

MY SCHOOL DC
The Public School Lottery
MySchoolDC.org

QUESTIONS BY PARENTS FOR PARENTS
2027-28 SCHOOL YEAR

Introduction

With the many public school options available in the District, parents and guardians must ask a variety of questions to find the school their child will call MY School. Parent representatives from the My School DC Parent Advisory Council (PAC) created this list of questions to help you get started. Visit schools' online profiles at **MySchoolDC.org** to get basic information, and then put a checkmark ☑ next to the questions you'd like to ask of school staff. Make sure to take them with you to EdFEST, school fairs and school open houses too!

Questions about school policies and support services

- ☐ Do you offer before and after care? How do I apply to your before and after care program? Is there enough room for all families interested in it?
- ☐ Are your before and aftercare programs managed by the school or an external organization? How does the programming align with the school's curriculum?
- ☐ What are your school uniforms or dress codes? Do you help families with the cost of the uniform?
- ☐ Are there added costs to your school programming that we should consider when thinking about your school as an option?
- ☐ If my child needs tutoring, is it available to them? Do you partner with external organizations to provide students with additional support (e.g., Higher Achievement, Reading Partners)?
- ☐ What types of sports, clubs and other extracurricular activities do you offer? Are they available to all students, including students with disabilities? Are there costs associated with these activities in order for students to participate in them? Are there limited slots or is there open availability?
- ☐ Do you have summer programming? If so, how much does it cost? Are vouchers accepted? Is it available for all students?
- ☐ Describe your school's culture and policies with respect to behavior management and discipline. For example, do you use a restorative justice approach? What type of support staff are available to assist students who face behavior management issues?
- ☐ What is your attendance policy?
- ☐ Do you have a dedicated Parent Liaison or Parent Engagement staff person that works with families who need extra help or works with families in general?

Questions about school curriculum

- ☐ What is your school's instructional model (e.g., Tools of the Mind)? How can parents learn about what their students are learning?
- ☐ What is your school's education philosophy and how is it embedded within its curricula? For example, are concepts like critical race theory or social justice taught?
- ☐ Do you incorporate culturally responsive teaching in your curriculum? If so, how?
- ☐ Please describe your school's approach to social and emotional learning.
- ☐ Do you partner with external organizations to expose students to different careers and technical education?
- ☐ What does test prep for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exam look like?
- ☐ What is the typical class schedule at your school?
- ☐ How much homework should my child expect to receive daily?
- ☐ Does your school offer vocational training programs (e.g., carpentry, masonry, electrician, barbering, cosmetology)? How do they qualify for those programs? Do these programs or courses count towards an apprenticeship?

Questions about school operations

- ☐ What type of technology do you use in your curriculum and how will my child use it?
- ☐ What is the average class size at your school? How many adults and kids are in the room?
- ☐ Does your school offer field trips or similar opportunities during the academic year?
- ☐ Do you offer gym class or recess as part of your curriculum? Do you have a playground or outdoor space for students to engage in recreational activities?
- ☐ Does your school have a full-time nurse and counselor on staff?

Questions about parent engagement

- ☐ Does your school have an organized Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) or similar group? If so, is it active?
- ☐ How do you engage parents at the classroom level? At the school level?
- ☐ Is there a school culture committee or other means of parent participation on issues like bullying and violence prevention?

Questions for families who are English Learners

- ☐ English is not my child's home language. What types of support are in place to help my child progress and succeed at your school?
- ☐ How does your school communicate with and share important information with families who are non-English speakers?
- ☐ How can I ask for an interpreter or for a document to be translated into my language?

Questions for families who have a child with disabilities

- ☐ If I suspect my child has a developmental delay, what is the school's process for determining if they need special education services?
- ☐ My child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan. How will you work with me and my child to manage their transition from their current school to your school? How does your school support students with the same disability as my child's?
- ☐ Are there staff chaperones on school field trips for children with disabilities?
- ☐ Do you have a self-contained classroom or do you offer inclusive classrooms for children with disabilities?
- ☐ Do you have full-time therapists on staff (occupational, speech, physical)?
- ☐ What is the difference between a Certificate of IEP Completion and a high school diploma? What programming and classes do you offer for students in the Certificate program?