

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

OFFICE OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND PLACEMENT

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Meredith Elementary School Kindergarten Lottery Q & A

January 20, 2017

1. What is the list of acceptable forms of proof of residency within the catchment area, that are required to be provided upon submission of the registration materials?

A list of required documents for enrollment in School District of Philadelphia schools is available in the Enrollment Guidelines for the School District of Philadelphia. The Enrollment Guidelines for the School District of Philadelphia were developed using the PA Department of Education's Public School Code governing the enrollment of students (24 P.S. §13-1301 – §13-1306)

2. In addition to proving residency, are there additional documents (such as birth certificate) which will be required to establish relationship to or guardianship of the child?

A birth certificate is not used to establish guardianship or relationship. It is used to prove the age of the child.

3. Will the list of required documentation or at least categories thereof be published ahead of time, or posted in the office, so as to better prepare the parents, as well as to remove the need to exercise discretion by those charged with reviewing the documents?

The list of required documents is listed in the Enrollment Guidelines for the School District of Philadelphia which can be found on the Office of Student Enrollment and Placement's website or obtained by visiting the main office of the school.

4. When will the actual screening occur under the new timeline, as published on the website?

The School District is in the process of developing a plan to verify the residency of all kindergarten registrants. The details of the plan will be shared with the community upon its completion.

5. Who specifically will conduct the vetting or screening process of the submitted documents, to ensure that the students are in-catchment - the school, the school district, or a 3rd party service?

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6. The main link for student placement which was shared at <http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/s/student-placement>, under section School Registration for the 2016-2017 School Year, there is mention that, in the event one is unable to produce two forms of proof, an affidavit will be accepted instead, to be valid for one school year only. What is the general intent behind this provision? Is the list of acceptable forms of proof of residency too restrictive, such that there is a concern some may be unable to produce them? This provision appears to be district-wide. As such, is William M. Meredith also bound to honor this provision for the 2017 Kindergarten Registration Process?

Residency affidavits will not be accepted as proof of residency in the Meredith School.

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7. Will the lottery be conducted live and in a public fashion, with those affected having the opportunity to attend and witness the process, as is done at some charters?

No. The lottery is a program on a computer. The program randomizes the list of names. The first 60 students will receive approval letters to the school. Students who are above the number of available seats will be wait listed in the order in which their name appears on the lottery list.

8. It is mentioned that, after the lottery, students will also need to bring two documents to prove residency with them, at the time school opens. Does this refer to the first day of school? If, at that time, and for whatever reason thereafter, it is found that the student does not reside within the catchment, will the student be redirected to their catchment school (or a nearby school, if that one is full) for that academic year?

Families must provide updated residency information during the early enrollment period when schools reopen for the new academic year in August. If a student's family does not provide the appropriate documentation, the student will be redirected to his/her neighborhood school.

9. If, after registration and admission into kindergarten, a student is deemed to have falsified an address, what will be done and how should that be reported so that the next person on the waiting list can have that spot?

Please make the principal aware of any information regarding the falsification of residency documentation. The principal will contact to the proper party to investigate and verify the allegation. If founded, the student will immediately be assigned to the student's neighborhood school and the next student on the wait list will be contacted to enroll.

10. If, on the first day of school, the two forms of documents are not provided, or are found to be inadequate -- will the spot be reassigned to another student on the waitlist?

Yes

11. If so, how will that family next in line be notified?

The family will receive a letter. It is critical for all families on the wait list to ensure the school has current contact information.

12. Is there a capacity limit to how many additional Meredith students Nebinger can physically accept for the 2017-2018 academic year?

We do not anticipate capacity limitations.

13. Is there any indication that Nebinger will be able to sustain the Meredith K overflow in future years, or was this a one-year arrangement?

No. There is no indication of such.

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14. What plans are being discussed for a long term solution (to this and the general overcrowding) and what is the timeline?

The School District is in the process of examining several long term solutions to address the anticipated increase of school-aged students in the Meredith catchment area. The principal of the Meredith School is a key partner in vetting all possible solutions with central administration and will share the options with the Meredith School community.

15. If Meredith students reassigned to Nebinger want to stay at Nebinger beyond kindergarten, can they?

No. Students will return to Meredith for the first grade. Nebinger will not accept any students from outside of its school boundary through the School Selection Process for the foreseeable future.

16. It is mentioned on the link which was shared, that typical kindergarten reassignments to other nearby schools is for one (1) year only, after which students must gain approval through the school selection process to remain at the reassigned school. Does this general school district guideline apply here?

Yes. If a student was reassigned to another school and seeks to remain in that school, they must participate in the School Selection Process.

17. According to the school district website, there is sibling preference for students applying to an out of catchment school. If a student is assigned to Nebinger, does this mean we have a preference at that same school, should we wish to transfer our oldest one there as well, to keep the family together? In other words, could we choose to send all of our children to Nebinger?

That is not an option at this time. With the exception, of reassigned Meredith kindergarten students, the Nebinger school will not be accepting any out of boundary students for the foreseeable future.

18. It was mentioned that no consideration will be given under this plan for existing siblings, and that each name will be drawn randomly. How will that process account for twins (or higher order multiples)? Will the lottery draw names of families rather than individual children, and provide 2 spots for families with twins chosen, to comply with what is believed to be a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania statute leaving the decision of classroom placement of twins together or separately, with the parents?

The statute below says “Twins or higher order multiple siblings are to be enrolled in the same manner as all other students.” Therefore, the lottery process will operate the same for all students and will select individual students.

“Twins and Multiple Siblings 24 P.S. § 1310.1

Twins or higher order multiple siblings are to be enrolled in the same manner as all other students. The School Code provides for parental discretion in the classroom placement of twins or higher order multiples. A parent or guardian of twins or higher order multiples who attend the same grade level at the same school may request that the children be placed in the same

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classroom or separate classrooms. Source- Department of Education Enrollment of Students, 24 P.S. §13-1301 – §13-1306

19. The probability of at least one family with an existing Meredith sibling being re-routed to Nebinger is over 99% (given a rough estimate of 80 eligible students applying for 60 spots, with out of those 80 having Meredith siblings). Given the high likelihood of this outcome, what allowances can be made for families with children at both schools, to ease the logistical hardships? Will early care or staggered times be implemented? Are school calendars going to be being coordinated to ensure no conflicts?

Both principals will communicate in an effort to give parents the opportunity to attend school based events.

20. Could we know briefly about steps being taken to ensure that all students will be offered a spot in Meredith for first grade without overcrowding the classrooms?

All students will be enrolled and the principal will advocate for the proper staffing and number of classroom assistants based on the student population.

21. How does ongoing address verification of families happen, once families are enrolled? If families choose to move out of the catchment after first grade, will they still be allowed to remain enrolled if capacity or overcrowding becomes an issue?

A pupil who moves may transfer to the new neighborhood school at any time during the school year; however, the pupil may choose to complete the school year in the present school. To remain in the present school beyond the end of the school year the student must receive an approval through the School Selection Process.

22. For anyone targeting the Kindergarten class of 2018-19, when will the details of 2018-2019 academic year registration be made available, with respect to whether they will differ from the policy that is currently posted? Could those registration plans be made available sooner than Dec 2017, so the next class has more time to prepare?

We do not anticipate a change in the guidelines year to year and the time frames generally remain the same. Therefore, the updated dates will be released in December as previously communicated.