



Office of Mayor Muriel Bowser

John A. Wilson Building | 1350 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 300 | Washington, DC 20004

Frequently Asked Questions

Tweaks to the Student Assignment Policies and DCPS School Boundary Recommendations

Last year, the District of Columbia undertook the first comprehensive review of student assignment and DCPS school boundaries since 1968. This review process was long overdue. Mayor Bowser recognizes the hard work that the DC Advisory Committee on Student Assignment, education stakeholders and agencies, and the community at large undertook to develop the comprehensive policy, boundary, and feeder pattern recommendations. During the drafting of the plan, the Mayor expressed concerns about cutting off current cross-park and cross-river school access. In order to correct the plan, Mayor Bowser and Deputy Mayor Niles are implementing the following tweaks to the DC Advisory Committee on Student Assignment recommendations. These two tweaks are:

- Extend the phase-in policy (or grandfathering policy) for families assigned to a new middle school until 2022.
- Establish dual rights for 8th graders at Kelly Miller MS to have the right to attend Eastern HS (by feeder right) or Woodson HS (by geographic right).

Now that the student assignment and boundary plan is final, Deputy Mayor Niles will focus on improving the quality of all the District's schools across all wards.

The following provides answers to some frequently asked questions in regards to these tweaks.

Extending the phase-in policy for new middle schools until 2022

Q: How does extending the phase-in for families assigned to a new middle school until 2022 help address the problem of Rock Creek Park acting as a geographic barrier?

A: The student assignment and school boundary recommendations were based on aligning elementary, middle school, and high school boundaries together so that geographic and feeder rights create vertical alignment of schools, predictable pathways for students, and a more balanced pipeline of students to meet the capacity of schools. The alignment of geographic and feeder rights caused some areas to be reassigned to a new middle school or lose their previous dual middle school grade rights to both Deal MS and the nearby education campuses. By extending the grandfathering rights for these neighborhoods



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assigned to new middle schools, students from across the park will have access to Deal MS until 2022. This will give these communities rights to Deal MS three or four years after the opening of MacFarland MS, which is enough time for them to make a smoother transition to MacFarland MS since the programs and facility will be fully established by then.

Q: Why was 2022 chosen as the school year for the revised phase-in policy for families reassigned to a new middle school?

A: The current phase-in policies allow families to maintain their previous geographic rights to the middle school or PK-8 school assigned to their address until the new middle school opens. The first new middle school to reopen will be MacFarland, with an expected opening of SY17 or SY18 depending on the extent of the school's modernizations. The phase-in period is being extended to SY2022 in anticipation for when the next comprehensive boundary review process will take place, which will be coordinated with the release of the next decennial Census.

Q: When will MacFarland Middle School be reopened?

A: MacFarland MS is expected to open in either SY17 or SY18, depending on the extent of the school's modernizations.

Q: The phase-in for students assigned to a new middle school was extended by three or four years. What will be the impact of extending the phase-in policies on the reopening of MacFarland MS? Will this impact Deal MS or Wilson HS?

A: The extension of the phase-in policy will not detrimentally impact the utilization of Deal MS or Wilson HS in the short term because these students already had geographic rights prior to the boundary revisions. The Deputy Mayor for Education and DCPS will work closely together to ensure that the new MacFarland MS has the resources and programming to ensure success so that Deal and Wilson are not overextended due to West of the Park dual right students after the new middle school opens.

Q: What is the communication plan for letting students and families assigned to the new middle schools know about their extended phase-in time period?



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A: The Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) will communicate these modifications to the community at large and to the specific education stakeholder groups. DCPS will work with the impacted schools to inform them of the extension of these policy changes and will update their school assignment and boundary implementation plans.

Establishing dual feeder rights for Kelly Miller MS to Eastern HS or Woodson HS

Q: How does establishing dual feeder rights to Eastern HS and Woodson HS for rising 9th grade Kelly Miller Students help address the Anacostia River acting as a geographic barrier?

A: The student assignment and boundary recommendations were based on aligning elementary, middle school, and high school boundaries together so that geographic and feeder rights create vertical alignment of schools, predictable pathways for students, and a more even pipeline of students to meet the capacity of schools. To accomplish this, Eastern HS's boundary was aligned with their feeder middle schools (i.e., Jefferson MS, Stuart-Hobson MS, Eliot-Hine MS, and Browne EC) and Kelly Miller MS was aligned with HD Woodson HS. This resulted in some neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River being reassigned to either HD Woodson HS or Anacostia HS from Eastern HS. Providing rising 9th grade Kelly Miller MS students with dual feeder rights to either HD Woodson HS or Eastern HS provides access across the river.

Q: Kelly Miller students will have dual feeder rights to HD Woodson HS and Eastern HS. What will be the impact on HD Woodson and Eastern High Schools?

A: Providing dual rights for rising 9th grade Kelly Miller students to Eastern HS and HD Woodson HS may cause an increase in the enrollment at Eastern HS, which may result in fewer out of boundary students admitted to Eastern. The additional rights to Eastern for Kelly Miller students may decrease the pipeline of students attending HD Woodson; however, the HD Woodson's school's boundary increased dramatically through the boundary review process and now has over 1,500 new age-appropriate students included in its boundary. The Deputy Mayor for Education and DCPS will work closely together to ensure that HD Woodson has the resources and programming it needs to ensure their success.



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Q: How can rising 9th grade from Kelly Miller utilize public transportation to access Eastern HS?

A: The Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) will be convening a transportation task force with other District agencies this year to ensure bus routes and services are maximized to support safe and efficient public school travel by students. In addition, the DME will explore whether the city can implement free passage on Metrorail to 9th through 12th grade students for travel to and from public school (recommendation 33 of the student assignment recommendations).

Q: What is the communication plan for rising 9th graders from Kelly Miller MS to know about their new feeder rights to Eastern HS? Will students lose out because Round 1 of the common lottery application (MySchool DC) for high schools has already closed?

A: The Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) will communicate these modifications to the community at large and to the specific education stakeholder groups. DCPS will work with the impacted schools, students, and families to inform them of these policy changes and will update their school assignment and boundary implementation plans to reflect these tweaks. Regarding the MySchool common lottery application, any current Kelly Miller student who had already selected Eastern High School as one of their school choices on their My School DC application will have that school selection removed from their application before the lottery is run because they have a right to Eastern High School and don't need to apply in the lottery to attend Eastern. My School DC will notify, by email or phone, any Kelly Miller family whose application needs to be modified.

Process for modifying the student assignment plan

Q: What was the process for making these two tweaks to the school boundary plan?

A: The Mayor expressed concerns about cutting off current cross-park and cross-river school access. The incoming administration identified policy options to address these concerns, taking into account the extensive public feedback received throughout the boundary process along with the feedback received since the release of the student assignment recommendations. The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education completed extensive



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analysis to understand any impacts the tweaks to the student assignment and boundary recommendations may cause prior to making a final decision. The Deputy Mayor solicited additional feedback on the latest tweaks with some community and education stakeholders who are knowledgeable about these neighborhoods and the boundary revision process.

Q: Are any future modifications to the boundary process planned?

A: No. We do not expect any additional significant modifications to the boundary process.

Q: Are there any other aspects to the Boundary Plan that have been clarified over the last few months?

A: Yes. The Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) needed to clarify the student assignment and boundary recommendations based on the logistics of implementing some of the recommendations for SY15-16. For example, the DME explicated the phase-in policy regarding students maintaining their current in-boundary preference for siblings by extending the preference to siblings graduating from the school the following year and not just if the sibling will be attending the current school (e.g., students with rising 9th graders at Deal will qualify for the phase in policy). Also, due to additional information and process needs, the recommendation that in-boundary students who move out-of-boundary may stay for the remainder of the year but must apply to the My School DC System in order to obtain a seat beyond the end of the school-year will not be implemented for SY15-16 (recommendation 4). Modifications such as these will be explained in more detail in DCPS's implementation plan.

Q: When will the next comprehensive boundary revision process occur?

A: The anticipated next comprehensive boundary review process is expected to occur in 2022, in coordination with the release of the next decennial Census.