that the total enrollment capacity of public charter schools will expand. The supply of seats in grades 6 to 12 is projected to grow at a faster rate than seats in pre-kindergarten to grade 5.

Public charter schools opening through SY16-17

New public charter school	Opening year	Planned capacity	Description
The Children’s Guild DC PCS	SY15-16	850	Serves kindergarten through grade 8; targeting special needs students
Kingsman Academy PCS	SY15-16	320	Serves grades 6 to 12; focus on at-risk students
Monument Academy PCS	SY15-16	160	Serves grades 5 to 8; intended for children in foster care
Washington Global PCS	SY15-16	240	Serves grades 6 to 8; emphasis on international education and foreign language
Breakthrough Montessori PCS	SY16-17	135	Montessori program for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students
Goodwill Excel Center PCS	SY16-17	360	Competency-based alternative high school for students older than 16
Rocketship DC PCS	SY16-17	650	Elementary school with blended learning model
Washington Leadership Academy PCS	SY16-17	400	High school with an emphasis on service learning and blended learning

³ When DC Office of Planning (OP) population forecasts are compared to available Census population estimates, OP estimates for the high school population are higher than Census estimates by at least 4,000.

⁴ Population eligible for adult and alternative education is estimated by the share of adults 18 and older without a high school diploma (11.6%, DC Fiscal Policy Institute).

⁵ To better identify the unmet need for publicly-funded PK, market share includes enrollment in PK incentive classrooms and full day subsidized preschool (1,492 students, as reported by OSSE) in addition to charter and DCPS seats. For consideration, approximately 1,285 students are estimated to be enrolled in private pre-kindergarten programs according to data published on Private School Review (www.privateschoolreview.com).

⁶ DCPS enrolls 3,552 students in selective high schools. Charter market share without DCPS selective high schools is 43%.

New traditional school openings and new grades in SY15-16

The traditional school system projected an enrollment increase of 1,688 students for SY15-16. The four new schools listed below were projected to have the highest increases in enrollment. The traditional school system has also announced a strategic goal of enrolling 50,000 students by 2017 and may open additional schools.

Traditional schools with increases in enrollment of 100 or more

Name of School	Increase	Expansion notes
Dorothy Height ES	590	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School enrolls students in kindergarten to grade 5 Dorothy Height ES is a former public charter school (Community Academy PCS – Amos 1)
Brookland MS	224	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School enrolls students in grades 6 to 8 New middle school will enroll students from Brookland ES at Bunker Hill ES, Burroughs ES, Langdon ES, and Noyes ES
Van Ness ES	110	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School enrolls students in pre-kindergarten (PK3) to kindergarten New school initially opening as an early childhood center
River Terrace SEC	108	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School enrolls special education students New special education school in SY15-16, enrolling students from former Sharpe Health and Mamie D. Lee schools

Supply of quality seats

In addition to growth in seats and population forecast, the quality of seats⁷ is another factor to consider when evaluating supply of public charter school seats.

- 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 4, 5, and 7.
- Quality seats are needed equally across grades. However, for traditional public schools, enrollment at quality high schools remains concentrated at a few selective high schools that require applications for admissions and Wilson High School (located in Ward 3).

2. Charter school demand⁸

Demand by grade

By grade, pre-kindergarten to grade 3 and grade 9 have the highest levels of excess demand when comparing seats offered by public charter schools to unique applicants to public charter schools.

⁷ Quality is measured for this analysis by DC PCSB's Performance Management Framework (PMF) for public charter schools and equivalent proficiency and growth outcomes for traditional public schools.

⁸ Demand data were requested from My School DC, the office responsible for DC's common lottery. The My School DC common lottery is a single, random lottery that determines placement for new students at all participating schools (majority of public charter schools, traditional public out-of-boundary schools, PK3 or PK4 programs at any traditional public school, and traditional public selective citywide high schools). Data are reported as of Round 1 of the common lottery, and the number of matches, applications, and open seats only describe charters. However, the number of applicants include



Adult and alternative public charter schools do not participate in the My School DC common lottery, so other sources of data are necessary to evaluate demand. Currently in Washington, DC, an estimated 11.6% of the adult population (or 62,000 adults) do not have a high school diploma according to the DC Fiscal Policy Institute. Thinking about the pipeline for adult and alternative education, an estimated 28 percent of ninth graders currently do not finish high school within six years, and about 13 percent of these non-graduates enroll in GED or other non-traditional school programs.⁹ Efforts are underway citywide to reduce these numbers.

Demand by student Ward

Comparing Ward of applicant to seats offered in the My School DC common lottery by schools in each Ward, there is a demand for additional seats close to where the majority of students live, particularly Wards 4 and 7.

Demand by student Ward and grade

Comparing Ward and grade of student Ward to seats offered in the My School DC common lottery 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 1, 4, 6, 7, and 8
- Excess demand tapers for upper grades
 - Relatively higher for grades 6 to 8 from students living in Wards 7 and 8
 - Relatively higher for grades 9 to 12 from students living in Wards 1, 4, and 8

Demand by performance

Match rates in the My School DC common lottery show demand for higher quality schools as measured by DC PCSB's Performance Management Framework (PMF). Applications to Tier 1 schools have a lower likelihood of a successful match after Round 1 of the SY15-16 common lottery.

Demand by program offering

Certain public charter school programs are in very high demand. Looking at data from Round 1 of the SY15-16 in the My School DC common lottery, applications at a Montessori or dual language/language immersion program have the highest demand and, consequently, lower match rates.

students that applied to only charter as well as charters and DCPS schools (excluding those students who only applied to DCPS schools).

⁹ Source of graduation data is the DC Graduation Pathways Project Summary, prepared for the Deputy Mayor for Education.