

## Parents Choose Toolkit: Evaluating and Applying to Schools in DPS (K-12)

*We always say that children are capable of anything, but at Transform Education Now (TEN), we are also confident in the power of a parent. TEN believes that you, as a parent, can and must be a part of the conversations that ultimately shape the schools your children go to as well as the decisions made at those schools. Using this packet, you can not only prepare for those decision making conversations, but also, learn how to evaluate schools, pair data with what you decide a high-quality school should be, and finally, introduce your wonderful and unique learner to their new school!*

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### Materials Needed

2020 - 2021 Great Schools Enrollment Guide  
2019 All Schools SPF Summary  
TEN's 2020 Parents Choose Guidebook

**Far Northeast**  
**Near Northeast**

**Central**  
**Northwest**

**Southwest**  
**Southeast**

TEN's Great Schools Framework

## School Choice: Apply on Time!

Want to apply to a DPS program? **Remember these key dates and events** to help parents get it done on time!

TEN

SCHOOL CHOICE

# APPLY ON TIME!

**OCT. 31 - DEC. 31**

**Complete your TEN Parents Choose Toolkit**, in order to narrow down schools options! Next, you will want to **reach out to those schools for tours**. DPS schools must give tours year round and parents can attend DPS's Expo week but **this may be the most comfortable setting to get answers to questions** we can't find with data or enrollment guides.



**JAN. 15**

**Round 1 School Choice Opens**



**FEB. 18**

**Round 1 School Choice Closes**

**EARLY APRIL**

**Round 2 School Choice Opens**



**LATE AUGUST**

**Round 2 School Choice Closes**

**OCT. 7 - DEC. 31**

Though **Transform Education Now (TEN)'s Parents Choose sessions** and meetings are available year round, **this is the best time to learn how to evaluate and apply to schools.**

Parents receive their **free TEN Parents Choose Toolkit** to learn and take important notes for the application process.

**NOV. 30 - JAN. 8**

**Gather all of the documents you will need to apply ahead of time**, in case they need to be re-ordered! You will need:

- o Proof of **Address** and **Income**
- o Child's **Birth Certificate, Immunization Records and Transcripts from 9-12 (HS only)**

**JAN. 21 - JAN. 23**

Meet school leaders from each region at **DPS's School Expo week**:

- o Knowing which schools you want to visit ahead of time may help you to get the most out of the event
- o **Each region has a different date**, use DPS's website to find yours!

**LATE MARCH**



Keep an eye on your emails and mailbox - **its time for DPS to inform you about your school assignments!**

**AUGUST**

**ALL parents must complete registration EVERY YEAR. Reach out to your school to find out what the dates are and then using a bill and your child's birth certificate, complete your registration online or in person.**

**If you used school choice to get a seat at a new school but skip registration, your child will lose this seat and have to attend their neighborhood school.**



## Parents Choose: Choice Season Checklist

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Check off these important steps as you go!

**1. Schedule Your TEN Parents Choose Session → [calendly.com/ten\\_events](https://calendly.com/ten_events)**

Translation  
Interpretation  
Childcare

1 on 1 & Group Meetings: You Decide  
Where!  
FREE Parents Choose Toolkit

**2. My Child's Birthday**

My Child Turns 5 Before Oct. 1st for Kindergarten

**3. Gather Documents**

Proof of Address   
Birth Certificate from ANY Country   
Immunization Records

**4. Learn and List**

I Checked Whether I Live in an Enrollment Zone   
I Checked Whether I Have a Neighborhood/Boundary/Home School   
I Used My Toolkit to Understand How Schools are Performing

**5. Tour**

I Contacted All the Schools I Like for Tours   
I Attended DPS's Regional Expo Week   
I Used TEN's Great Schools Framework During Tours

**6. Apply on Time**

**I Applied by Feb. 18th at 4PM (DPS Schools)**

**7. Yearly Registration**

I Found Out My School Assignment   
I Contacted My School for Registration Day

## Part I: Presentation Notes

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Gather all of the **Materials Needed** and follow along with the presentation to answer the following questions:

1. How can TEN help parents?
2. What is **school choice**?
3. **When should I apply to a new school using school choice?**
4. **Why should I apply during Round 1?**
5. How do I apply to a new school using school choice?
6. What is a **boundary/home/neighborhood school**?

7. What is an **enrollment zone**? Why is this important?

- a. Let's stop to **find out if you live in an enrollment zone**. Use your computer or cell phone to visit: <https://dps.schoolmint.net/school-finder/home>. Pick what grade your child is going into, and then, **slowly** type in your address - the address will eventually pop up. Once it does, click your address. **Avoid adding interests for now, so that all possible results appear.**

b. **Do you have a neighborhood school?** *List them here!*

c. **Do any schools serve your enrollment zone?** *List them here!*

8. **What do traditional, innovation, charter, and magnet schools all have in common?**

### Find my neighborhood school

Type in your address and select a grade to look up your neighborhood school and see the boundary or zone for your location.

Your Address

Type in your address here.

Select grade

Select grade

FIND

This is your neighborhood school.

This school is in your enrollment zone.



9. What are some questions you have about what we've learned so far?
10. Who at TEN should I contact if I have more questions about school choice, performance, completing/getting help with my choice application, school tours, etc.?

**Carla Blanc** - Text/Call/Email Me with Any Questions!  
**Email:** [carla@transformeducationnow.org](mailto:carla@transformeducationnow.org)  
**Schedule Meeting:** [calendly.com/ten\\_events](https://calendly.com/ten_events)  
**Provided for Meetings:** Translation - Interpretation - Child Care

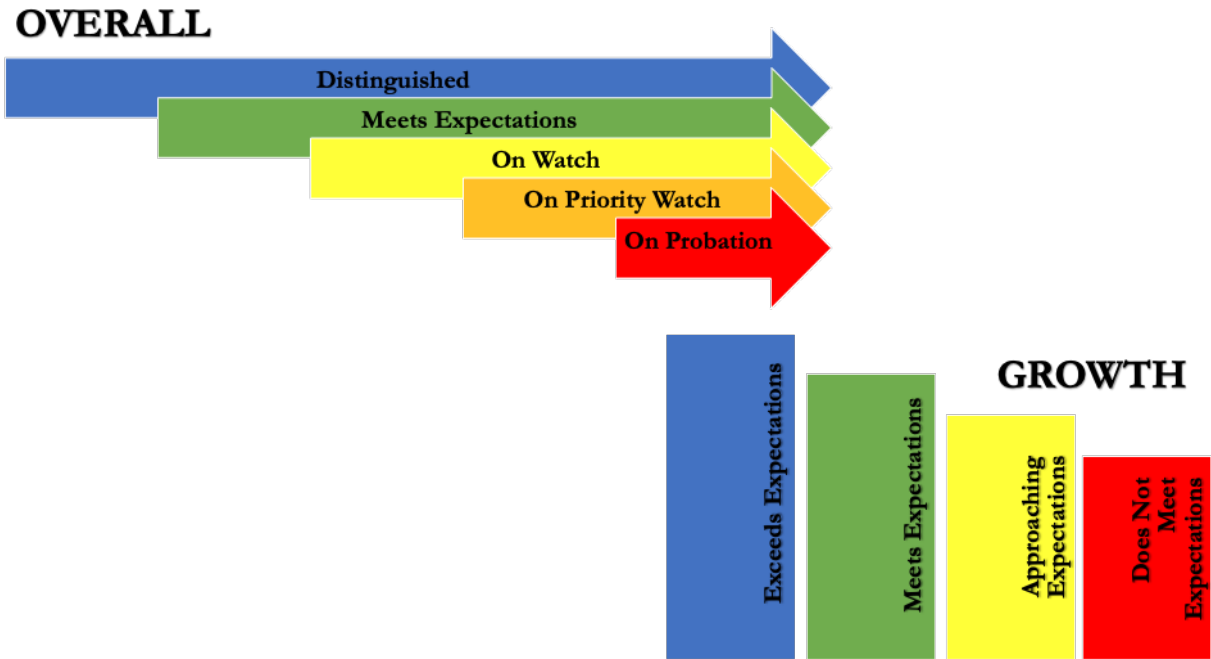
## Part II: Tools for Evaluating Schools

### Tool #1: Enrollment Guides & the All Schools Summary School Performance Framework (SPF) Grades

Each year, the school district prints **Enrollment Guides** meant for learning more about all of the schools in DPS. There is one booklet for elementary schools, and another for middle and high schools. Use this book to find out information like:

- ✓ 2 of the school's **SPF scores**
- ✓ **English Language Acquisition (ELA) services** at the school
- ✓ **Before/after school programming**
- ✓ **Basic transportation information**
- ✓ If students wear **uniforms** at the school

You'll notice **5 COLORS FOR OVERALL**



and only **4 COLORS FOR GROWTH**

**Remember, these are just 2 of the MANY scores DPS schools receive.** Keep working to learn more about some of the rest!

### Activity

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Use your **2020-2021 Great Schools Enrollment Guide** and follow along with the presentation to answer the following questions:

11. What does the **OVERALL** rating tell you about a school?
12. What does the **GROWTH** rating tell you about a school?
13. Use this section to list all the schools in your region with a **BLUE** or **GREEN** overall rating.



14. What if a school has a **YELLOW** overall rating?

a. Where can I find a specific growth percentage?

***INSTRUCTIONS:*** Use the **2018-2019 All Schools Summary**, which is sorted by region, for this part of the exercise.

15. If a school has a growth rating of 50%, that means children are getting 1 day worth of learning in 1 day. What if their **growth is higher than 50%**?

- What if their **growth rating is lower than 50%**?

Use this section to list all the schools in your region with a **YELLOW** overall rating and a growth rating of 50% or higher.



16. What are some questions you have about what we've learned so far?

17. What are some questions you still have that DPS's books do not answer?

## Tool #2: Transform Education Now (TEN)'s 2020 Parents Choose Guidebook

TEN believes that information about schools should not only be easy to interpret, but even easier to find. Because of this, each year we create data sheets parents can use to learn about all of the schools across the city, including student performance, growth, enrollment, maps and more - all in one convenient package. Use this book to find out information like:

✓ **How many children**  
**attend** the schools in your  
region

✓ **Students performing**  
**at grade level or Status**

✓ **Graduation rates**

✓ **Growing/Declining**  
**test performance or**  
**%Change**

✓ **% of Growth/Decline**  
**by Test Subject/Type at**  
each school

✓ **% of Free/Reduced**  
**Lunch students** at each  
school

✓ **% of Students in SPED**  
at each school

### Activity

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Find the section in your **2020 Parents Choose Guidebook** labeled "Students Meeting Grade Level" to answer the following questions:

1. The data shown in this section is shown as **STATUS** in the SPF, and is based on various tests including ELA & Math CMAS (Grades 3-8), PSAT/SAT (Grades 9-12), and the iStation test (Grades K-3).
  - a. What does the **STATUS** rating tell you about a school?





4. What are some questions you still have that TEN's Parents Choose Guidebooks do not answer?

## Part III: School Tours

### Tool #3: Transform Education Now's Great Schools Framework

Through countless meetings with community leaders, educators, parents like you and many more, TEN was able to put together the **Great Schools Framework**, a rubric organized into 4 categories which parents now use to determine if their future or current school is a high-quality program. Use this tool to find out information like:

- ✓ **Curriculum**
- ✓ **Teacher/Staff/Student Diversity**
- ✓ **Additional Supports for students in SPED**
- ✓ **How the school supports your child/family's language needs**
- ✓ **Teacher/Staff training**

### Activity

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Use your **Great Schools Framework** as well as the questions you have been recording in your previous activities to ask questions during school tours and the DPS Regional Expo.

### Teacher - School Community

1. How often does the school **give parents updates about how their child students are performing, other than during parent-teacher conferences?**
2. Are the teachers at your school **diverse?**
3. Does your school have **a plan to make sure its quality teachers stay every year?** If so, where can I find it?
4. **How does your school communicate with parents? Are all communications available in my language?**

5. Does your school have a **curriculum through the entire school year that is relevant to the cultures of the children in the classrooms?** Can you give me an example (ex: projects, lessons, trips) from this year?

### School Leadership

6. **Is the leadership team (ex: Principal, Vice Principal, Dean) diverse?**
7. How does your school collect feedback from family? **How is that feedback from families shared with all parents at the school?**
8. **How does your school inform families about its overall academic performance each year?**
9. **Are parents involved in the hiring process for school staff?** How so?

## Instruction & Program

10. Does your school have programming for ELL students? Students in Special Education? Gifted and Talented students?
11. Is there a way to track my child's progress during the school year in each of their subjects?
12. Does your school invite parents to participate in class activities? Can you give me an example from this year?
13. What are some unique program options students have at your school?
14. What are all of the school-wide tests my child will be taking? Where can I find the results?

## School Culture

15. Does your school have **ongoing training so that the staff addresses implicit biases?**  
**Can you give me an example from this year?**
16. Does your school have **ongoing training so that the staff knows how to support students from different backgrounds, races, ethnicities, etc.?** **Can you give me an example from this year?**
17. What are some different **ways parents can become leaders at your school?**
18. Sometimes having a safe school means having the right number of teachers and students per class - **what is the student to teacher ratio at your school?**
19. **How does your school manage student behavior?**

## Final 5 (Up to 12)

***INSTRUCTIONS:*** Use this section to take additional notes, especially about your top 5 - remember **you must choose a minimum of 5 on the application, and up to 12 total.**

★ Option #1: \_\_\_\_\_

★ Option #2: \_\_\_\_\_

★ Option #3: \_\_\_\_\_

★ Option #4: \_\_\_\_\_

★ Option #5: \_\_\_\_\_