



How the Kindergarten Lottery Works

A Guide for Families - 2017 Kindergarten Lottery

Some families wish to more fully understand the process and mechanics of the Kindergarten Lottery. We hope that the following questions and answers will help you to better understand how school assignments are made during the lottery, and how the waitlists are created through this process.

If you have any questions, please contact: **Family Resource Center**
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Why does Cambridge have Controlled Choice?

Cambridge Public has been implementing the Controlled Choice Plan for over 30 years, and its primary purpose is to integrate and diversify all of our schools and programs. We do not integrate based on race or ethnicity, but by using “socioeconomic status” or SES balance to help us achieve a diverse student body that reflects the diversity of the city in all of our schools.

How does SES factor into the registration process?

When registering for school, you are asked to voluntarily fill out the “CPS Meals Application” as part of your registration packet. In CPS, families’ choice to share a sample lunch application allows us to determine which assignment category they

qualify for: Free/Reduced Lunch or Paid Lunch. We balance our schools based on these two categories; and there are set percentages for the categories.

If you do not think your income qualifies for Free or Reduced Price meals then you do not need to complete the form. Families who do not complete this portion of the application are designated as “Paid Lunch.”

The purpose of filling out the meals application is for registration purposes only, not to apply for the Federal Free & Reduced Priced Meals Program. When your child is about to start school, you will need to apply for this benefit through the Food & Nutrition Services Department, and applications must be renewed each September.

By voluntarily disclosing whether or not families qualify for this program, they help our system remain equitable.

How is SES Balance determined? And how is it calculated in the Lottery?

SES balance is based on the 3-year average of the percentage of JK/ Kindergarteners that do, and do not qualify for Free or Reduced Price meals as of Oct 1st of each year. In other words, it is like taking a snapshot of what the SES balance of the JK/Kindergarten class looks like after school begins, and then averaging the last three years of this data. This average SES composition for our Kindergartens is applied to the Lottery pool in January.

Now, to go one step further in this explanation, let's explain how the SES percentages are applied below:

- For this year's 2017 Kindergarten Lottery, the target SES percentages will be 63% Paid Lunch and 37% Free/Reduced Lunch based on the average of the last three years.
- To allow for more flexibility and help more families receive one of their school choices, a "+/- 10%" band or variance is used when making school assignments. This means that we can assign 10% more or fewer students in each category at an individual school. This year, this means we can assign up to 73% of seats to families in the Paid Lunch category at any particular school, but we cannot exceed this amount. Or, we could assign up to

47% of seats to students in the Free/Reduced Lunch category.

- To complete our calculation: In a school that has a capacity of 80 seats, we could assign up to 58 students in the Paid Lunch category and 22 students in the Free/Reduced Lunch category. Conversely, we could assign as many as 38 students in the Free/Reduced Lunch category, with 42 students in the Paid Lunch category.
- The exact percentage and number of students in each category will depend on the applications received for the school.

How does the Lottery work?

Now, that you have a good understanding of SES balance and Controlled Choice, the next step is to understand how this works in the Lottery.

After all the applications are received in January, the FRC compiles all the data and sends it off to an outside Lottery consultant.

The first step in the Lottery is to establish a random number for all applicants; it's similar to putting everyone in a hat and drawing out a completely random number for all 600 applicants. Essentially, the higher your random number in the Lottery, the better.

Is the Lottery entirely random, or are there other factors?

After every student in the JK/K Lottery is assigned a random number, bonus points may be added for some, all, or none of each application's choices, depending on the following factors:

- Families will qualify for **sibling bonus points** at the school where the child's brother or sister is enrolled in Grades JK-4. This rule is intended to keep siblings together in the same elementary school.
- All families in Cambridge receive bonus points if they choose the two closest schools to their residence, also known as **proximity bonus points**. Parents can find their two proximity schools online at [this link on the CPS website](#). This rule is intended to increase the number of families who can get into a school within walking distance from home. (Families do not have to select their proximity schools. They may select both, one, or none.)
- In addition, families who apply to a two-way immersion program may receive **program language bonus points** based on a test of the child's fluency in the program language. This rule is intended to increase the percentage of students who speak the program language of a two-way immersion program.

These factors are each weighted differently. The highest amount of possible bonus points is 3 million for those applicants who qualify for:

- Sibling + Proximity = 3 Million
- Sibling + Program Language = 3 Million

This is followed by:

- Siblings only = 2 Million
- Proximity only = 1 Million
- Program Language only = 1 Million

What happens when the points are added to the random number in the Lottery?

Bonus Points, if applicable, are added to the random number to create the Applied Random Number, which may vary for each choice on your application form. For example:

Jane chooses schools A, B, and C. She can have different Applied Random Numbers for each school. In the example below, Jane received the number 548 in the Lottery, and, as you can see, she received bonus points for different categories for her first 2 school choices. She did not qualify for any bonus points for her 3rd school choice. The bonus points increase her score for two of her three choices in the Lottery.

Jane's Applied Random Number for each school are shown on this chart:

Choice Number /Priority	SCHOOL CHOICES	Random Number	Bonus Points Category	Bonus Points	Applied Random Number
1	School A	548	Sibling	2,000,000	2,000,548
2	School B	548	Program Language	1,000,000	1,000,548
3	School C	548	NONE	N/A	548

How much of a priority is parent/guardian choice in the Lottery?

While the goal of Controlled Choice is to achieve socioeconomic balance, the lottery is also designed to maximize the number of students who are assigned to their preferred school. Starting with the highest Applied Random Number calculated for Choice 1, the computer will assign as many students as possible to their first choice. Students may only be assigned to open seats in their SES Category (Free/Reduced Lunch or Paid Lunch). The computer will move down the list of applications from highest to lowest Applied Random Number until there are no seats remaining in the SES categories of the remaining applicants.

Some schools will fill up entirely with students who chose them as Choice 1. When this happens, no one who listed the school second will get in. Seats are not saved for students who gave the school a lower priority.

When there are no more seats available based on applicants' first choices, the computer will move on to match as many of

the remaining applicants as possible to their second choices. Finally, the process is repeated for third choices.

What happens when an applicant does not get their first choice? What if they receive none of their choices?

Students who receive any assignment besides their first choice will be placed on one or more waitlists. Students are only waitlisted for schools that were a higher choice on their School Choice form than the school to which they are assigned. For example:

Jane received her second choice school in the lottery, and she is now waitlisted for her first choice school. She will not be waitlisted for her third choice school. Another applicant, John, received his third choice school in the lottery; he is waitlisted for his first and second choice schools.

The ordering of the waitlist is derived from the Lottery results. One way to think of the

waitlist and how it's organized is that it starts where the lottery left off. After all available seats were filled according to their SES balancing category, the waitlist starts with the next person in line.

Just as in the lottery, the goal of the waitlist order is to maximize the number of students who could eventually be assigned to their first choice school. The waitlist also seeks to increase the number of students who could possibly be able to attend one of their three choice schools after the Lottery.

To accomplish these goals, the waitlist order is re-organized as follows:

Group #1: First Choices

Applicants who did not receive their first choice are re-arranged into three subgroups on that school's waitlist, each of which is then rank ordered by Applied Random Number. So, using the example of School A, above, the first applicants on School A's waitlist will be:

- Unassigned students who listed School A as Choice 1 and did not receive any of their choices.
- Students who listed School A as Choice 1 but were assigned to their third choice.
- Students who listed School A as Choice 1 but were assigned to their second choice.

Group #2: Second Choices

Following all of the applicants who listed

School A as their first choice will be those who selected School A as their second choice but were not assigned to their first choice or to School A. The Second Choice group is re-arranged into two subgroups and rank ordered by Applied Random Number as follows:

- Unassigned students who listed School A as Choice 2 and did not receive any of their choices.
- Students who listed School A as Choice 2 but were assigned to their third choice.

Group #3: Third Choices

Applicants who selected School A as their third choice and received none of their school choices will be the last group of students added to the waitlist for School A.

Every school's waitlist will follow the same order. If you are on more than one waitlist, your waitlist position will be different for each school, depending on whether you listed the school as Choice #1, 2, or 3. You will be highest on the waitlist for Choice 1.

There is one final rule. Students **must** list three choices on their registration form. Any student who lists only 1 or 2 choices, and who becomes became unassigned, will be placed at the end of the waitlist regardless of applied random number. It is ***imperative*** to list three choices. Per Controlled Choice Policy, you must sign a release if you elect not to choose three schools on the registration form.

EXAMPLE WAITLIST

To keep things simple, let's imagine a waitlist with 13 students on it – two per each sub-group of each group, plus one who did not list three choices. **Here is an example of a waitlist for School A as an illustration of how waitlists are ordered based on Lottery results.**

	Groups: Priority of School A on the Choice Form	Subgroup: Assignment Received in Lottery	Lottery Applied Random Number	Waitlist Position	Name
Group #1	School A was their #1 Choice	None/Unassigned	12	1	Grace
			9	2	Francois
		Choice 3	442	3	Mariah
			301	4	John
		Choice 2	1,000,001	5	Kian
			548	6	Jane
Group #2	School A was their #2 Choice	None/Unassigned	8	7	Bettina
			6	8	Nia
		Choice 3	36	9	Oliver
			15	10	Curtis
Group #3	School A was their #3 Choice	None/Unassigned	3	11	Lenora
			1	12	Andres
Only listed 1 Choice (School A)		None/Unassigned	204	13	Henry

Remember: school assignments must still follow the requirements of SES Balancing. Therefore, in some cases a seat will open and the first few students on the waitlist are not eligible to be assigned to it due to their SES assignment category. In the case of Immersion Programs, we must also follow rules regarding the percentage of students who speak the Program Language. We will always follow the order of the waitlist while at the same time following the rules of Controlled Choice.

Waitlists are complex. We are available to help families understand how waitlists are organized. Please don't hesitate to ask us any and all questions that you may have.

Any tips on how to think about the School Choice Form?

In every Lottery, more students get assigned to their First Choice than to their Second or Third Choice. Therefore, your First Choice is the most important. We encourage you to get to know a little bit about all of the schools, and see which one is the very best fit for your child and family.

Different families will take different approaches to their Second and Third Choice. For instance:

- Some families feel very strongly about a particular type of program, or feel strongly that three schools will be the best – and they do not wish to accept anything else. Even if these schools are all highly chosen in the lottery, they feel ok with the risk that they may have to go through the waitlist process.
- Some families have a first choice, but feel that there are probably a lot of options that would work well for their family. If they would like to avoid the uncertainty of becoming unassigned, they might look at historical lottery data and invest some extra time in learning about schools that have traditionally been chosen at a lower rate. Listing a school that typically does not have much of a waitlist in their assignment category is a good strategy for influencing your child’s eventual assignment.

Every family will have their own priorities and preferences – there is no “right” way to

participate in the lottery. If you have any questions about the process, the Family Resource Center is here to help.

What historical data is available about the lottery, and how is it useful?

The Family Resource Center has developed the following tables, which provide historical information that might be helpful in the school selection process. The tables **are only estimates** and most of the numbers will change over time – however, these tables provide a general idea of how many seats might be available this year.

These tables do not guarantee seat availability. This is a lottery, and there are no guarantees that past patterns will be repeated in the future. In addition, schools become more or less chosen over time; therefore, past history is not necessarily a perfect predictor of future trends.

Please also bear in mind that these charts do not include any SES data. Families may find that any available seats are limited to either the “Free/Reduced” or “Paid” Category.

Each year, approximately 85% of students receive one of their three school choices, and additional students move off of the waitlist and into a chosen school by the start of the school year.

TABLE #1

Estimated Seat Availability: January 2017 Kindergarten Lottery

School	A JK/K Capacity	B JK's Rising	C Estimated Seats Available for new students	D Prior Year Siblings	E Prior Year Proximity Bonus Applicants	F Estimated Seats for Students With No Priority Points
Baldwin	100	36	64	26	24	14
Cambridgeport	80	29	51	17	19	15
FMA	80	29	51	3	8	40
Graham & Parks	60	18	42	16	46	0
Haggerty	80	30	50	20	23	7
Kenn/Longfellow	80	31	49	9	7	33
King-Regular	60	28	32	9	12	11
King Open	80	26	54	9	2	43
Morse	80	27	53	13	17	23
Peabody	80	35	45	17	58	0

How to Read this Chart

Column A: This column refers to the total capacity of JK/K classrooms at each school.

Column B: These are the current Junior Kindergartners plus the 3-year average of students who may repeat their kindergarten year and who would take seats next year as second-year Kindergartners.

Column C: This column refers to the estimated seats available after rising Junior Kindergartners are accounted for.

Column D: These are the number of siblings who applied for seats in last year's lottery, both JK and K. Note that this column will be updated with the estimated number of siblings who will register for this year's Lottery once that is finalized.

Column E: These are the number of applicants who received Proximity points in their first choices in the previous year's lottery.

Column F: These are the estimated net number of seats available for this year's Kindergarten Lottery when Columns B, D, E, are subtracted from Column A.

Please note: Column D represents numbers from the previous year's lottery and are presented here for informational purposes and could vary in this year's lottery. The Tobin Montessori was part of the 3 year old lottery in the fall and there may be as few as zero seats available for students ages 4-5 at Tobin Montessori.

Please remember: All seats are subject to SES controls (Free/Reduced Lunch and Paid Lunch).

TABLE #2

Estimated Seat Availability: Dual Immersion Programs *

School	A JK/K Capacity	B JK's rising	C Estimated Seats Available for new students	D Prior Year Siblings	E Prior Year Applicants w/ Language Bonus (2016)	F Estimated Available Seats for Students With No Priority Points
Amigos	80	34	46	21	28	0 *
Chinese Immersion	40	20	20	13	14	0 *
OLA	20	5	15	2	2	11

How to Read this Chart

Column A: This column refers to the total capacity of JK/K classrooms at each school.

Column B: These are the current Junior Kindergartners plus the 3-year average of students who may repeat their kindergarten year and who would take seats next year as second-year Kindergartners.

Column C: This column refers to the estimated seats available after rising Junior Kindergartners are accounted for.

Column D: These are the number of siblings who applied for seats in last year's lottery, both JK and K. Note that this column will be updated with the estimated number of siblings who will register for this year's Lottery once that is finalized.

Column E: These are the previous year's applicants who received the language bonus points.

Column F: These are the net number of seats available when Columns B, D, E, are subtracted from Column A.

Please note: Column E represents numbers from the previous year's lottery and are presented here for informational purposes and could vary in this year's lottery. Language schools offer bonus points for students who speak the program language and for siblings of current students. Dual Immersion Programs do not offer proximity points.

Please remember: All seats are subject to SES controls (Free/Reduced Lunch and Paid Lunch).

* It is important to remember that these charts represent estimates based on a mix of current and last year's data. The available number of seats in the Immersion Programs has varied over the past four years. We anticipate that, this year, seat availability for students with no priority bonus points will be tight due to large numbers of JK rising cohorts and siblings.

TABLE #3

First Cycle Kindergarten Registration School Choice Applied and Assigned SES Analysis SY 2016-2017

1st Choice					
School	F/R		Paid		Total App
	App	Asgd	App	Asgd	
Amigos School (AB)	9	9	29	29	38
Amigos School (AN)	15	8	35	8	50
Baldwin School	15	13	74	50	89
Cambridgeport School	12	12	37	36	49
Fletcher Maynard Academy	11	11	8	8	19
Graham and Parks School	11	11	56	30	67
Haggerty School	10	7	38	34	48
Kennedy/Longfellow School	14	14	10	10	24
King Open School	7	7	8	8	15
King Open School (OB)	0	0	3	3	3
King Open School (ON)	0	0	7	7	7
King School	14	14	13	13	27
King School (CB)	2	2	16	12	18
King School (CN)	2	2	14	7	16
Morse School	10	10	28	28	38
Peabody School	19	12	58	33	77
Tobin MJK4	5	0	2	0	7
Tobin MK5	2	0	9	0	11
(Blank - No Choice)	0	0	0	0	0
Total	158	132	445	316	603

2nd Choice					
School	F/R		Paid		Total App
	App	Asgd	App	Asgd	
Amigos School (AB)	0	0	3	0	3
Amigos School (AN)	8	0	30	0	38
Baldwin School	11	0	85	0	96
Cambridgeport School	16	0	41	2	57
Fletcher Maynard Academy	10	1	12	2	22
Graham and Parks School	23	1	98	0	121
Haggerty School	8	1	21	3	29
Kennedy/Longfellow School	8	1	10	5	18
King Open School	7	0	23	1	30
King Open School (OB)	0	0	0	0	0
King Open School (ON)	0	0	6	3	6
King School	18	3	37	9	55
King School (CB)	0	0	3	0	3
King School (CN)	2	0	8	0	10
Morse School	20	4	15	6	35
Peabody School	13	0	29	0	42
Tobin MJK4	4	0	17	0	21
Tobin MK5	10	0	6	0	16
(Blank - No Choice)	0	0	1	0	1
Total	158	11	445	31	603

3rd Choice					
School	F/R		Paid		Total App
	App	Asgd	App	Asgd	
Amigos School (AB)	0	0	0	0	0
Amigos School (AN)	6	0	36	0	42
Baldwin School	21	0	75	0	96
Cambridgeport School	10	0	32	0	42
Fletcher Maynard Academy	13	0	15	3	28
Graham and Parks School	15	0	76	0	91
Haggerty School	6	1	34	0	40
Kennedy/Longfellow School	9	2	13	1	22
King Open School	12	0	26	0	38
King Open School (OB)	0	0	3	0	3
King Open School (ON)	1	0	6	0	7
King School	14	0	19	3	33
King School (CB)	0	0	0	0	0
King School (CN)	2	0	6	0	8
Morse School	11	0	23	1	34
Peabody School	14	0	44	0	58
Tobin MJK4	14	0	15	0	29
Tobin MK5	9	0	20	0	29
(Blank - No Choice)	1	0	2	0	3
Total	158	3	445	8	603

How to Read this Chart

F/R = Refers to the number of students who participated in the Lottery that qualified for Free and Reduced priced meals.

Paid = Refers to the number of students who participated in the Lottery that did not qualify for Free and Reduced priced meals .

App = Refers to the number of students who "Applied" to the school.

Assgn = Refers to the number of students who were "Assigned" to the school through the lottery.

AB, OB, CB = Refers to the bilingual category in our Immersion programs, this designation is used to categorize students who speak the program language (Spanish, Portuguese or Chinese) **AN, ON, CN** = Refers to the non-bilingual category in our immersion programs, this designation is used to categorize students who do not speak the program language.

None= Refers to the number of students who did not make any choices in their 2nd or 3rd choice schools.

MJK4 = Refers to the Tobin Montessori - 4 year old level

MK5 = Refers to the Tobin Montessori - 5 year old level