

Increasing Equity, Transparency, & Efficiency in the APS Charter School Enrollment Process

*An Overview for APS Charter School Board
Members*

April 18, 2019



Agenda

- Introductions and purpose of session
- Why are we tackling this project?
- Unified enrollment nationally
- Unified enrollment among APS charters
- Implementation process and timeline
- Discussion

Introductions



APS Office of Innovation

Matt Underwood, Executive Director

Nikki Goodson, Project Manager

- Implement the start-up and renewal petition process in alignment with State laws, rules and Board policy.
- Manage and provide support for TKES/LKES Charter and Partner Schools.

Dihanne Hayes, Program Manager

- Provide operational support for systems, services and facility management needs of schools.
- Manage the Buy Back Services Program.

Nicklaus Khan, Special Education Coordinator

- Monitor Charter Schools adherence to District, State, and Federal compliance as it relates to special education.
- Provide guidance on issues, concerns, with IEP development and implementation.

Kathleen Lu, Accountant

- Calculate Charter and Partner Schools allocation of funds.
- Monitor grants awarded to Charter Schools, Buy Back Service invoice and payments.

Corliss L. Melvin, School Business Analyst

- Interface with schools to provide improved business & reporting processes.
- Troubleshoot issues with District applications.

Nnenna Ogbu, Performance Data Manager

- Facilitate internal/external reporting of accountability data.
- Manage the unified enrollment project across Charter Schools.

Joshua Arnold, Project Facilitator

- Support the development of processes and procedures for effective office management.
- Serve as department liaison for parent complaints/inquiries.

Brian Eschbacher

- Brian coaching APS on this project through support from Dell Foundation
- Worked as consultant for Deloitte for several years prior to joining Denver Public Schools (DPS) in 2012
- Served in several roles at DPS, ultimately as Executive Director of Planning & Choice
- Responsible for managing the expansion of the fastest-growing urban district in the country by forecasting future capacity needs, interfacing with city leaders and developers to allocate resources for new schools
- Oversaw what has been recognized as the leading enrollment system in the country, DPS's SchoolChoice.

Why are we tackling this project?

- APS currently offers a variety of school choice options to families seeking education opportunities outside of their neighborhood school: 18 charter schools which currently serve 18% of the district's 52,000 students.
- Yet the current school choice process is esoteric and school-centric.
- For families, the process does little to help parents gather information about charter school options, nor does it reduce procedural barriers for families hoping to apply to multiple charter schools.
- For charter schools and the Office of Innovation, the entire process can be improved to allow for better communications, data verification and integration, seat assignment and enrollment, and overall data quality between schools and the district.

Why are we tackling this project?

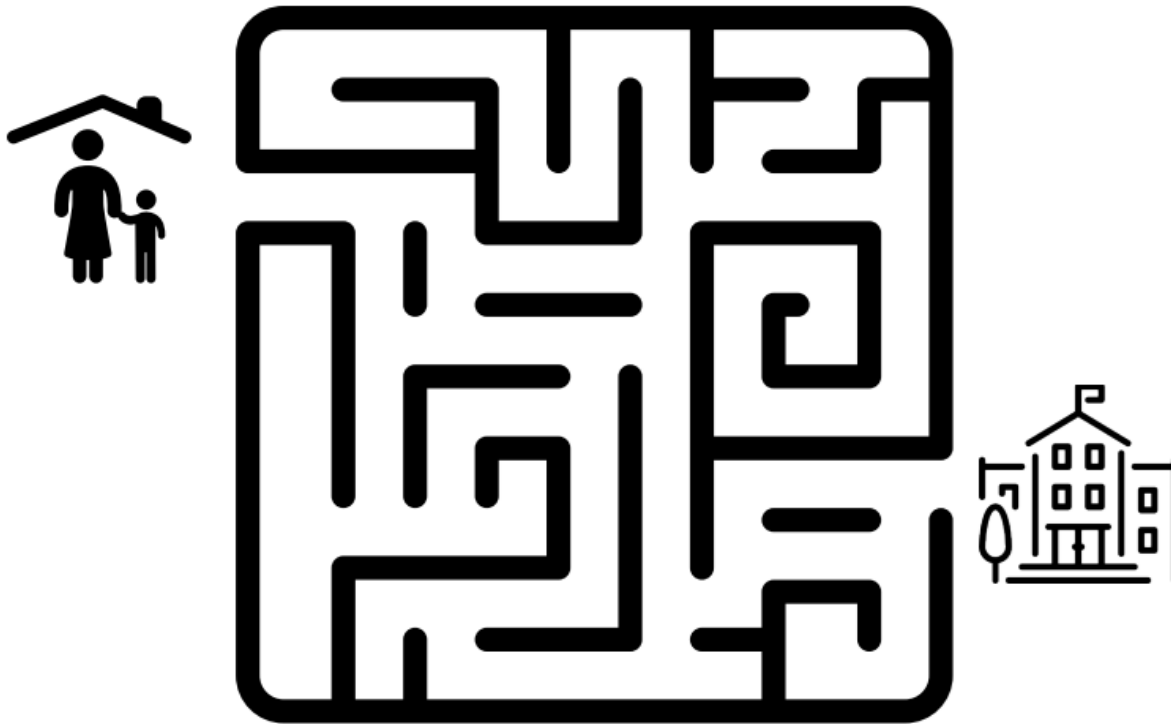
- To address these challenges, the Office of Innovation is:
 - building a **centralized marketing and finder tool** for all 18 of the district's charter schools
 - **piloting a common application and lottery process** among a voluntary set of the district's charter schools with the hope of eventually having all of the district's charter schools sign on to this unified enrollment process.
- The anticipated benefits of this project include:
 - **Equity:** Increased equity of access to educational options for APS families to help make informed school choices
 - **Transparency:** Clear and understandable school choice system for all involved--families, schools, and district—and better demand data
 - **Efficiency:** A single streamlined system making it easier for families to navigate and reducing schools' administrative burdens and costs associated with the application and lottery process

What is “unified enrollment”?

- What is the goal?
- What are the components?
- How is it being used in other school districts nationally?

Key Question

How does a city provide access to schools to best serve families, schools, and the system at large?



The goal is to make it **Fair** and **Easy**.

Components of Unified Enrollment Solutions



Find

Research schools through online tools, community events, and school visits to learn what is right for them



Apply

Complete one application that covers all schools. Prioritize schools in the order you wish to attend



Match

Students receive one matched school based on school availability and family preference.

Family Engagement / Support

Policies / Processes

Why is Unified Enrollment Important?



Families

- Largest beneficiary
- Makes it easy and fair
- Increases equity between levels of social capital
- Builds awareness of school options and quality
- Reduces confusion over timelines / processes



Schools

- Central supports to inform families about enrollment
- Earlier access to family decisions on attendance
- Defined transfer windows
- Levels the playing field between schools by being a part of the same system (reduced “creaming”)
- Helps mitigate some common criticisms of charter school enrollment from opponents



City / System

- Better data on the types of schools students are seeking
- Better fills high quality seats through information sharing
- Identifies areas of the city that have lower interest and may need improvements
- Key input to student-based budgeting through access to accurate enrollment data

Different Flavors of Enrollment Solutions to Match Local Context

Chicago: 370,000 students



Size



Camden: 16,000 students

Operated by the district in
Denver / Chicago / NoLA



Governance



501c3 in Indy / Camden

Oakland: one lottery for all
traditional schools,
another for all charters



Scope



All district, charter, some
vouchers in NoLA

Different Levels of Implementation to Match the Local Context



Awareness of Options

Printed School Info

- Printed school information
- Family resource center to answer questions

Interactive Online Finders

- Online school finder with quality information
- Formalized community organization partners
- Marketing budget to drive awareness / school expos

Applications

Common Application

- Common timelines across sectors
- Common application for all schools

Open Access

- Everything above, plus:
- Online applications that are mobile-friendly and in multiple languages
- No auditions or testing required for application

Assignment

Multiple Assignments

- Common dates
- Multiple seats occupied by the same student
- Individual waitlists

Unified Lottery

- One student to one seat
- Algorithm used to assign students
- Centralized waitlists
- Process for summer and mid-year enrollees

Lighter Touch / Lower Barriers to Implementation

Best Practice / Full Implementation

How might we unify APS charter school enrollment?

- What were initial concerns of schools?
- How have we been working to address them?
- What's the proposed process and timeline moving forward?

This is based on trust

Families must trust



- They have the accurate information and can get support for open questions
- The assignment process is fair
- Schools are not discriminating against them



Schools must trust

- Project timelines will be met
- They have access to data
- Policies will be fair
- They have support and training for new technology



The system must trust

- Schools will share feedback on key decisions and make accommodations
- Schools will engage in training and provide needed information by due dates
- Information shared with families is accurate
- Technology vendors will deliver on their timelines

Honoring School Autonomy in a Unified System

Existing cities have been able to maintain a high level of school autonomy while unifying the enrollment process. These are some areas that the working groups has explored and can explore further:

- Host our own website, printed materials, and school tours
- Control school information like mission, clubs, sports on a school finder
- Maintain school control over class and grade sizes
- Maintain the ways that we prioritize students in the lottery (siblings, staff, etc.)
- Have visibility to the number of students selecting my school by grade
- Have visibility to the names of students who have selected my school
- Determine whether to have waitlists and when to pull students from them

Procurement of vendors

- RFP process is active and members of stakeholder group represented on evaluation team:
 - [School Finder RFP](#) (closes at end of April)
 - [Application Management System RFP](#) (closes at end of April)
 - Lottery RFP (will be live shortly and close mid-May)

Solidifying agreement for 2020 lottery pilot

- Using experience of other districts and feedback from school staff and boards, developing agreement between Office of Innovation and schools electing to participate in common application/lottery pilot for 2020 with agreements focused on:
 - Governance & Decision-Making
 - School Finder & Marketing
 - Application Management System
 - Lottery
 - Registration, Waitlists, & Transfers
 - Audit & Review
 - Financial Commitment
 - Cancellation Clause
- Targeting early June (post-vendor selection) for schools to sign on to pilot

Cross-Sector Working Groups

Based on lessons learned from existing unified enrollment cities that have implemented policies and systems with district and charter schools, we propose two different cross-sector working groups to be established summer 2019:

	Implementation Group	Advisory Group
Members	Enrollment managers, Operations staff, APS project members, Software vendors (as needed)	Charter Executive Directors, APS Senior Leadership, Software vendors (as needed)
Charge	Resolve system configuration, communication and training plans, draft enrollment processes/policies	Discuss and resolve escalated issues, Review draft policies for approval, Receive updates on overall project
Cadence	Weekly one-hour phone calls with in- person check-ins	Monthly in-person check-ins and/or phone calls

Summary Project Timeline

Phase 1: Prepare School Finder (July 2018 through July 2019)

- Step 1: Pre-planning – July & August 2018
- Step 2: Engagement – August 2018 through July 2020
- Step 3: Procurement – March 2019 through May 2019
- Step 4: School Finder Build-Out – June through August 2019
- Step 5: School Finder Launch – August 2019
- Step 6: Communications & Feedback – Summer 2019

Phase 2: Prepare Application/Lottery (July 2019 through June 2020)

- Step 1: Develop and implement communications plan – SY2020
- Step 2: Application/Lottery Build-Out – July 2019 through December 2019
- Step 3: Application Launch – January 2020
- Step 4: Lottery – TBD (Spring 2020)
- Step 5: Waitlist Management – post-lottery, recurring

Discussion

From what you just heard:

- What helps clarify questions that you walked in with?
- What questions or concerns still remain?

Take 2 minutes to yourself.

Then 5 minutes with your neighbors.

Then we'll share out as a group.