

QUESTIONS BY PARENTS FOR PARENTS

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.

The following questions were drafted by parents to help other parents navigate and ask questions during EdFEST, school open houses, and more. Put a check mark next to the ones you'd like to ask and use as a starting point as you begin your school research.

Questions about school support services and policies

- Is it important for my child to attend school daily? What is your attendance policy for Pre-Kindergarten (PK3-PK4)?
- What are your disciplinary policies? What type of support staff is available to assist students who face disciplinary issues?
- Does your school have a full-time nurse on staff? A full-time counselor?
- Do you offer before and after care? If so, is it managed by the school or an external organization? If managed by an external organization, how does the programming align with the programming offered by your school?
- What is the capacity of your school's before and after care programs? Is there enough room for all families interested in it?
- How do I apply to your before and after care program?
- What is the cost of before and after care? Do you accept vouchers?
- Do you have summer programming? If so, how much does it cost? Are vouchers accepted?
- If my child needs extra support with school work, is it available to him/her?
- Do you offer Saturday schooling? If so, what does it entail?
- Are all sports, clubs and extracurricular activities available to all students, including students with special needs?

Questions about school operations and curriculum

- What calendar year does your school follow: traditional year or extended year (which is longer than the traditional 180 school days)?
- Is child care available during the days when school is closed?
- What kind of technology is available and how will my child interface with it?
- What is the staff-to-student ratio and average class size at your school?
- How many field trips are offered per academic year?

Questions about parent engagement

- How do you engage parents, including parents of children with special needs or parents who are non-English speakers, 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 supports 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 in my language?

Questions for families who have a child with special needs

- If I suspect my child has a developmental delay, what is the school's process for determining if he/she needs special education services?
- My child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP). How will you work with me and my child to manage his/her transition from their current school to your school?
- How do you approach behavior management? What type of support staff are available to assist students who face behavior management issues?
- 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 special needs?
- 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?

Applying to PK3 or PK4? Consider asking the questions below

- Do you provide a full-time program or do you have half-days? Do you offer before and after care when your school has half-days?
- What is the structure of your day? For example, do you include playtime, naptime?
- What curriculum and materials do you use to teach?
- Does my child have to be toilet trained? What is your policy on toilet training?
- My child is transitioning from daycare/Head Start to Pre-K. What types of support will you offer my child as she/he makes the transition?
- My child has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). How will you work with me and my child to transition to an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

Applying to elementary school (grades K-5)? Consider asking the questions below

- What types of sports, clubs and other extracurricular activities do you offer?
- What does test prep for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exam look like?
- Does your school have a full-time 5th grade counselor?
- My child is transitioning from daycare/Head Start to K. What types of support will you offer my child as she/he makes the transition?

Applying to middle school (grades 6-8)? Consider asking the questions below

- What types of sports, clubs and other extracurricular activities do you offer?
- What is the typical class schedule at your school?
- How much homework should my child expect to receive daily?
- What does test prep for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exam look like?
- How do you prepare students for high school and beyond?
- Do you expose students to post-secondary and vocational training? How do they qualify for those programs?

Applying to high school (grades 9-12)? Consider asking the questions below

- What types of sports, clubs and other extracurricular activities do you offer?
- What is the typical class schedule at your school?
- How much homework should my child expect to receive daily?
- What does test prep for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exam look like?
- Do you expose students to post-secondary and vocational training? How do they qualify for those programs?
- Can my child receive college credit through his/her classes?
- Will a counselor be able to help my child with college applications? What about military or vocational preparation?