



My School DC Common Lottery Board  
Washington, DC

April 19, 2022

Dear Common Lottery Board Members:

We write regarding the request of District of Columbia Public Schools that the District's My School DC platform be employed to bestow seats in a pre-K3 class created at Hyde-Addison Elementary School after the application deadline for the SY 2022-23 lottery cycle had passed. For the sake of the public's continued confidence in MSDC as a fair and equitable system, we respectfully urge you to oppose the request.

This council considers every issue before it within a framework of ensuring that the lottery is accessible, rational, and viewed as an equity-promoting vehicle within the District's public education system. Unfortunately, the proposal before you undermines this approach. There is simply no fair mechanism to allocate seats via MSDC once thousands of parents have researched options, ranked preferences, and are enrolling, given available information at the system's published deadlines. This standard should apply equally in cases of 16 seats or 16,000.

Uniform expectations are as important, however, with respect to the lottery's participating LEAs as the Washingtonians it serves. Saying "yes" today creates a detrimental precedent by putting similar requests in play for the future and turning what belong as standards into advanceable options. Indeed, the PAC has advocated for appropriate guidelines to minimize disruptive impacts on families arising from post-lottery, (sometimes 11<sup>th</sup> hour), changes to institutions' plans for the past several years. While those cases effectively removed seats, the forgone opportunity here, however, in adding them post hoc, applies to PK3 applicants universally, not just those directly impacted. The objectional consequences, therefore, are arguably worse.

It is rare, if not unprecedented, for the PAC to issue its own statement on a matter before you instead of having it passed along during a staff presentation. This is to convey to the Board the impact we believe this seemingly minor request carries. The public's conviction in the lottery as the most objective means available for parents exercising choice to pursue educational opportunities for their children is critical to the system's success. As parents, we make this a priority of our council's work and address it in often-painstaking detail. The

underlying request allows for winners and losers in a way that is incompatible with the lottery's objectives and should be denied.

We want to reassure the Board that we have considered the impact of this decision from both sides and we have determined, as the Parent Advisory Council, that any potential benefits do not outweigh the serious and damaging ramifications to our lottery system should this measure be passed or allowed.

Thank you for your consideration and service to the District's students and families