



## CODE FOR DC'S LATEST APP GIVES PARENTS A VOICE IN CRITICAL CHANGES TO DC SCHOOL POLICY

Washington, DC, education officials are proposing historic [changes to the way students are assigned to public schools](#) that will impact thousands of families. To help parents navigate these important initiatives, [Code for DC](#) is introducing a web and mobile app called [Our DC Schools](#) that explains the proposed changes and provides citizens with a platform to give the city government feedback about them.

Our DC Schools lets anyone see how the potential school assignment changes would play out in their neighborhood by entering their street address into the app. Users are then presented with a map showing current boundaries of their school district compared to the ones being proposed by the city. The app also allows the public to rate and comment on each element of the proposed changes by clicking on emoticons that describe the way users feel about the district's initiative.

The idea for Our DC Schools came about after Code for DC member [Chris Given](#) saw how much data was available to help parents see the the impact of the district's proposals.

"I attended a public working group meeting at Dunbar High School and while I was impressed by the dedication of the Deputy Mayor for Education and DC Public Schools staff, I was just bowled over by the scale of the challenge of getting meaningful feedback from everyone these policies affect," said Given. "I wanted to create an on-ramp for engaging with a really complex issue."

The Our DC Schools team will post all responses collected (excluding street address, for privacy protection) on [OpenDataDC](#), a public catalog of civic data built by and for the people of Washington. Feedback collected through mid-May 2014 and will be shared with the [Boundary Review Advisory Committee](#), a district government entity working on the changes. The data used to help build Our DC Schools is also downloadable from OpenDataDC.

Our DC Schools was brought to life through a collaboration between volunteers from Code for DC and the office of the district's Deputy Mayor for Education (DME).

"The Our Schools DC app is an example of what can be achieved when government collaborates with citizens to find solutions to common problems. In addition to providing valuable information, it's a means of public engagement that will help city leaders better meet the educational needs of communities throughout the district," said Traci L. Hughes, Director of the District of Columbia Office of Open Government.

Code for DC is the Washington, DC, chapter of Code for America's [Brigade program](#), an effort that brings together citizens and local governments around the world to collaborate around using technology to solve some of the most important challenges facing cities.