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DCPS receives record number of applications for school lottery

By: Lisa Gartner | Examiner Staff Writer @Lisa_Examiner | 03/14/11 8:05 PM

A record 6,661 applicants threw their pint-sized hats into the ring for D.C. Public Schools' annual preschool, pre-kindergarten and K-12 out-of-boundary lottery.

While the school system says 59 percent of students were placed in one of their six preferred schools, many parents in baby boom areas were left staring down waitlists.

Acting Chancellor Kaya Henderson noted that last year's application boom drove the school system's first enrollment increase since 1969.

"This year, we exceeded that number, proving that our



DC School Acting Chancellor Kaya Henderson, pictured, at a press conference at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC on Tuesday October 12, 2010.

DCPS' early grade growth

	2009	2010	2011
Preschool applications	532	1,489	1,949
Pre-K applications	1,134	1,504	1,858
Total applications	3,463	5,219	6,661

programs continue to offer exciting options for thousands of families seeking a quality education for their children," she said.

The number of applicants

increased by more than 25 percent over 2010's 5,219 applicants, while the total number nearly doubled the demand of 2009. At the preschool level, applications nearly quadrupled.

Some schools, like Northwest's Garrison and Marie Reed elementary schools and Ludlow-Taylor Elementary in Northeast, saw applications almost double from 2010.

The swell of applications has parents across the District refreshing their Web browsers to check -- and double-check -- whether they've climbed on their desired school's waitlist.

Among 92 options, 57 kindergarten and 62 pre-K schools were full Monday evening, with waitlists in some cases reaching 200 students -- and only three lottery slots available.

Of 86 schools offering preschool, 35 were at maximum capacity, with none more in demand than Capitol Hill's Peabody Elementary, where 519 hopefuls packed the waitlist for 30 slots.

Laura Hogan said her 3-year-old daughter is 16th on Peabody's waitlist, but she's not holding her breath. After contacting DCPS for alternatives -- she's 250th on another waitlist -- Hogan visited Walker-Jones Education Campus and said she was impressed.

Still, she was concerned about the years ahead, as her daughter is zoned to attend Peabody in kindergarten. "I don't know how they're going to do it -- there were 50 in-boundary students on the waitlist this year, so I don't know where they're going to put them," she said.

DCPS spokesman Fred Lewis said each school manages its own waitlist, which is active throughout the

2011-2012 school year. Lewis said most movement stops by August.

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