



**An Open Letter to the Community  
on CMS Student Assignment, Choices and Options  
Dec. 1, 2017**

Dear CMS families and community members,

Our efforts across CMS should be worthy of your family's highest educational aspirations. At the end of the 2017-2018 CMS choice lottery, 25,250 students were seated in magnet schools. Thousands of families are now engaging in the 2018-2019 choice lottery, which closes on Monday, Dec. 18. We appreciate the input of parents who are giving feedback and suggesting ways to better inform and empower families. ***CMS is committed to both immediate and longer-term steps to increase access and improve the school choice process for all families.***

**CMS has taken immediate steps to improve this process for the 2018-2019 lottery, including:**

- **More resources at [cmschoice.org](http://cmschoice.org).** Step-by-step instructions and additional information have been added to the site, including downloadable short guides to school choices.
- **Direct outreach to School Performance Priority (SPP) families.** Families with students in schools designated as low-performing for three years in a row are being sent mail at home and school-based notices reminding them they qualify for SPP status in the lottery.
- **Improved call center at 980-343-5030.** Additional resources have been devoted to respond to calls. The auto hang-up problem for some callers has been solved.
- **CMS Choice on Facebook** – go to the CMS Choice Facebook page for information. Questions can be answered via chat messenger.

**CMS has deployed and is exploring additional steps, including:**

- **Expanded [cmschoice.org](http://cmschoice.org) website.** Go to [cmschoice.org](http://cmschoice.org) or call 980-343-5030 for more information about magnet and options schools, the lottery, step-by-step instructions, magnet themes, contact information, sign-up for text reminders, transportation and timelines.
- **Community Task Force.** The CMS Community Task Force on Student Assignment launched in September last year to involve the community and find ways to expand access to CMS choices. The task force meets monthly on the first Wednesday. Go to [cmslistens.org](http://cmslistens.org) for more information.
- **Community outreach campaign.** The district launched *Your Child. Your School. Your Choice* last year to build awareness and reach people with or without digital connection. The campaign includes direct mail, printed guidebooks, English and Spanish materials, advertising, social media, community events, open houses, and outreach to local media.
- **Better technology.** CMS is evaluating online platforms to provide a single point of digital entry for families and to better align placement functions (e.g., enrollment, reassignment and transfer requests, etc.) and the lottery (e.g., magnet programs, SPP eligible choices).
- **Dedicated call center.** CMS is exploring a dedicated call and online response center to field inquiries from families across the district on a variety of topics throughout the year.

Every day is important in the education of children and we are committed to moving ahead with this work as quickly as possible while prioritizing high quality results for families and students.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Clayton Wilcox, Superintendent