



KINDERGARTEN

COMMON SCHOOL TERMS

DECIPHER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT JARGON WITH THIS HANDY GLOSSARY

When looking at schools, it's easy to get lost in the terminology. To help, we've put together a list of common terms you may encounter as you prepare to enroll your child in school.

Attendance boundary: Also known as an attendance zone or catchment area, this is the geographic area from which children are eligible to attend a local school.

Charter schools: Tuition-free public schools that are privately run and free from many state and local regulations. They often perform the same as their public counterparts and have more flexibility with implementing innovative programs.

Choice: Public school districts that provide students with the option to attend a public school in their district other than their neighborhood or zoned public school.

Common enrollment: A process that allows students to apply to several public schools in a district with one application, instead of having to apply to each school individually.

Expeditionary Learning (EL): A network of schools in which students engage in rigorous, project-based learning activities with real-world applications. Pairs of grades such as kindergarten and first grade, are typically combined, known as looping.

Feeder school: A school that generally sends a large population of its graduating students to a specific middle or high school.

Gifted education: Instruction and services designed to support students who have high levels of academic or intellectual ability.

Interdistrict permit: A permit, typically provided by a student's local school district, that allows a student to enroll in a school outside of the district in which they reside.

Intradistrict permit: A district-provided permit that allows a student to enroll in a school within their district other than their neighborhood or zoned school.

Lottery admissions/lottery enrollment: In a lottery system, students are randomly selected for enrollment. Schools typically have an application deadline and conduct the lottery afterward.



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Magnet schools: Schools that have a theme (such as science or performing arts or gifted education) and can enroll students from anywhere in a school district, city, or other area, such as a county.

Neighborhood/boundary/reside schools: Schools where enrollment is guaranteed if the student lives within the attendance boundary or zone of the school.

Parochial school: A type of private school with a religious affiliation, such as a Catholic school.

Prekindergarten/junior kindergarten/transitional kindergarten: Programs that help prepare young children for kindergarten, typically taught by credentialed teachers and more academically structured than preschool.

Private school: A school that operates without state or federal governance and is not government-funded. If a private school has a governing board, it may also be referred to as an independent school.

Project-based learning (PBL): A student-centered approach that encourages real-world problem solving through hands-on learning activities.

Redshirting: Postponing a child's entry into kindergarten to ensure that the child is older than most of their classmates.

Selective admissions: Schools may have an entrance examination, look at a student's academic records, or ask for recommendation letters to determine whether a student is accepted into the school.

Sibling preference: Granting enrollment priority to students with siblings already attending a school.

Social and emotional skills: Positive interpersonal behaviors and actions that help others, such as sharing, kindness, and showing empathy.

Title I: A federal program that provides funds to assist students from disadvantaged backgrounds. At least 40 percent of the student population must be disadvantaged for a school to qualify.

Voucher: A government-funded certificate that covers the cost of tuition at a private school chosen by the student or the student's parents.

Zoning/zone: Geographic boundaries that determine which school students will attend.