

A RESOLUTION

23-595

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

November 10, 2020

To declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to amend the District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995 to add an admissions preference for the child of a student already attending or selected for admission to a public charter school in which the child is seeking enrollment.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Child Enrollment Preference Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2020”.

Sec. 2. (a) There exists an immediate need to amend the District of Columbia School Reform Act of 1995 to add an admissions preference for the child of a student already attending or selected for admission to a public charter school in which the child is seeking enrollment because the admissions lottery for School Year 2021-2022 will open in the next couple of months.

(b) Currently, only one public charter school, Briya Public Charter School, in the District would use this preference. Briya employs a two-generation model of education where at least one parent must enroll in the public charter school along with his or her child. Parents who enroll participate in parenting and digital literacy classes. If a parent is an English language learner, he or she may enroll in English classes, and for a select group of parents, Briya offers a high school diploma, as well as training to be a medical assistant or to earn a Child Development Associate credential. The children, who are enrolled with their parents, receive a high-quality pre-kindergarten education.

(c) Briya’s two-generation model is highly effective and has resulted in Briya receiving a Tier 1 designation from the District’s Public Charter School Board.

(d) No admissions preference currently exists in District law that allows for Briya’s two-generation model. If an individual wanted to enroll solely his or her child and did not intend to also enroll, Briya would be faced with a potential challenge to its successful model. To ensure that Briya’s model is not impeded and to allow for other public charter schools also to employ the two-generation model in their schools if desired, the Council unanimously approved the Expanding Equitable Access to Great Schools Act of 2020, passed on 1st reading on October 20,

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

2020 (Engrossed version of Bill 23-717). Bill 23-717, among other things, creates a permanent admissions preference for the child of a student already attending or selected for admission to a public charter school in which the child is seeking enrollment.

(e) Although Bill 23-717 is expected to be approved on second reading on November 10, 2020, it will be months before the bill actually becomes law. Given that Briya is currently employing the two-generation model and plans to also do so for School Year 2021-2022 as well as the fact that its admissions lottery opens in the next couple of months, Briya needs certainty now that the child enrollment preference is District law. Public charter schools have already begun to communicate with and recruit prospective students and families, but Briya cannot inform prospective families about the child enrollment preference until it becomes law.

(f) Moreover, because of the economic downturn, Briya has seen a surge in enrollment inquiries and expects far greater demand for seats during School Year 2021-2022, so an immediate need exists to guarantee that Briya has the child enrollment admissions preference in place in time for its admissions lottery, which will open before Bill 23-717 becomes law. Thus, it is vital for this emergency legislation to be enacted now.

Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia finds that the circumstances enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it necessary that the Child Enrollment Preference Emergency Amendment Act of 2020 be adopted after a single reading.

Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.