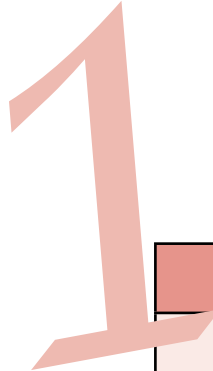


"CHOICE"

A complex election issue

In the upcoming school board election, voters will choose representatives to make decisions that will drive DPS policy in the future. The current board supports "choice," which allows families to choose from numerous schools.

With four of seven board seats up for a vote, the candidates' positions on issues



Geography Is Not Destiny

Home location doesn't necessarily determine school placement. Some neighborhoods have traditional boundaries, some have enrollment zones, and some schools have no boundary associated with them.

	Boundary	Enrollment Zone	Non-Boundary
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —A school with its own geographic boundary. —Students living in the boundary are guaranteed enrollment in grades kindergarten through 12. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —A school that shares a geographic boundary with one or more other schools. —Students living in an enrollment zone are guaranteed enrollment in grades kindergarten through 12 at one of the schools within the zone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —A school or program that does not have a geographic boundary, including charter schools and specialty programs. —A non-boundary program may be housed within a boundary school, such as Advanced Kindergarten at Bill Roberts. —Enrollment is not guaranteed.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —<i>Elementary</i>: Montclair School of Academics & Enrichment, Park Hill, Lowry —<i>Middle</i>: Hill Campus of Arts & Sciences —<i>High Schools</i>: East, Northfield 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —<i>Elementary</i>: Stapleton enrollment zone —<i>Middle</i>: Greater Park Hill/Stapleton enrollment zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —<i>Elementary</i>: Odyssey School, Polaris —<i>Middle/High School</i>: Denver School of the Arts

Choice Forms—Students in zones, or boundary students who prefer a school other than their home school, fill out a "SchoolChoice" form and rank their school priorities from one to five. DPS runs an algorithm that matches students to schools based on their preferences, school admission priorities and available space. New forms are filled out when students enter a new school, typically Kindergarten, 6th and 9th grades.

Choice Outcomes—District-wide, match rates for first or second choices in 2017 were **93%** for Kindergarten, **92%** for 6th grade, and **93%** for 9th grade.



Some Schools Are More Autonomous than Others

	Traditional	Magnet	Innovation	Charter
Administration	—Administration is operated through DPS.	—Administration is operated through DPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Administration is operated through DPS but with specific waivers of district policy, state statute, and collective bargaining. —Innovation plans have to be approved by DPS Board and renewed periodically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Independently operated public schools, governed by an independent board of directors. —Charters are approved by the school board with specific time-limited contracts that can be extended, or not, by the board.
Description	—Serves a general student body and adheres to all district and state policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Emphasizes a particular style of learning or educational need to serve students with a common interest. —Some have admission criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —2008 state law authorizes innovation schools, creating the ability to waive certain district and state policies. —Schools and principals can gain authority over budget, curriculum, schedule, calendar, hiring and firing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —1993 state law first authorized charter schools that have contracts with school boards for terms of performance, programming, and legal compliance. —Can use their own curriculum, hire and fire teachers, and institute policies independent of DPS.
Boundary/Zone/Non-Boundary	Boundary or Enrollment Zone	Non-Boundary	Boundary or Enrollment Zone	Enrollment Zone or Non-Boundary
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —<i>Elementary</i>: Lowry, Park Hill, Westerly Creek —<i>K-8</i>: Bill Roberts —<i>Middle</i>: Hill Campus of Arts & Sciences —<i>High Schools</i>: East, GW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —<i>Elementary</i>: Polaris, Bill Roberts Advanced K —<i>Middle/High School</i>: Denver Center for International Studies —<i>High School</i>: Denver School of the Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —<i>Elementary</i>: Swigert International, High Tech, Montclair School of Academics & Enrichment, Isabella Bird, Denver Discovery, Ashley —<i>Middle</i>: McAuliffe International —<i>High School</i>: Northfield High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —<i>Elementary</i>: Odyssey School —<i>K-8</i>: Denver Language School —<i>Middle</i>: Girls Athletic Leadership —<i>Middle/High School</i>: DSST: Stapleton, DSST: Conservatory Green



related to choice could maintain or change choice options in the future.

An informed vote will require an understanding of the current choice system and the language used to talk about it: enrollment zones; charter, innovation and magnet schools; school accountability. In preparation for reading about candidates' positions in our October issue, the *Front Porch* has created this guide to understanding choice in DPS.

What Is Choice?

“SchoolChoice” is the system DPS has created to give families options from which to choose the best school for their child—and not have their options limited to one school determined by the location of their home.

3 Accountability Measures Apply to All Schools

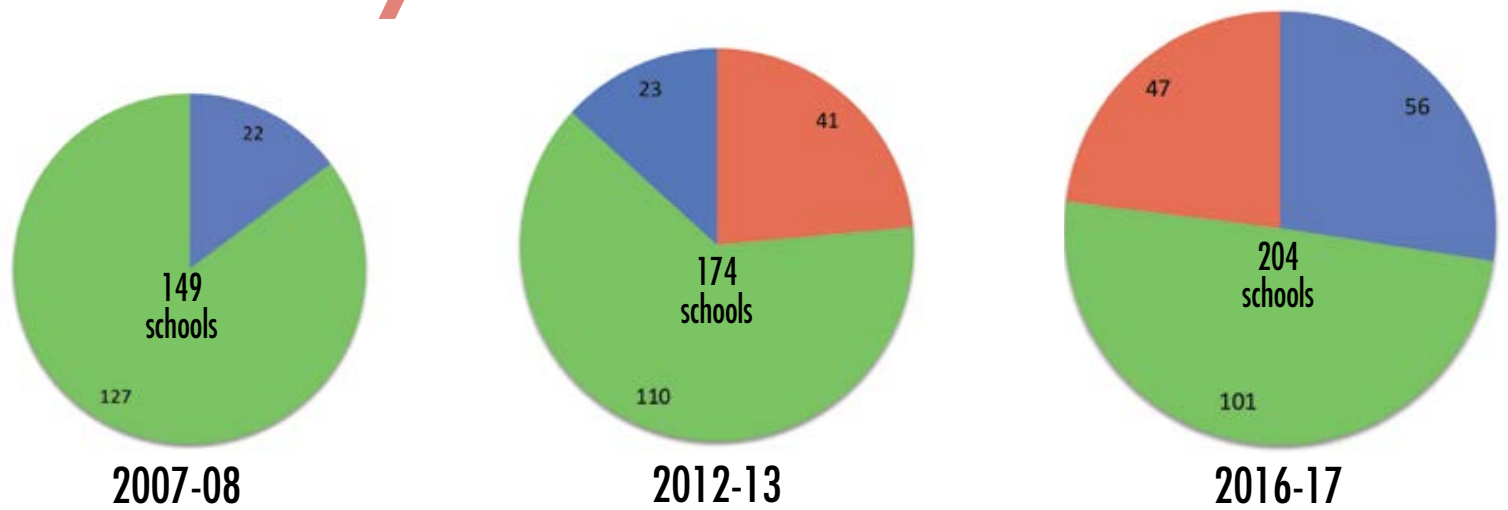
Contracts and Closures—Charter schools and waivers for innovation schools are granted by the board for limited periods of time and may not be renewed if agreed-upon standards aren't met. Traditional (district-run) schools may be closed or restarted with a new program and staff if they aren't meeting district standards. In fact, DPS has used this authority, as shown in the chart below that shows closures since 2009.

School Performance Framework—All DPS schools are held accountable through the School Performance Framework, which is like a report card for schools. It includes multiple measures of student performance, such as scores on standardized tests and other assessments, parent and student satisfaction, and college readiness.

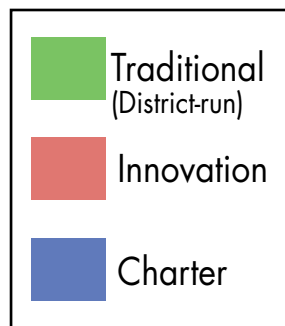
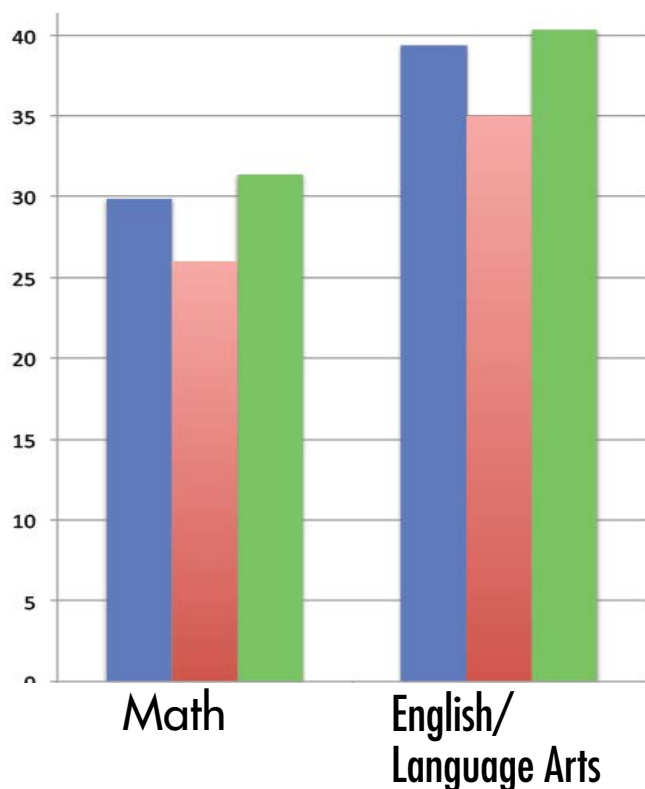
Financial Transparency—All charter schools and school districts must comply with the financial transparency act, which includes posting of annual budgets, financial audits, salary schedules or policies, financial data file and list of waivers received by the district or charter school. Charter schools must comply with state statute around bidding processes, although

DPS by the Numbers

Changes in Types of Schools Since 2007



2016 DPS Testing Outcomes
(percent proficient on standardized tests)



Closures/Restarts Since 2009
(number of schools)

