

This glossary contains commonly used admissions, enrollment, and registration terms and acronyms. If you can't find the definition you're looking for, or if you have additional questions, please email [servicecenter@seattleschools.org](mailto:servicecenter@seattleschools.org).

## A

**Accelerated International Baccalaureate (IBX):** An accelerated IB program (based on seat availability at Ingraham High School) that leads to the completion of the IB Diploma in grade 11, allowing seniors to explore their academic interests by participating in internships, college classes, and further electives.

**Access services:** Access services are intended to provide specifically designed instruction to students with more intensive academic and functional special education needs. This special education service model supports students who are able to make progress on their individualized education program (IEP) goals while spending most of their instructional time, including specially designed instruction, in general education settings with a range of supports.

**Admission:** All students who live within the boundaries of the Seattle Public Schools district (the City of Seattle) are eligible for "admission" into the district. To be admitted, students must verify their address and register through the Admissions Center.

**Admissions Center:** Admissions, formerly known as Enrollment Services, performs the day-to-day public-facing functions around enrollment. Admissions enrolls new students, manages student transfers between schools (if applicable), and processes choice applications.

**Advanced Learning:** Advanced Learning programs and services provide complex and accelerated curricula for academically advanced students based on student eligibility.

**Advanced Learning Opportunities (ALO):** Advanced Learning Opportunities is a program (grades 1-8) that serves the needs of the advanced learner or highly capable eligible student and teacher-identified students who demonstrate skills and readiness for participation in an accelerated and rigorous curriculum that is based on advanced learner curricular guidelines.

**Advanced Placement:** The Advanced Placement program allows students to take rigorous college-level courses while still in high school. Students may earn college credit and/or advanced placement into upper-level college courses by taking AP exams. Many colleges and universities recognize AP courses when making admissions decisions.

(Transfer) **Appeal:** To formally contest a student's assignment or eligibility for certain programs or services, families should submit an appeal to the Admissions Center. Transfer appeals (from one school to another) are subject to the assignment guidelines and are only considered in extreme or unique circumstances.

**Assignment/assigned:** When a student is assigned, he/she has an active school, grade, and program placement for next year.

**Assignment address:** The basis for admission and assignment in Seattle Public Schools is the student's principal place of residence. The student's principal place of residence is the home, house, apartment, facility, structure, or location, etc. where the student lives the majority of the time. Generally, the residence of a student is the principal residence of his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s). It is this address that determines the student's designated school and transportation eligibility, as well as any applicable tiebreakers during Open Enrollment for School Choice.

**Assignment inquiry:** Assignment inquiries are designed to correct any choice application errors or commissions that may have occurred during Open Enrollment. Inquiries have priority consideration over newly submitted choice applications, transfer appeals, or waitlist moves.

**Attendance area school:** Elementary, middle, and high school students are assigned to a designated attendance area school based on where the student lives. If the student needs programs or services that are not offered at their attendance area school, they will be assigned to a linked school with the appropriate program or service. Each attendance area school has a defined geographic boundary and is intended to serve the students who live within that geographic boundary.

**Attrition:** Attrition is the loss of students between two point of time (such as the beginning of the school year and the end of the school year).

## **B**

**Bilingual Orientation Center (BOC):** Bilingual Orientation Centers provide intensive English language learner instruction to prepare newly enrolled non-English speaking students for regular classroom instruction.

**Birth-to-K ratio:** The Washington State Department of Health provides Seattle Public Schools with birth data for the City of Seattle. From this information, Enrollment Planning determines the number of births in each elementary school attendance area who will attend

their neighborhood school for Kindergarten five years later, adjusting for the percentage of those who historically move in and out of each area.

**Boundary:** All attendance area schools have a geographic boundary which defines who is assigned to a particular school.

## C

**Capacity:** Capacity is calculated by multiplying the number of teaching spaces by type, by the class size limit.

**Capture rate:** Capture rate reflects the number of school-age Seattle residents that attend their designated attendance area school, as opposed to attending another school within the Seattle Public Schools district. A school's capture rate is an important consideration in enrollment projections.

**Career and Technical Education (CTE):** Career and Technical Education programs provide 21st century academic and technical skills for students.

**(School) Choice:** Students may choose to apply for another attendance area school, including K-8 schools; option schools; or programs such as Montessori, Spectrum and the Highly Capable Cohort. To apply for school choice, students must submit a choice application. Choice assignments are generally dependent on space availability.

**Classroom configurations:** Classroom configurations are the arrangement of students into homerooms.

**Cohort:** A cohort is a group of students. For example, a cohort can be the students who enter the same high school together during the same year. In another example, a cohort can also be the students currently enrolled in a certain program, such as the Highly Capable Cohort.

**Continuation assignments:** Students will automatically get a continuing assignment to the same school, as long as the school offers the grade and services the student needs.

Generally, the following students will have a continuation assignment: students who have not moved and whose current school includes their next year grade and current program (including students at K-8 schools rising to 6th grade); students at option schools will be continued at that school through the highest grade served by that school, as long as the school offers the services the student needs; and students with a choice assignment to an attendance area school that is not the student's attendance area school.

## D

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH):** Seattle Public Schools provides special education services for students who are hearing-impaired.

**Demographics:** Demography is the scientific study of population that focuses on four basic topics: size of the population, its distribution across geographic areas, its composition, and the determinants and consequences of population growth. Demographics are the characteristics that describe the population.

**Demotion:** Grade level changes are generally only changed by the principal of the school. If a school changes a grade, and thereby demotes a student to the previous tier (ex. from high school to middle school) for this year, the change must be done before the start of school.

**Designated school:** Elementary, middle, and high school students are assigned to a designated attendance area school based on where the student lives. If the student needs programs or services that are not offered at their attendance area school, they will be assigned to a linked school with the appropriate program or service. This provides predictable assignments for students who need these services.

**Distinct services:** Distinct services are intended to provide specially designed instruction to students with intensive academic and functional special education needs. These services support students who benefit from spending most of their instructional time in a smaller group setting as their least restrictive environment.

**Dropped:** Students are dropped from Seattle Public Schools when they miss 20 consecutive days of classes or attend a different school outside of the district (private schools, online schools, and/or are homeschooled).

## E

**Eligibility:** A student's eligibility for services and programs is typically determined by the respective program office. For example, if a student's individualized education program (IEP) team has determined a need for continued support and transition services after at least four years of high school in order for the student to meet his or her post-secondary transition goals in education/training, employment and (if needed) daily living, the student may be eligible for the BRIDGES (Building Real-life Independent Daily living and Gainful Employment Skills) program.

**English Language Learners (ELL):** English language learner services provide English language instruction and academic support in general education classrooms for students whose home language is not English and who have limited English proficiency.

**Enrolled:** When a student is enrolled, they have an active school, grade, and program assignment and they are currently attending Seattle Public Schools.

**Enrollment Planning:** Enrollment Planning is the department that works with other district offices to provide information and plan for changes in enrollment over time. Enrollment Planning calculates enrollment projections, studies the district's demographics, determines class numbers at option schools and choice seats at attendance area schools, proposes changes to school boundaries when population trends change; and produces maps using student data.

## **F**

**Feeder pattern:** Multiple elementary school attendance areas "feed" into one middle school attendance area. That is, students from those elementary schools are assigned to the feeder pattern middle school upon transition to the 6th grade. There are no feeder patterns from middle to high school. Each attendance area high school has its own geographic attendance area.

**Focus services:** Focus services are intended to provide specially designed instruction to students with more intensive academic and functional special education needs. These services support students who benefit from spending most of their instructional time, including specially designed instruction, in a smaller group setting as their least restrictive environment.

**Free and Reduced price Lunch (FRL):** All students who are eligible for free or reduced price meals receive meals free of charge. Information about free and reduced priced meals, including applications, are available online.

## **G**

**Geographic Zone (GeoZone) tiebreaker:** The geographic zone, or GeoZone, tiebreaker is for applicants to an option school who live within a defined area in proximity to the school. Living within the GeoZone does not guarantee assignment to the requested option school, but rather gives a preferential tiebreaker to students who live within that defined area in proximity to the school. This tiebreaker is designed to relieve capacity constraints at nearby attendance area schools.

**Grade:** Students are assigned to a grade level, based on age, continuous assignments and/or transcripts.

**Grandfathering/grandfathered assignments:** Grandfathering means that students are able to remain at their current school through the highest grade offered when their designated attendance area school has changed. Aside from instances where new schools are opening, Seattle Public Schools aims to grandfather students whenever possible, based on the capacity at the impacted schools.

**Growth:** Growth is the gain of students between two points of time (such as the beginning of the school year and the end of the school year).

**Growth Boundaries:** Growth Boundaries are the school boundary changes that occur when a new school opens or when an existing school's enrollment changes.

## **H**

**Head Start:** Head Start is a federally funded child development program for low-income children and their families.

(Native) **Heritage speaker assignment:** Eligible students will be tested for language proficiency to qualify for a heritage speaker assignment to international schools. Those who pass the heritage speaker test will be assigned to available seats at language option schools, in order of their placement on the waitlist.

**Highly Capable (HC):** State-mandated designation and service for gifted and talented students, with eligibility determined by the Advanced Learning department through a set of multi-variable criteria. "Highly capable" is a student's eligibility.

**Highly Capable Cohort (HCC):** Student placement into the Highly Capable Cohort program is based on the student's highly capable eligibility, as determined by the Advanced Learning department. Once qualified, an HC-eligible student must apply for the Highly Capable Cohort (HCC) program. Students are not initially automatically assigned. "Highly Capable Cohort" is a student's placement.

**Homeless students:** Students and/or their families are considered homeless if they are: living in a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground; living on the street; living in an abandoned building, trailer or other inadequate accommodation; doubled up with friends or relatives because they can't find or afford housing; and/or are waiting for foster-care placement.

## I

**Individualized education program (IEP):** Once a student has been determined to be eligible for special education services, an IEP team writes an education plan for that student, known as their IEP. The IEP is the framework for ensuring that students with disabilities have a free, appropriate public education.

**International Baccalaureate (IB):** Rigorous high school curriculum based on an internationally developed and reviewed curricular program that can lead to college credit.

**International schools:** Seattle's international schools provide students with linguistic skills, higher-order thinking skills, and a global perspective that will help them to contribute to, and succeed in, a 21st century world. International schools are part of the language immersion pathways.

**International students:** It is the practice of Seattle Public Schools to admit as a student, any person, regardless of national origin or citizenship, upon documentation that the student or parent/guardian resides within the boundaries of the district.

## J

**JSCEE:** The John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence (JSCEE) is the central district office for Seattle Public Schools. The street address for JSCEE is 2445 3rd Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98134. The mailing address is PO Box 34165, Seattle, WA 98124-1165.

**Jump Start:** Jump Start is a free transition to Kindergarten program offered at most Seattle elementary and K-8 schools. This program offers children a chance to get comfortable in their new school, meet teachers and staff, and feel ready and confident when school starts in September.

## K

**Keep Siblings Together Rule:** Upon parent/guardian request, siblings (including twins/multiples) applying for the same school(s) in the same order will be assigned (or waitlisted) together [or kept at their current school(s) if requesting reassignment and they cannot be reassigned together]. This is dependent on being able to meet any specific program or service needs or one or more siblings at the requested school(s).

## L

**Language immersion:** Language immersion programs offer instruction in Japanese, Mandarin, and Spanish. These programs are designed for students to achieve dual language fluency by the end of elementary school.

**Linked school:** Many students are assigned to their attendance area school; however, for required services not available at every attendance area school, a linked school is generally designated. This provides predictable assignments for students who need these services.

**Lottery tiebreaker:** The last tiebreaker in the Student Assignment Plan is a computer-generated random number known as a lottery number. This number ranks orders students for assignment, or for placement on a waitlist.

## M

**Medically fragile services:** Medically fragile services are intended to provide specially designed instruction to students who need intensive support for medical care needs throughout the day. These services support students who benefit from spending most of their instructional time, including specially designed instruction, in a smaller group setting as their least restrictive environment.

**Montessori:** Montessori is an alternative approach to education that is based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning, and collaborative play. Montessori programs are offered at Daniel Bagley and Graham Hill Elementary Schools. A blended Montessori and contemporary program is offered at Leschi Elementary School.

**Move rules:** School assignment in Seattle Public Schools is based on the student's home address. Depending on the student's grade, when you move, and where your new home is located, your student may need to change school. The Student Assignment Plan outlines these move rules.

## N

**Next Year:** The upcoming school year. For example, the 2017-18 school year begins in September 2017.

**New assignments:** Students will get a new assignment if: the student's current school does not include their next year grade or required services, or students have moved out of the school's attendance area (except for students grandfathered at the school).

**New students:** A student who has not previously attended Seattle Public Schools at any time during the current or previous school year.

**Non-resident students:** Non-resident students are those who do not live within the Seattle Public Schools district. Non-resident students may attend Seattle Public Schools as long as: the anticipated needs of resident students are met first, acceptance of the non-resident student does not create a financial hardship for SPS, and the non-resident student's attendance and discipline records meet appropriate standards, which are set by the School Board.

## O

**Open Enrollment:** Open Enrollment is the annual two-week period where students may first apply to attend a different school or program (based on seat availability and eligibility, if applicable) next year.

**Option schools:** Option schools provide a variety of programmatic opportunities, different curriculum, and educational styles for families looking for alternatives to their attendance area school. Assignment is by application only, based on set tiebreakers, and seat availability. (For language immersion schools, student eligibility is determined by a language proficiency exam.) Option schools are designed to relieve capacity at nearby attendance area schools. The application period for option schools begins in late winter (typically February) during Open Enrollment and continues through May 31. Students new to the district after May 31, may enroll in their attendance area (or designated) school or an option school where space is available.

## P

**Pathway:** The concept of a pathway is that a student entering a program in elementary (or middle) school would be able to continue in that program in middle (or high) school.

**Preschool:** Instruction for children usually younger than those attending kindergarten or elementary school.

**Program:** A term used to express educational and learning opportunities outside of the general education curriculum (ex. language immersion, Highly Capable Cohort, etc.).

**Projections:** Projections are the expected number of students and/or classrooms for specific time period, based on historical information.

**Promotion:** Grade level changes are generally only changed by the principal of the school. If a school changes a grade and thereby promotes a student to the next tier for this year (ex. from middle to high school), the change must be done before the start of school.

## **R**

**Registration:** Registration is the first step to attend Seattle Public Schools. If you are new to the district, you will need to bring the student's birth certificate, updated immunization record, and two pieces of address verification of Seattle residency to the Admissions Center.

**Returning students:** A returning student is a student who previously attended Seattle Public Schools for any length of time, then withdrew from SPS, and subsequently returns to attend SPS again.

**Retention:** The term "retention" means repeating an academic year of school. Retention is also called grade retention, being held back, or repeating a grade. Retention is the opposite of promotion.

**Riser:** A student rises to a new school when they have completed the highest grade available at their current school. Elementary school students in the 5th grade rise to 6th grade in middle school. Middle school students in 8th grade rise to 9th grade in high school.

## **S**

**Service area:** Elementary school attendance areas are combined to create middle school attendance areas, resulting in geographically based feeder patterns as students move from elementary to middle school. The middle school attendance area is also a service area within which various services (ex. Transportation) are provided for students who live within the service area.

**Service school:** Service schools provide specific services or unique academic programs that are not offered at attendance area or option schools. Students are usually placed in a service school based on individual assessment. Assignments to service schools are always choice assignments, except for the Seattle World School, which is a designated assignment.

**Show rate:** The number of assigned students varies from month to month throughout the school year, and in the summer. A school's show rate reflects attrition or growth between a given time (e.g. July 1) and the October 1 enrollment head count. If a school's show rate indicates losses over the summer, this is based on historical data, and has been adjusted for the actual numbers each year.

**Sibling:** Siblings are defined as students living in the same household with the same home address on record for assignment purposes. The definition of sibling also applies to foster children living in the same home.

**Sibling tiebreaker:** The first tiebreaker for assignment to schools through the School Choice process at all levels is the sibling tiebreaker. The sibling tiebreaker applies when the sibling of an applicant is attending a school this year and will continue to attend that school next year. The sibling tiebreaker is applicable for assignment to a school, but not for assignment to a specific program within a school.

**Skills Center:** The Skills Center is a program that provides students with hands-on classes in real-world career fields at various school sites.

**Social/emotional services (SEL):** Social/emotional services are intended to provide specially designed instruction to students with more intensive academic and functional special education needs. These services support students who benefit from spending most of their instructional time, including specially designed instruction, in a smaller group setting as their least restrictive environment.

**Special Education (SpEd):** The Special Education department works collaboratively with school and district leaders, teachers, students and families to provide the tools, guidance, supports and services needed to ensure access and success for students with disabilities.

**Spectrum (Advanced Learners):** Enhanced, enriched, and/or accelerated curriculum in reading or mathematics provided to eligible students in 1st-8th grade.

**STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics):** STEM is an acronym for science, technology, engineering, and math education. STEM may also refer to STEM K-8 School or Cleveland STEM High School.

**Student Assignment Plan (2009):** The Student Assignment Plan was approved by the Seattle Public Schools Board of Directors in 2009 to provide greater predictability for families while still offering opportunities for school choice. Annual Transition Plans guided a phased approach to implementation.

**Student Assignment Transition Plan for 2016-17:** This document is the most recent transition plan for student assignment. It continues most of the assignment rules in effect during the previous plan.

**Superintendent's Procedures for Student Assignment:** The Superintendent's Procedures for Student Assignment sets forth the implementation of policies established by the Seattle

Public Schools Board of Directors in the Student Assignment Plan and the most recent Annual Transition Plan. The Superintendent approves this document annually.

## **T**

**This Year:** The current school year. For example, the 2016-17 school year runs from September 2016 to June 2017.

**Tiebreakers:** If there are more applications for a school or program during the School Choice process than available seats for a particular school, grade, or program, then certain tiebreakers are used to determine assignment and waitlist status. Most tiebreakers are only applied for those who participate in the on-time Open Enrollment period during the annual School Choice process. Current tiebreakers are listed in the Student Assignment Transition Plan for 2016-17.

**Transportation:** Seattle Public Schools provides yellow bus, door-to-door, Metro, and cab service to a variety of students attending SPS and Head Start. Detailed information is available in the Transportation Service Standards.

**Twice exceptional learners:** Students who meet criteria for Advanced Learning and are also eligible for Special Education/504 support are considered twice-exceptional learners.

## **V**

**Vision services:** Orientation and Mobility (O and M) and vision services, including instruction in Braille, are provided for visually impaired students.

## **W**

**Waitlist:** Schools (and programs) have waitlists when more students request the school (or program) during the School Choice process than available seats.