



## The Office of Access and Enrollment TOP TEN MYTH BUSTERS ABOUT THE APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

1. **Myth:** If I don't rank a selective enrollment high school as #1, I won't be selected by it.

**Busted:** The selection process is always conducted in order of the list of students, which is ranked according to the applicants' final point scores. Therefore, ranking a school first would not give a student preference over another student in the same tier, who ranked a school third, had a higher point score, and did not get an offer from their first or second choice schools. In this scenario, the student with the higher point score who ranked the school third, would receive an offer to that school before a student with a lower score who ranked the school as her first choice.

In another example, a student with an 865 would be selected for a school even if that school is her third choice, but it is her highest choice for which she is qualified on the basis of her total points. She would be selected before a student with an 864 who ranked the same school as her first choice.

2. **Myth:** In ranking schools, I should rank the schools in the order of where I think my child will get in rather than where she really wants to go.

**Busted:** Schools should always be ranked in the true order of *where the student wants to go*. Schools should not be ranked in any other way. The computer selection process is designed to give your child the highest choice for which she qualifies. Therefore, if you believe your child will get in to School A, but he/she really wants to go to School B, you should rank School B first. If your child does not qualify for School B, but does for School A, he/she will receive an offer from School A.

3. **Myth:** Schools select the students.

**Busted:** Selections are conducted by the Office of Access and Enrollment (OAE) through a computerized selection process. With the exception of selective enrollment high schools, there is no principal discretion.

4. **Myth:** I have a child who has a sibling in the school, so I don't have to apply. My child will automatically be accepted.

**Busted:** Even if you already have another child enrolled in a magnet, magnet cluster, or open enrollment school, you must submit an application if you have another child who you want to attend, *unless* the school is your designated neighborhood school. If you do not apply, then your child will not be included in the selection process at the same school as his/her sibling. (The only schools with sibling preference are magnet, magnet cluster, and open enrollment schools.)

5. **Myth:** Race and ethnicity are considered in the selections for selective enrollment and magnet schools.

**Busted:** Race and ethnicity are NOT used for any selections. Although we ask for this information on the application, it is only used when our office receives requests about the diversity of the applicant pool. The socio-economic tiers replaced the use of race in selections in 2010.

6. **Myth:** If I apply early, I have a better chance of getting selected, because students are selected on a first-come, first-served basis.  
**Busted:** It does not matter when you submit your application as long as it is before the application deadline. The selection process does not take place until after the application deadline.
7. **Myth:** I want to schedule my child for the latest possible test date so that she will score higher than children who tested a few months earlier.  
**Busted:** Tests are normed to the student's age. With regard to test results, there is no benefit to waiting for the last test dates to have your child tested.
8. **Myth:** The tier system looks at my personal information and assigns my child a tier based on that.  
**Busted:** The tiers are based on aggregated data from within each census tract. All addresses within a census tract are the same tier. Tiers are updated annually in the fall.
9. **Myth:** My child is in a preschool, so he can stay at the school for kindergarten without applying.  
**Busted:** Children in a PreK program do NOT automatically have a kindergarten seat at that school the following year. The only exceptions are for students attending a PreK program in a school that is their designated neighborhood school, and students in a PreK program at Drummond, Inter-American, Mayer or Suder Magnet Schools. All other students must apply in order to be included in the school's selection process for kindergarten.
10. **Myth:** If I pay for a test prep program, my child will get a seat at a selective enrollment school.  
**Busted:** There is no evidence that students taking test prep programs outperform any other students.