

Proposed Revisions to Cross-Sector Task Force Mid-Year Mobility Policy

November 2016

Key data findings provided to Cross-Sector Task Force:

1. There were **2,108 PK-12 new student transfers (2013-14) into a D.C. publicly funded school (not previously in a DCPS or DC charter school, but could have been a DC resident)** between October 5th and the end of the school year and 86% enrolled in DCPS schools and 14% enrolled in charter schools.
2. There were **620 PK-12 charter student transfers to a DCPS school** during the 2013-14 school year.
3. **DCPS audited enrollment increased by a net 2%** over the course of the year.
4. **Charter sector enrollment declined by a net 5%** over the course of the 2013-14 year.

| Within School Year Transfers | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 |
|--|--------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Students who entered or left "other" D.C. funded schools | 202 | 114 | 104 |
| Students who left DC publicly funded schools | 3,174 | 2,341 | 2,494 |
| <i>Students who left DCPS</i> | | | <i>1,486</i> |
| <i>Students who left PCS</i> | | | <i>1,008</i> |
| Students who transferred within sector | 826 | 784 | 743 |
| <i>DCPS during year transfers within DCPS</i> | | | <i>673</i> |
| <i>Charter student transfers within charter sector</i> | | | <i>70</i> |
| Students who transferred out of sector | 638 | 572 | 669 |
| <i>DCPS transfers to charter sector</i> | | | <i>49</i> |
| <i>Charter student transfers into DCPS</i> | | | <i>620</i> |
| New students who transfer into D.C.'s publicly funded schools | 2,037 | 1,766 | 2,108 |
| <i>New students transfer into DCPS schools</i> | | | <i>1,819</i> |
| <i>New students transfer into charter schools</i> | | | <i>289</i> |
| Students being counted toward "mid-year mobility" | 6,877 | 5,577 | 6,118 |

- The 74 **Category 1 Schools** were enrolled with 52% of DCPS students and 48% of charter students and were the most stable, with **low entry and low exit**. These were the **highest performing DCPS and charter schools**.
- 92% of the enrollment in the 48 **DC Category 2 Schools (low entry and high exit)** are charter schools and they **dramatically out-perform** the **Category 3 Schools (high entry, high exit)** which are 88% DCPS and only 12% charter enrollments.
- A small set of 16 schools created **Category 4 Schools** with **high entry and low exit** were primarily DCPS (94%) and only 6% PCS enrollment, with their performance level slightly lower than the Category 2 Schools, but not substantially.

The five proposed Policy Goals presented to the Cross-Sector Task Force should be amended as follows:

1. Better understand why students enter, transfer, or exit mid-year **and between years**.
Rationale for proposed change: Policy makers need to understand BETWEEN year mobility and not just solve for mid-year mobility.
- ~~2. More equitably distribute new mid-year students or transfer students to schools across both sectors so as to reduce the concentration of mid-year transfer students in high-churn schools.
Rationale for proposed deletion: The policy approach should not be to try to control concentrations of students experiencing high mobility, but rather to do a good job preparing schools to assist these students.~~
- ~~3. Ensure that schools are better **administratively and educationally** prepared for new students who transfer or enter mid-year and **between years**. ~~by providing the school with information on incoming students.~~
Rationale for proposed change: The focus of policy change should be on helping the students; information about students is only a small part of how schools must be administrative prepared to support and educate the students.~~
4. Ensure that students and families are aware of their **enrollment rights and** school choices should they enter or transfer school mid-year, across both sectors.
Rational for proposed change: A “choice” system favors the exercise of choice, as opposed to claiming rights, even if the by-right school offers advantages equal or greater than a “choice” school; information must clearly communicate the benefits of attending by-right schools.
- 5. Reduce financial incentives for mid-year exit from charter schools.**
~~5. Facilitate charter schools’ ability to take on transfer and entry students mid-year.
Rationale for proposed substitution: Since the primary objective of a change in mid-year mobility is to reduce it, then the Task Force should look for ways to discourage schools from counseling students out because they are difficult, but still allow for the fact that for some students, a mid-year transfer may be best for the student and/or family and that costs and financial responsibilities for charter schools, like DCPS schools are not reduced with individual mid-year exit.~~
Rationale for deletion: Currently, charter schools, with space, may take on students during the school year if they choose. For “out-of-state” students, DCPS is organized and scaled to efficiently respond to demand, as it has schools across the city serving all grades. Setting up a duplicative enrollment system is costly, bureaucratic, and undermines DCPS as our public system of right.

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DCPS Position and Proposal

The overarching approach to address challenges of mobility of students in our District's public schools should be to **understand and prepare for** within year *and* between year mobility, rather than try to control it.

1. It is appropriate for “new” students, including from charters, to enter their DCPS neighborhood schools, where all students are welcome, by right. There are also financial benefits to the District from economies of scale of DCPS that enable it to absorb additional students (2,439 new and charter students in 2013-14) without new funds.
2. If there are abuses by certain charter LEAs that push out students during the year, the individual abuses should be addressed by the PCSB and can be addressed without creating complex and costly administrative controls under OSSE or the DME.
3. The District should address systemic incentives for pushing out students from charters through budget policy.
4. DCPS needs to put in place targeted supports in the Category 3 schools, with high entry and exit, to be sure these schools are **prepared** for the challenges of within year and between year mobility. the UPSFF formula committee could examine whether to create an at-risk category for students who are multiple movers.
5. OSSE already has a centralized data system on entry, transfer, and exit, in SLED which can provide data and information for analysis.
6. The District should **not duplicate** an administrative structure for DCPS's registration system to manage within year mobility.

DCPS should establish a working group to develop proposals for the FY2017 budget to **meet the needs of transfer students and to put systems in place to better support high mobility schools, such as:**

1. **Lowering class sizes** for teachers, in Category 3 and 4 schools than for category 1 and 2 schools to be prepared for increasing enrollments during the year.
2. **Staffing and training counselors** to be prepared to immediately secure and interpret charter and out of state records for students to appropriately place them, counsel them and get **special education or ELL services** they may need.
3. **Prepare academic and social supports for transfer students**, everything from a buddy system upon arrival to tutoring to ensure they can benefit from class time, to quick diagnostics on preparation for class and levels.
4. **Better communicating and explaining the DCPS role as a system of right** that will welcome all students whenever and from wherever they come.

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There are opportunities for the Mayor and Council to **increase policy and budget incentives for keeping students and penalties for pushing out challenging students.**

1. Continue and expand research on student enrollment patterns—particularly looking at between year mobility.
2. Have transfers of charter students to DCPS after Oct 5th result in loss of per student facility allowance, but not affect the current year’s UPSFF—this is simple and doesn’t require multiple audits during the year.
3. Give DCPS and charter schools performance recognition for stable student enrollment (not total enrollment, but specific cohort survival).

There are opportunities for the Mayor and Council to **ensure during-year and between-year transfer students and high mobility schools are adequately and fairly supported.**

1. Charge OSSE with helping to translate transcripts, if not standardize them.
2. Put policies in place for timely transfer of records and penalties for not doing so.
3. Add another category for “at risk” students of “student has changed schools at least 3 times in 3 years”, whether within year or between year, but excluding school transition changes for promotion from ES to MS, or MS to HS.
4. Clarify current family and school rights for enrolling in any of the District’s publicly funded schools during the academic year and communicate these to the general public, schools, and real estate agents.