



Growing Together FAQ

Sources of Information

Where can I get more information about the Growing Together proposal?

All information is housed at the Engage DPS Website: <https://engage.dpsnc.net/>

1. Engagement and Project Background Information:

<https://engage.dpsnc.net/dps-boundary-and-magnet-project>

2. Specific Programs and Boundary Recommendations:

<https://engage.dpsnc.net/growing-together-regions-programs-and-boundaries>.

Neighborhood & Application Elementary Schools: Growing Great Schools Together

DPS is committed to all schools being excellent schools. Informed by school and community input through a two-year engagement process, the Growing Together plan enhances the academic program offered at every DPS elementary school. Both neighborhood and application schools will provide *all* students with at least weekly visual art and music instruction in appropriate classrooms, at least weekly world language instruction, and *daily* emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) instruction through the curriculum.

In addition to a robust neighborhood school academic program, application programs provide unique differentiated instruction, such as changes to the calendar, language, or pedagogy. Application programs were selected based on extensive feedback from the community leaders, parents, students and school staff.

How does this plan (Academic Program & Boundaries) promote school diversity and equity?

The three levels of this plan – regions, application program placement, and school boundaries – have been intentional in using all available demographic data regarding DPS students and the Durham community. Moreover, regions were designed to ensure that each region has at least 50 percent families of color (self-reported in the 2019 American Community Survey) and at or above \$50,000 median family income. In addition, application programs were placed and assigned neighborhood enrollment boundaries to promote access to academic programs that would be beneficial for all students. School boundaries are designed and proposed using historic student enrollment, current and future residential development and growth in Durham, and median family income as key measures.

What does it mean to use an equity-based lottery?

All boundaries, including application school boundaries, have been drawn to promote school-level diversity. An equity-based lottery assigns weights to a student applicant that balances a school's overall student enrollment to reflect the Durham community. The rules for the application lottery will be developed over the next few months by the Implementation & Rules Working Group.

Regions & Academic Programs

How do regions work? Why do we need regions?

Regions are important for several reasons. First, a regional approach helps DPS ensure equitable access to PreK, EC and other specialized classrooms for families across the district. For example, through looking at regions, DPS identified that as of today there are no application program seats available to families living in the DPS Eastern Region (east of the upcoming East End Connector/I-885). Second, regions also increase transportation efficiency—fewer buses, more efficient bus routes, shorter ride times—by providing academic programs closer to student homes.

DPS is proposing to offer the same application programs in each region, which 1) ensures equitable access throughout Durham, 2) increases the likelihood that families can attend a desired academic program, and 3) increases transportation efficiency.

Every region will provide access to each of the four application programs proposed by the Growing Together plan. Dual Language Immersion and Year-Round application programs are available at one school in each region. Fewer schools will offer International Baccalaureate (2) and Montessori (3) programs, but each region will have access to one International Baccalaureate and one Montessori school via the application lottery. Which regions will have access to which International Baccalaureate and Montessori programs will be determined through the Implementation & Rules Working Group over the next couple of months.

How were schools selected for an application program?

The placement of application programs followed the suitability criteria set forth in Policy 4150-*School Assignment* that includes centrality to the region, community context, historical enrollment and building utilization (for example, whether the program is located in a school building with enough space to meet community demand).

Can you share details about the Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Program?

At this time, Durham Public Schools' Dual Language Immersion instruction will be in Spanish. The implementation rules for Dual Language Immersion will be developed over the next few months by the Implementation & Rules Working Group. Dual Language Immersion schools will offer World Language, visual arts, music, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) for all enrolled students. Dual Language Immersion will transition from being a program only available to students in a few schools who happen to live within a school's boundary to being available through the application lottery in each of five regions.

School Boundaries

How will school boundaries work under the Growing Together proposal?

Every school will have a boundary defined as a geographic attendance area designating eligible students to attend. If a student lives in that school's boundary, then that school would be the student's elementary school for attendance, regardless of the academic program (application or neighborhood).

The DPS Boundary Interactive Map (<https://bit.ly/ProposedDPSBoundaries>) provides the proposed boundaries for all elementary schools in the district. Families can put in an address using the magnifying glass icon and click on the map near that address. The displayed school is the addressed boundary.

All students living in a boundary will be assigned to that school, unless they enter the lottery to attend a choice program at another school or opt-out of the specialized program. (Opt-out schools will be designated by the Implementation & Rules Working Group). If a student's assignment boundary school has an application program, then all students in the boundary have access to that program. They do not need to apply (the one exception to this is Dual Language Immersion programs—see below).

The difference between application and neighborhood schools is that neighborhood school boundaries are designed to fill the entire school to capacity, while application school boundaries have been designed to leave lottery application seats open. The number of open seats will be determined each year based on projected enrollment and will then be filled via the application lottery.

For example, EK Powe is proposed as an International Baccalaureate school (IB) with a boundary. All students living in the boundary will be assigned to EK Powe and would have access to the IB program. In addition, application school boundaries have been designed so that each application school (whether IB, Year-Round, Montessori or Dual Language) has capacity to accommodate lottery application student seats. Eligibility for these seats is determined by the program type: Year-Round and Dual Language lottery seats are filled by students living within that region; Montessori and International Baccalaureate lottery seats are filled by students living within eligible regions.

Note: Although this proposal dissolves former geographic priority zones from the lottery application rules, boundaries for application programs have been designed to support a diverse base area student body while also trying to honor legacy application program priority zones to the extent reasonable.

Will school boundaries be changing often in the coming years as Durham grows?

The goal of the Growing Together initiative is to develop policies, systems and procedures to ensure that Durham Public Schools can address Durham's growing population in ways that maintain access, equity and diversity for all schools.

This initial plan is for elementary academic programs and student assignment is the first step for positioning Durham Public Schools on a scheduled five-year planning interval, per Policy 4150. This will ensure DPS continues to monitor student enrollment, review equity, diversity and inclusion, and align school capacities with academic programs and projected student enrollment to continue building an

equitable school system in which all students can ignite their limitless potential and have access to academic programs and opportunities throughout Durham County.

Will students assigned by both boundaries and application create in-school segregation?

For all DPS Application Programs other than DLI, which includes Year-Round, Montessori, and International Baccalaureate, all students attending the academic program will have complete access to the school's program – there will be no distinction between students that attend the school via boundary and those that attend via the application process.

Regional DLI schools will include cohorts of students that are taught through full immersion in Spanish by a bilingual teacher. Other students in the school will receive specialized instruction for world languages. Boundary students will not be required to be in the language immersion classrooms but may apply with other students in their region. Rules for lottery access to the dual language immersion classrooms of a DLI school will be determined in the next few months with community input with a focus on equity and diversity via the Implementation & Rules Working Group.

Implementation & Rules

When will the Academic Program & Boundaries proposal take effect?

This plan is proposed for the 2024-25 Academic Year. Rules for implementation will need to be formally adopted by the Implementation & Rules Working Group, as the proposal does not make a formal recommendation as to the impact for existing students attending DPS schools. DPS has modeled the impacts for 2024-25 kindergarteners and beyond over a five- and ten-year horizon to plan for adequate space and suitable classrooms for DPS students.

When & how will the implementation rules be finalized?

The Implementation & Rules Working Group will include internal and external stakeholders' input to develop the rules of school assignment including transitioning for legacy students, access to application programs, and priorities. The application lottery in January 2024 will implement the update rules for regional and district-wide application schools.

Why doesn't this proposal include middle and high schools?

Durham Public Schools has not had the opportunity to set forth a vision for Academic Programs and Student Assignment comprehensively since the 1992 city-county school system merger. The Growing Together project has been ongoing for more than two years. The team has done extensive engagement with the community, families, students, staff, and the Durham Public Schools Board of Education. After establishing elementary school academic programs and school boundaries as the foundation for DPS' vision for equitable student success, the Growing Together initiative will focus on middle and high school (secondary) alignment in the second half of 2022.

What about students at schools or programs that will be transitioning?

The Implementation & Rules Working Group will determine rules governing legacy enrollment in 2024-25 for current (2022-23) DPS elementary school students over the coming months. DPS families who are interested in participating in shaping the Implementation Procedures for Growing Together will have an opportunity to share their interest when the working group's structure is developed. A call for participants will be announced through the DPS website, on social media, and by email to DPS families.

Will program links between elementary and middle school magnet programs (e.g Montessori, IB, Year-Round) remain the same, or what will they look like?

The rules for school assignment will be developed over the next few months by the Implementation & Rules Working Group; however, we anticipate that program links will be preserved as the revised Policy 4150 School Assignment has language that honors program links.

Will sibling links continue to exist for Application Programs?

The rules for school assignment will be developed over the next few months by the Implementation & Rules Working Group; however, we anticipate that sibling linkage in the application lottery will be preserved as the revised Policy 4150 School Assignment has language that honors sibling links.

Feedback & Engagement

How can we share questions or comments regarding the proposed Academic Program & Boundaries?

Feedback can be shared on <https://engage.dpsnc.net/>.