



Reading this report

This survey was sent to:

- Education directors,
- System principals,
- Principals,
- Area office administrators,
- School front office staff, and
- Public information staff.

There were 271 responses to one or more questions on the survey.

All results and complete responses to open-ended and 'Other' open field responses are included in this report.

Open-ended comments and 'Other' open field responses appear in this report as they were written. Comments have not been edited for spelling, grammar, sentence structure, truncation or otherwise. Comments have been edited to ensure anonymity.

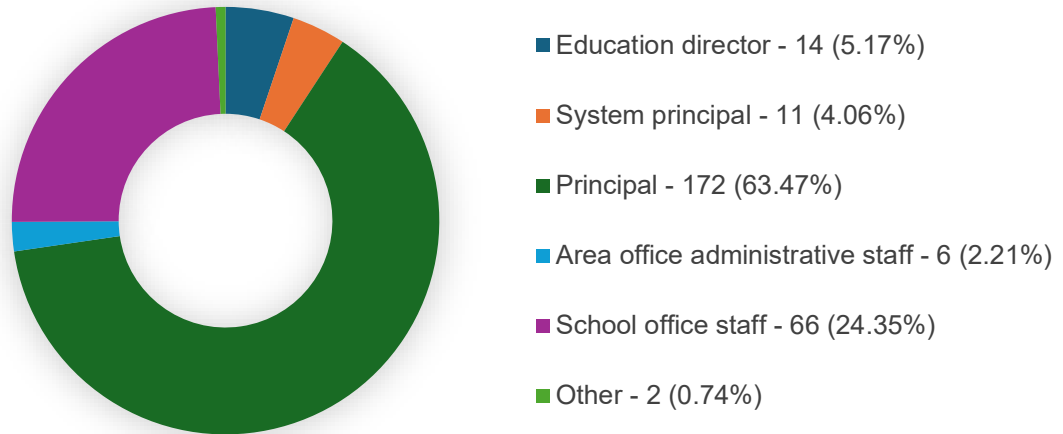
Insights from open-ended and 'Other' open field responses

Participants provided generous responses to open-ended questions (10, 13, and 23) and 'Other' open text fields (7, 8, 12, 16, 18, 19, 20, and 22). A summary of high-level insights about communication and the lottery process, grouped under themes, is provided [at the end of this document](#).

Survey results

Section 1: Demographics

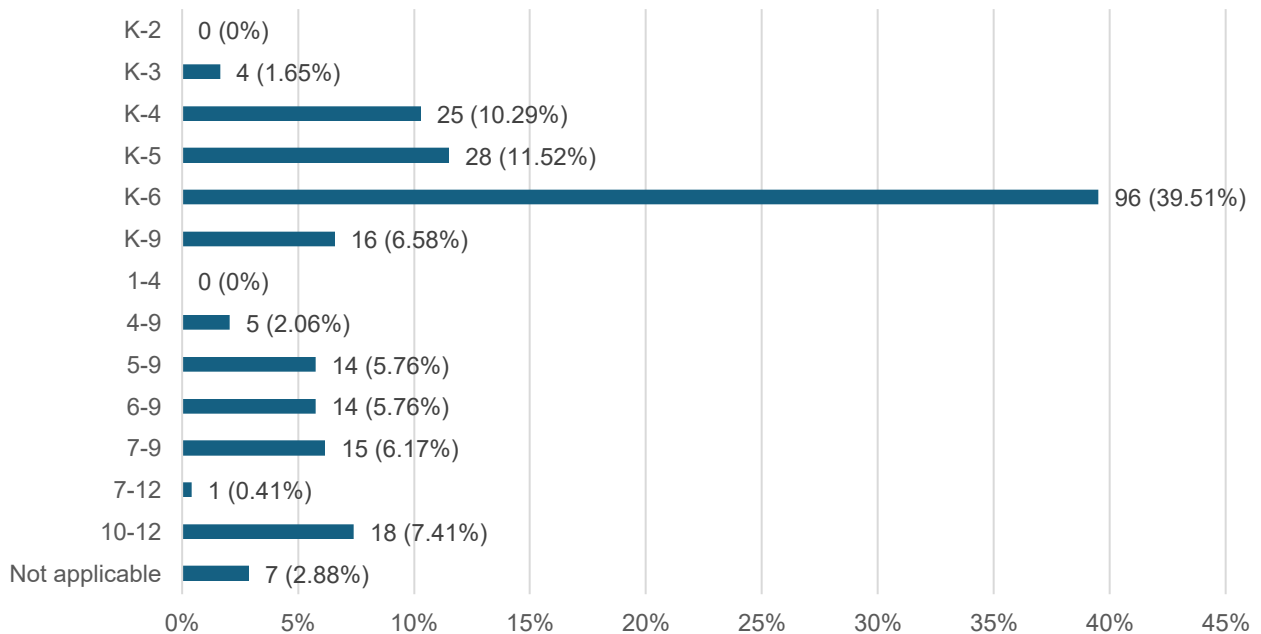
1. Please indicate your current role/staff group. (271 responses)



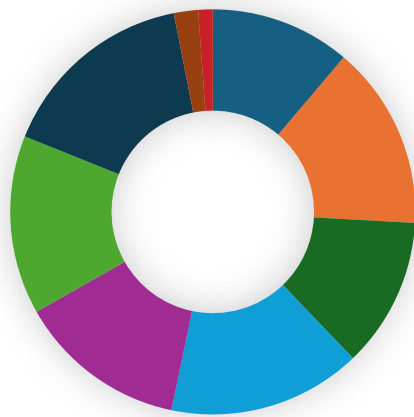
Other:

- SIS
- Public information

2. If applicable, please indicate the grade configuration of your school. (243 responses)

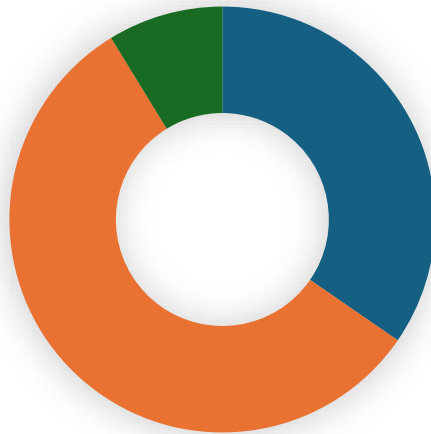


3. If applicable, which Area do you work in? (259 responses)



- Area 1 - 29 (11.20%)
- Area 2 - 38 (14.67%)
- Area 3 - 31 (11.97%)
- Area 4 - 40 (15.44%)
- Area 5 - 35 (13.51%)
- Area 6 - 37 (14.29%)
- Area 7 - 41 (15.83%)
- Central A - 5 (1.93%)
- Central B - 0 (0%)
- Not applicable - 3 (1.16%)

4. Do you currently work at a school that offers an alternative program (including language programs)? (263 responses)



- Yes - 91 (34.60%)
- No - 149 (56.65%)
- Not applicable - 23 (8.75%)

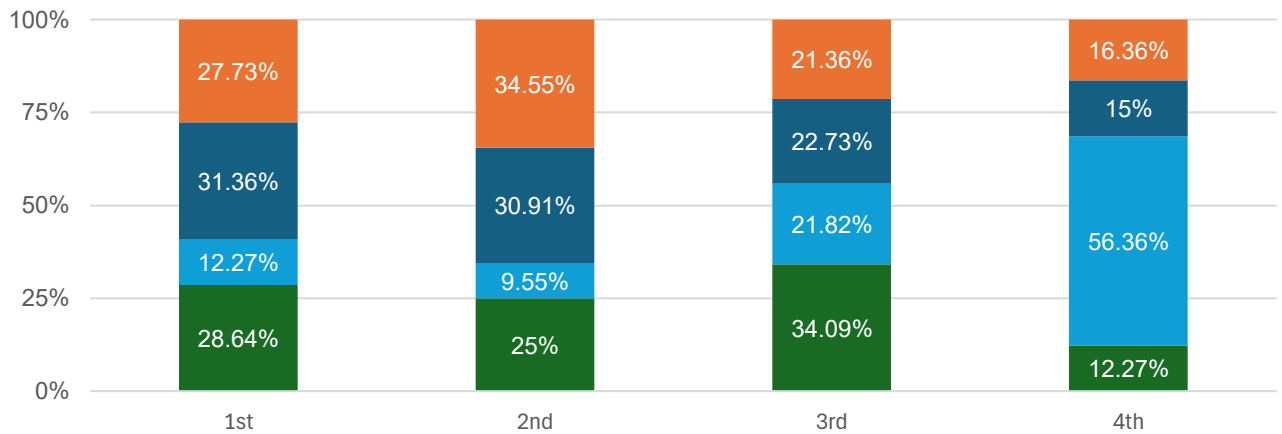
5. In your current or past role, have you administered or supported the administration of a school lottery? (270 responses)



- Yes - 169 (62.59%)
- No - 101 (37.41%)

Section 2: Preferences for Lottery Zone Determination

6. Please rank the following options for determining lottery priority groups according to your preference. (1 = most preferred, 4 = least preferred) (220 responses)

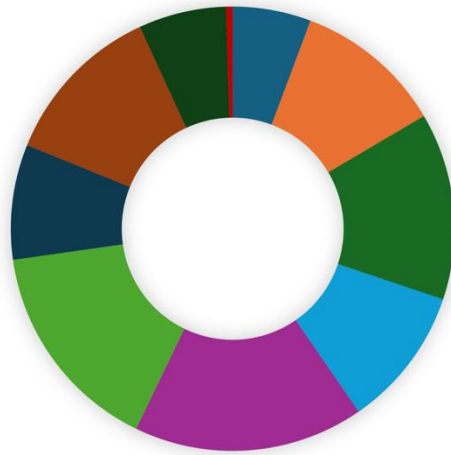


- Option 1: Continue to use 2024-25 walk zones developed by the CBE Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC).
- Option 2: Apply a single distance for all grades (or one distance for K-9 and another for high school) to the walk zone methodology described in option 1.
- Option 3: Use walk zones developed using provincial rules for transportation service areas.
- Option 4: Blend 2024-25 walk zones (option 1) with walk zones developed using provincial rules for transportation service areas (option 3).

Priority	Answer Option	Unranked	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total	Score
1	Option 2: Apply a single distance for all grades (or one distance for K-9 and another for high school) to the walk zone methodology described in option 1.	0%	31.36%	30.91%	22.73%	15%	220	613
2	Option 1: Continue to use 2024-25 walk zones developed by the CBE Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC).	0%	27.73%	34.55%	21.36%	16.36%	220	602
3	Option 4: Blend 2024-25 walk zones (option 1) with walk zones developed using provincial rules for transportation service areas (option 3).	0%	28.64%	25%	34.09%	12.27%	220	594
4	Option 3: Use walk zones developed using provincial rules for transportation service areas.	0%	12.27%	9.55%	21.82%	56.36%	220	391

**NOTE: Ranking scores are calculated by assigning points based on the number of options (e.g., 4). A first-place ranking receives 4 points, second place receives 3, third place receives 2, and fourth place receives 1. Any option that is not ranked receives 0 points. The total score for each option is the sum of all points it receives across all responses.*

7. Why did you select your top-ranked option? Select all that apply. (220 responses)

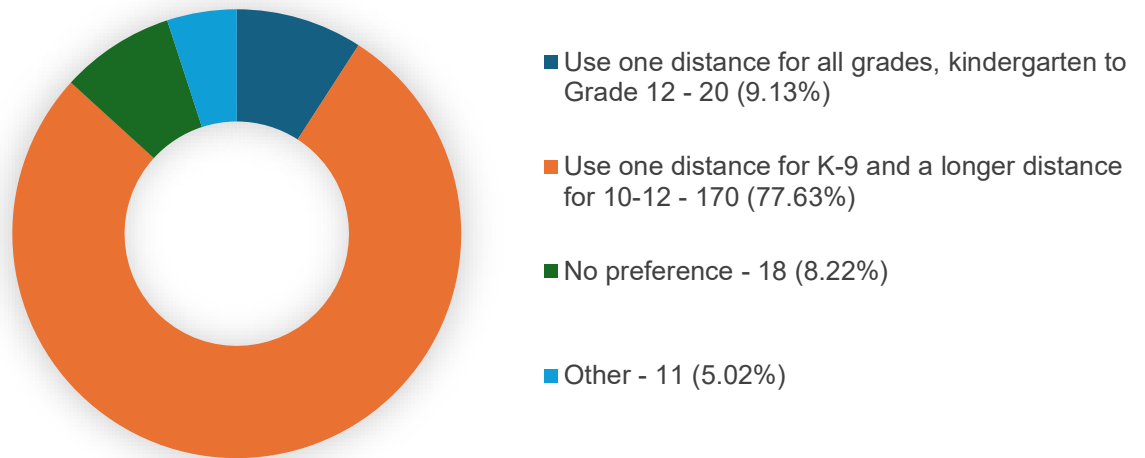


- Aligns with the government's requirements for how transportation eligibility is calculated - 49 (22.27%)
- Allows the flexibility to adjust lottery zones based on CBE needs and local context - 93 (42.27%)
- Minimizes disruption for students, families and schools by minimizing changes required in the future - 117 (53.18%)
- Maintains consistency with previous practices - 88 (40%)
- Provides a clear and understandable approach for families - 144 (65.45%)
- Promotes fairness and equity across CBE schools - 134 (60.91%)
- Supports efficient planning and use of transportation resources - 72 (32.73%)
- Prioritizes students closest to the school in the priority groups - 103 (46.82%)
- Reflects natural neighbourhood boundaries - 55 (25%)
- Other - 4 (1.82%)

Other:

- To encourage parents to connect with their MLAs if they feel the walk zone is poorly conceived.
- The lottery is a CBE process, and it should remain in CBE control, not at the whim of government change or timelines. Option 2 allows us to create our own maps and prioritize families who live closest (supporting positive well-being & environment)
- It is not equitable, arguable unethical, to prioritize student for a program/school based on the distance they live to a school. However it does greatly affect cost re transportation. This option is the most equitable/fair out of the 4.
- I am in a community school effected by student going to a lottery school. Because our school boundary is in the walk zone we lose many registration as the school is a K-9 Science program.

8. If lottery zones were created using a standard distance (option 2), should the distance be the same for all schools (K-12) or separate distances for high schools (e.g. one distance for K-9 and a longer distance for 10-12)? (219 responses)



Other:

- K-6, 7-10, 10-12
- Only one HS in Lottery - may be a moot point. If essential then longer for 10-12 would be fine as there are VERY few school cases with an overlap of K-9 and 10-12 grades so very few with multiple lottery zones & none of these would be lottery.
- K-6 distance, 7-9 distance and 10-12 distance
- Use one distance for K-6, a longer for 7-9 and a longer for 10-12
- K -6, 5 - 9 and 10-12
- If it's one distance, it needs to be short and within reason for the youngest learners
- K-5, 5-9, 10-12
- Separate distances including for K-9. Students in K cannot walk as far as students in Grade 9.
- K to 6 then 4 to 9 10 to 12
- K-6 should be distinct from 7-9
- Walking distance for K-4 should be shorter as it gets dark in the winter early causing a safety concern

9. If lottery zones were created by combining both past and current walk zones (option 4), how should we determine lottery zones for schools that span multiple grade divisions (e.g., K–9 or 5–9)? (219 responses)



- Use the 1.6 km elementary walk zone for schools that span multiple grade divisions - 74 (33.79%)
- Use the 1.8 km middle school walk zone for schools that span multiple grade divisions - 46 (21%)
- Create two lottery zones, one for each grade division (e.g. one for K-6 and one for 7-9) - 57 (26.03%)
- No preference - 42 (19.18%)

10. Is there anything else you would like to share about lottery zones that hasn't been covered in this survey? (43 responses)

- No (6)
- Not at this time (2)
- Not applicable or N/A (2)
- This may be off topic but something needs to be done around the students who apply to program of choice and remain on the community school's engage page for extended periods of time which affects next year planning for community schools.
- The new walk zones are choppy and needing to zoom in on as it is very specific and some houses on the same streets are in different zones, whereas the lottery maps (using old walk zone) is easy to see and easy to read when having to individually look up and prioritize every student entering lottery. Also, if lottery boundaries change, having to re-prioritize students would be a huge workload for Admin E's and cause backlash within the parent community. The lottery is already such a demand on time and stress load, adding more to our plates is a big ask when we are already juggling lottery responsibility added to our Admin E job requirements.
- My thought would be to just leave out walk-zones from the lottery and simplify the process. Leave priority to siblings living in designated communities only and all other students residing within the designated communities to falling into priority 2. If walk-zones must be in place, leave that to determine bussing, not priority in a lottery.
- Our lottery zone is our "old" walk zone. Our new walk zone includes part of the next community over, yet not all of our "home" community. I can see parents getting very confused and possibly angry about this. It is too confusing for them
- Are they calculating based on the provincial mandate door to door or is it the property line?
- Aligning with provincial 'walk zones' is consistent with past systems, and the recent changes are poorly conceived (i.e. based on driving distances). CBE can create a simple system by

aligning walk zone to lottery zone, and when parents bring up that they live close to the school but out of walk zone, encourage them to connect with their MLAs, to ultimately encourage changed legislation that better represents walkability (vs drivability) to the school for walk zones.

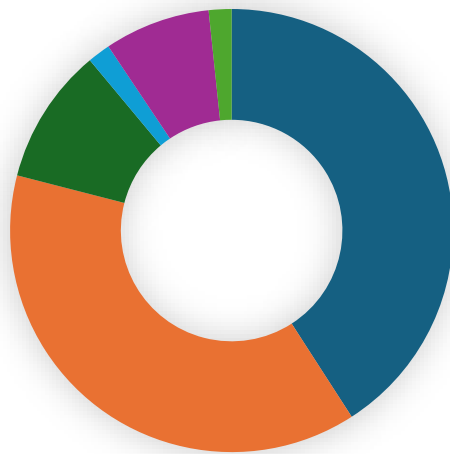
- Communication to parents is critical. Having simple, EAL friendly material that is ready to provide communities is useful.
- I don't think walk zones should be considered in the lottery process, period. When considering equity, it is unfair to prioritize one neighborhood/area over the many others that feed into that school for parents wanting access to alternative programs. Having a sibling in the school is an obvious priority area, however I don't believe whether a student has access to the programming they desire should depend on how close to the school they are. Transportation is available to all neighbourhoods outside of the walk zone...they should all be considered equally.
- The lottery zone should be set to the youngest grade offered in that particular school so that families don't have one on the bus and one walking or one eligible and one not.
- Please consider having a different lottery date for alternative programs and regular programs. This makes decisions for families easier.
- Standardizing the walk zone definition will be the most important piece as to not confuse parents. Having a variance will undoubtedly create confusion and likely frustration
- There should be consideration of creating critical mass for overflow schools. Why send kids to 3 or 4 different schools when they could all go to 1 other overflow school?
- With option 3 in the above question. I think having 2 lottery zones works as long as clear communication and adherence to the sibling rule is followed. If a family is applying to a school with a Division 3 student and a division 1 student, clearly indicating that there are varied rules for siblings in terms of distance will be important.
- Although many, many people live close to a school, the majority still use some sort of vehicle to get to school (outside of those who live within one block).
- I don't think so as I have never been in a school that has had a lottery system.
- Using the provincial rules provides continuity across processes - CBE adheres to provincial rules in many areas. When the province makes changes, CBE is not forced to re-invent processes because we already follow provincial rules. Easier for parents to understand.
- Make it as clear as possible so families understand.
- As clear as possible for both schools and parents to understand
- My school has alternative program and community. It is best if both programs have the same zones to maintain clarity (probably goes without saying)
- Walk zones should NOT be used for alternative programs. This is unequitable. Because a family can not afford to purchase or rent in the neighbourhood puts them at a GREAT disadvantage to attend this school because there are so many families within walking distance.
- There is a huge Equity Gap basing lotteries on these models. In many instances, the families who can afford housing in neighborhoods surrounding alternative program schools are the ones whom have more privilege when it comes to the education of their children. Again, I do realize that this impacts the cost to the CBE with potentially having to run more busses, which has impacts in other areas. The best option for now is having the largest Lottery zone possible
- all schools need to have consistent lottery/walk zones - if using 1.6 or 1.8 for schools with multiple grades you must use the same for all schools

- previous answer I would have said do not use ones associated with walk zones to avoid confusion.
- Whatever process is decided, communication needs to be very clear for families. It also should be sustainable solution that will not change year to year so I think preference would be for whichever walk zone can be consistently applied year to year.
- Consider removing walk zone priority altogether.
- Lots of the time we are doing a lottery based on grade (ie. more seats at grade 6 than at other grades) so the walk zone could be applied for a specific age group based on which lottery they are in.
- I am not a lottery school
- The more clear-cut, simplified and straightforward the 'rules' are is better for families, including proof of address rules. In my past experience with a lottery school, there is much confusion and disagreement about how/why the lottery zones apply to them, and parents have a tremendous number of questions and unique situations. More straightforwardness for families but also for schools (often with frequent staffing turnovers) can result in different answers and uncertainty without clear guidelines and expectations.
- I believe the walk distances are too long for the young, K-3, students, especially during the cold months. More congregated bus stops are needed. CBE needs MORE regular program elementary schools, and if need be, fewer alternative schools. Many families end up at an alternative schools as there are is not enough capacity at their regular schools without having to go to an overflow school. Alternative schools are not chosen because parents want them, it is because it is just a space for their child to go to school.
- While I understand the need for lotteries in overflow situations, I think the different priorities merely encourage people to play address games. In my experience, very few families actually walk to school anymore, preferring to drive. Maybe priority only to those families with siblings who will be attending the school in the same school year, and everyone else at the same priority might eliminate some of the address games.
- Ideally lotteries would occur after the high school transfer process. This would allow full visibility on how many actual seats are available post transfer process.
- Consideration should be given for communities where one community is guaranteed acceptance and the second community served goes in lottery. Our school's new walk zone has a SMALL corner of the community that is outside the new Provincial walk zone yet currently ALL students in the community are told that they are guaranteed a spot at the school and only students in the neighbouring community have a lottery.
- Either way it is very confusing for staff and families Clear key messages and professional learning for those schools in lottery are required.

Section 3: Lottery Communication with Families

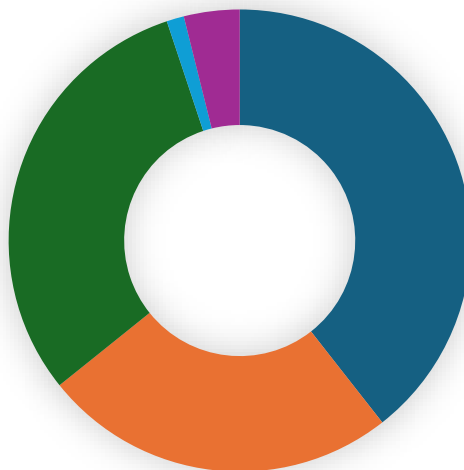
School-Based Lottery Communications

11. How confident are you in your ability to communicate the current lottery process to families? (181 responses)



- Very confident - 74 (40.88%)
- Somewhat confident - 69 (38.12%)
- Not very confident - 18 (9.94%)
- Not confident at all - 3 (1.66%)
- Not applicable to my role - 14 (7.73%)
- I don't know - 3 (1.66%)

12. Which resources or supports would most help schools effectively communicate the lottery process to families? Select all that apply. (181 responses)



- Standardized letter templates and online resources for schools to use in communicating with families - 162 (89.50%)
- Virtual Lottery 101 sessions for schools - 102 (56.35%)
- A lottery manual and checklist for schools - 126 (69.61%)
- I'm not sure - 5 (2.76%)
- Other - 16 (8.84%)

Other:

- Standardized process so schools are all following the same process
- Not all schools appear to follow the rules - not sure how you can handle that, but it has caused a lot of extra work for those that do. Maybe being addressed this year?
- items listed are already available - would like to see an automated process (similar to EOI for alternative programs where the parent has to go in to accept the placement within the designated timeframe instead of 100's of emails)
- video to share with families

- find a school tool that shows lottery zone and attendance zones for current and next year functionality.
- needs to be standardized so schools don't approach lottery differently
- Website clarity and FAQ for parents
- Having a summary of changes document from year to year. Have a template slideshow that is posted to the school websites automatically outlining the registration process, so that we can reference it in our open houses and afterwards.
- clear simple to understand bullet point rules with visible easy to read maps available for parents to see
- Maps that clearly show street names, especially at the boundary of the zone where one side of the street is in and the other side is out.
- system created videos to share with families that are posted on each website
- paper school lottery zone map to physically show parents
- EAL friendly resources (not just translations but simplified for families with low literacy in any language)
- Flatsheet for parents that they can use for translation purposes.
- videos created like the one at the beginning of this presentation are the most helpful at providing consistent messaging and visual representations.
- CBE Public Website and InSite

13. What are the most important improvements we could make to support your role in communicating the lottery process? (138 responses)

- Not applicable or N/A (6), *with two responses offering additional details around their comment*
 - Not applicable in my current role
 - (not currently a lottery school and there will be many changes to the process if I ended up in a school with a lottery in future years)
- Decisions need to be made sooner and waitlisted students need to be dealt with sooner to support the community schools in their RAM process.
- Ensure I am invited to any lottery discussions with CBE
- consistent practice to track and manage data when running a lottery - seems like everyone has a different method. As I am a junior high school, 95% of my lottery consists of students already enrolled in the CBE and therefore not in SchoolEngage for registration. Everything needs to be tracked manually on a spreadsheet.
- Standard system messaging sent centrally
- Processes for actually administering the lottery. Can this be done digitally? The process to do it manually is very arduous currently.
- Clear communication to Admin Es and administrators and firm deadlines
- Make it easier for parents, like Find a School
- Flat sheet to share with families that both designated and overflow schools can share. Ensure that all schools that are in lottery and overflow have the "pop-up" on their website.
- It is a very complex and time consuming (and stressful) process. It would be helpful if there was a way that incoming students would be prioritized automatically by the system (PowerSchool)

based on address and siblings as the manual process is time consuming. The hardest part is the notifying the families of the outcomes and keeping track of the yes's, the no's and the accepting and the declining of positions, and then moving down the list when you receive a decline. There needs to be an easier way so that I am not keeping track of hundreds of emails within a 10 day timeframe each time a spot is offered. Also, I do think that schools in lottery need to somehow reassess the pay scale of Admin E's - I know it is difficult with the union but it is not fair or equitable that this is an added responsibility/expectation - when we have 1000 students and in lottery and getting paid the same as an E at a school of 250 kids.

- clear boundaries (mapped) for priority 1 walk zones
- Clear communication
- It would be helpful to have information readily available to give to parents about the overflow school if they are not successful in the lottery. Parent's biggest concern is how their child is going to get to the other school. We are aware of a bus that does transport students, but we have no information to provide about a route, time, contact information and always have to refer the family to reach out to the overflow school.
- Every year it seems like the process and communication is tweaked to make everything clearer and easier to follow. I have one lottery under my belt and hope it is smoother this year.
- FAQ fact sheet, standard communication first from communications team and a key contact for support.
- Create a video that explains the process for parents that is posted to the registration page AND for us to share via QR code at open houses.
- Doing great. Continued standard communication across the board.
- Timing is important as it will allow principals to create a school-based communications plan as impactful information gets rolled out to families.
- See last remarks
- Communication
- Clear maps
- Families have to be able to clearly understand the program without us having to go into detail about various scenarios and complexities.
- clear communication 1:1 with school admin (not general emails)
- Provide information in multiple languages.
- See above
- Clear videos/documents created by the system for schools to share
- Website banner on all schools that have lotteries
- When possible, have it shared with schools earlier
- An FAQ flatsheet for administration
- everything is very clear
- clear communication, and clear maps
- Ease of understanding for parents
- Consistency and clarity for families
- Consistency in approach, year over year.
- Include the principal in the letter vetting process.

- Clear communication sent to families from system, not just school
- Having printed zone maps is needed; we understand that we live in a digital age, yet the printed map is helpful for families and staff
- Clear identification of lottery status and process on a school website (currently the letters can get buried)
- A manual and checklist would be helpful.
- Send out timely communication and ensure that schools receive the information prior to it being shared with the community
- I always love the 101 learning sessions and templates
- Have an interactive flowchart, like is done on registration, for the lottery process on the website, for people to enter in their own scenario.
- Time to work without interruptions
- templates to ensure common language and messaging
- Alberta Ed and CBE alignments for communication purposes
- Most importantly is to have the information in our brains before the system opens up so that we are telling parents the right thing from the start and not back peddling (which makes us look bad)
- 1st - there are no overflow schools for alternative programs; 2nd - out of area students cannot be contemplated when school is in lottery
- There should be a "I acknowledge and understand the lottery process" in the registration process. Make it clear and transparent so parents know what they are agreeing to understand.
- Continued system coherence around communication to schools and families
- Make video of lottery process accessible to parents.
- language new administrators to use when communicating with families
- System developed clear language for schools to use when communicating with families
- I am not currently in a lottery, but clear information in advance is always appreciated as this is a process that needs to be consistent across schools.
- Clear templates and guidelines that we can use that are created early in the school year. An updated registration website early in the year with an upcoming year section (this is always updated too late when we've already started creating our open house presentations.
- updated current maps (large maps to use as a visual for parents when they come to the school) indicating walk and transportation zones
- Ensuring projections precede lottery process so principals can make informed decisions about how many students they are accepting. Ensure planning meeting with schools in lottery happen prior to lottery so any updates from principals can be acted on.
- Standardize messaging is key. Staying the course as much as possible is also very helpful. The more change we add, the more interpretation ensues.
- Clear and Concise messaging. Ensuring all schools have the same messaging and are following the correct process. Many people ask why the boundary lines go down the middle of a street. Ex: "I live on the other side of the street". Clear messaging around these boundaries and how they are measured.

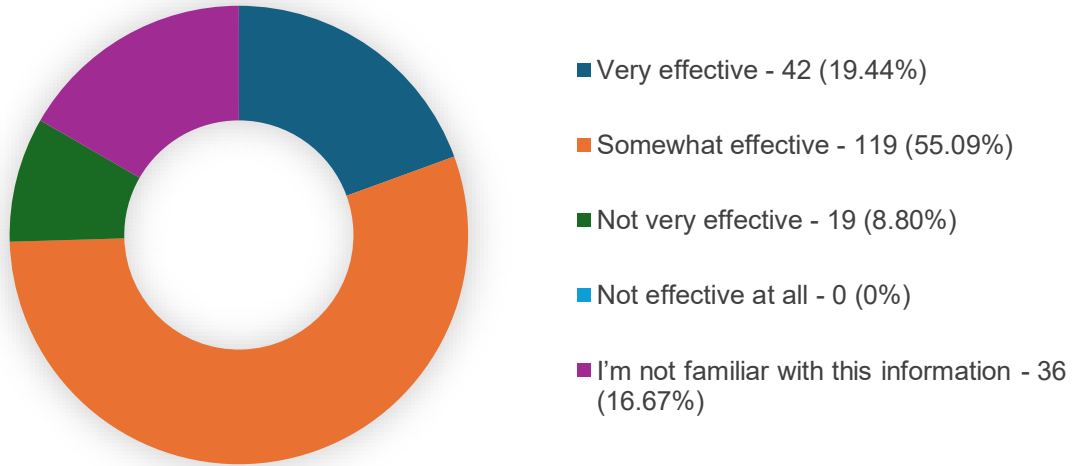
- For me it has simply been a learning process. The website is very clear as is the process, however each year we face different challenges as our waitlist grows in this community. When I started the waitlist was almost non-existent and in the span of 4 years it has greatly increased which simply requires more clarifying questions for us in our process
- Transportation: the CBE is advertising we are providing transportation as an overflow school. We are not. Currently we have zero students in 'overflow' status. At what point will we organize transportation? Confusing currently.
- consistency across all schools
- Common language and community boundaries
- Clear communication around the lottery process
- Ensuring that lottery schools and overflow schools understand the process. This includes school-based staff but also Area and Sr Leadership. There are many out of scope practices being used (holding spaces for private operator students) or not understanding overflow school's role in the process.
- Clear maps and email templates for share with parents so the messaging is consistent across our system.
- Consistent message from all schools
- Provide clear, consistent messaging and templates that can be shared directly with families. Having a concise guide or checklist, plus opportunities for training or Q&A session that would be placed on InSite. And the addition of this to the Principal's' Handbook
- Standardized information package to share.
- Short videos for parents; support with a PowerPoint but also have a video
- Make it make sense to parents
- aligned / consistent CBE messaging
- none - I work directly with Communications on this.
- keep consistent boundaries from year to year
- Keep it standard processes and don't change rules every year.
- Prompt and concise information
- Please consider our families who are new to Canada and learning English in communication. I find those are the families who are most confused at lottery time.
- Timely information - much earlier than January (November at the latest) to be able to process, understand and internalize the information
- I am not in a lottery school at this time. System co-ordinated communication is best.
- Having changes and training to understand them BEFORE the opening of registration. Having training after registration opens causes frustration and confusion for families and school staff.
- My school is not a lottery school, but in my Area many of the comprehensive CBE messages to parents are too challenging for our parents to read. So, a few different methods to communicate would help tremendously. That's why in the example in the question above, I choose 3 different resources or supports, not just one.
- Clear communication resources
- The slides created by the alternative program team were very helpful this year.
- Clear concise information / resources to share information with families.

- Standardize processes and supports.
- Please designate students in Regular Program to the same school for their Alternative Program. My Regular Program students go to a different school for TLC, even though it is offered in my building.
- Support with consistent communication.
- Clear and consistent rules and access for parents.
- I found it straightforward and easy to communicate with our community; however, we only had priority one students in our lotteries because our community was only walk zone before the new provincial rules changed.
- minimize disruption
- Ensuring consistency between schools (especially schools that do not run a lottery) in communicating with the community. For example, we have students sent to us from CBE schools that do not check to see that we have a waitlist.
- Not sure
- Consistent communication templates
- common practices within the CBE
- I don't have experience with the lottery process and if our school was one of the lottery schools, I would follow the process/support more in detail.
- Keep families together if in the same school. It is not first come first served.
- Clear communication to parents and students.
- clear rules with visuals
- Communication with schools whose students are transitioning to other schools in lottery would be vital.
- Make it consistent for families with siblings.
- Alignment across the system.
- By providing the resources as noted above before roll out and a FAQ document prior to roll out. Professional Learning for the Admin E's at schools.
- create the presentations like a plug and play to ensure consistency
- consistent, clear communication that is provided in a timely manner
- central message sent to families
- It does not impact this school right now
- Clear manual and checklist for schools, including a separate checklist for alternate program school lotteries
- be consistent across the system
- Timeline in advance of new resources/processes to anticipate communication planning
- on the SE emails to notify parents, can you please include a respond by DATE or # days instead of saying 10 'business' days. this is very confusing for families and schools.
- Include Quick Byte videos helping to explain.
- Ensure consistent messaging from all schools
- training and easily accessible online resources that can be shared with families electronically

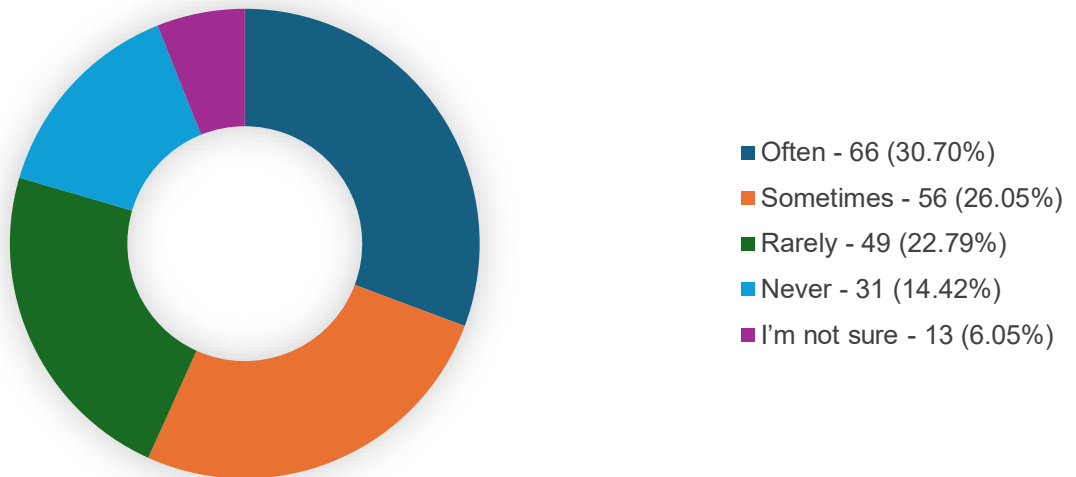
- A dummy / fake School Engage Parent Account so we can walk families through the process via TEAMS or in person also Forum for questions and ongoing responses to answers to follow, similar to how the Job Action Insite page
- continue to provide practical resources, like templates and flatsheets, videos and sessions
- clear boundaries and clear definitions for each priority
- Clear, large maps outlining transportation zones
- more training, with questions and answer period
- Targeted PL sessions by division for schools who will be in lottery any given year.
- Discussion Templates/talking points to use with families when they call a school (for all office staff), Standardized messaging that can be posted on our websites with versions that synch with the context of the school (grade specific, walk zones, overflow schools, transportation links)
- Easy to understand videos in multiple languages for parents to view.
- Have standardized documents and online resources available for school leaders to use in communicating the lottery process.
- Restrict the number of choices available. Add more alternative programs if this is where demand is
- link maps on the school website
- Be sure to provide training for office E secretaries
- Having as much consistency across the district on as many elements in the process as possible - even if we need a lottery zone map and a transportation map
- Clear messages, clear maps and the ability to ask questions of the lottery team as families register.
- The walk boundaries
- Increased communication around Expression of Interest forms and how the EOI is embedded in the registration form
- None
- Talking points for admin; a good flat sheet
- one webpage for maps and the process - you currently have to hunt for the information. Or on the find a school, make both the walk and lottery zone available for viewing on this one page but make the options more obvious.
- Early planning
- This is my first time doing it so I will have more to say afterwards.

System Lottery Communications

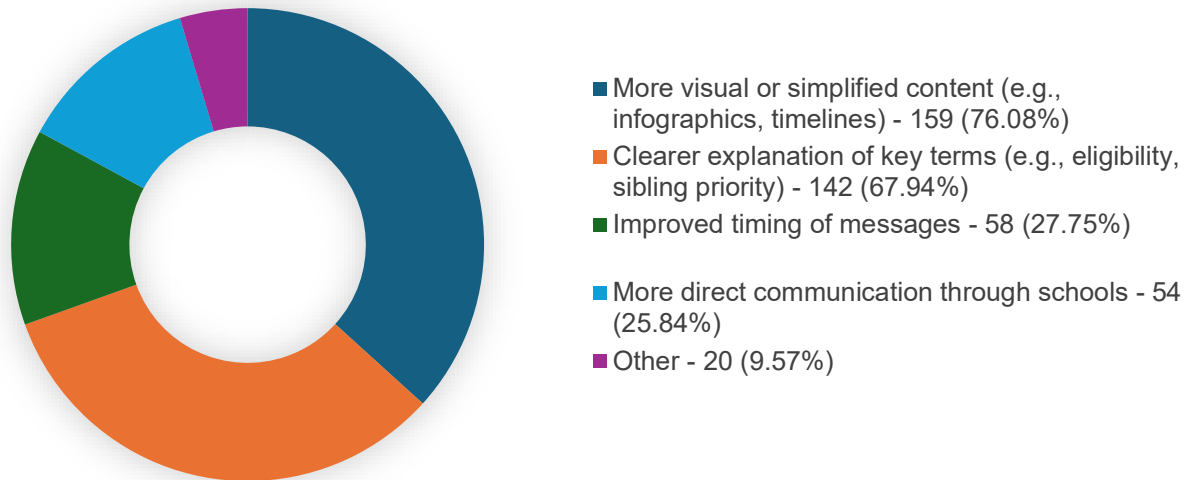
14. How effective is the information about school lotteries on the corporate website in supporting communication with families? (216 responses)



15. How often do you direct families to the information about school lotteries on the corporate website? (215 responses)



16. What improvements could make system-level lottery communications easier for families to access and understand? Select all that apply. (209 responses)



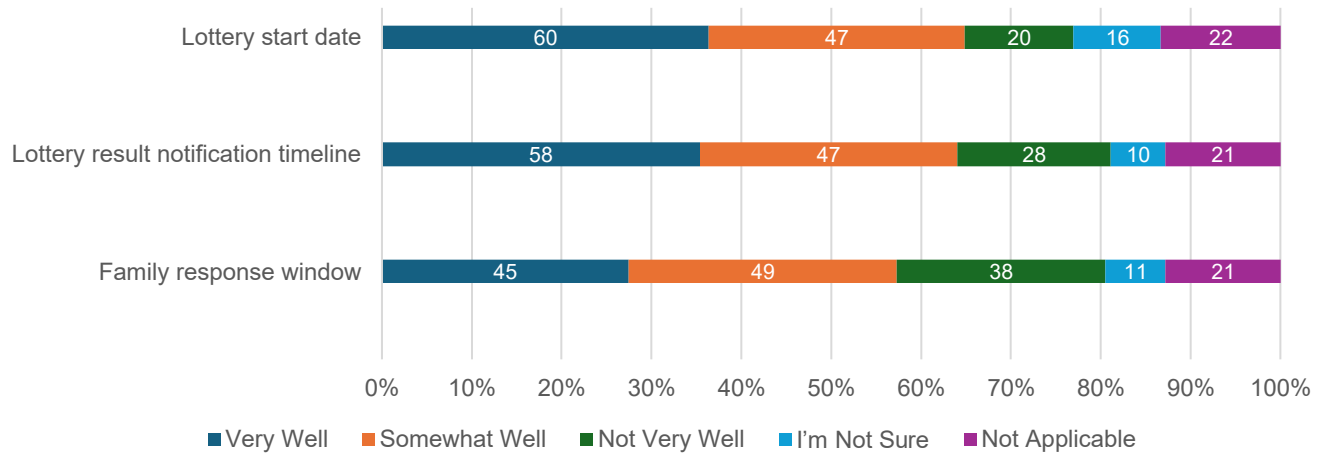
Other:

- Flat sheet for schools to use when incoming registrations are made with key messages for families
- Website is clear and easy to follow yet parents still panic and call the schools - it is exhausting day after day, I am not sure how to alleviate the calls as I think the website is clear and concise.
- video for families
- find a school tool updated functionality
- Flat sheet?
- Consistent messaging from the CBE, not the schools, to ensure continuity and clarity regardless of the school
- people are confused about the whole process. there are too many web links to pages with web links to more web links. perhaps putting the process in one location. Each topic could have a short description & more info with expanded bubble
- multiple languages, video tutorials, highlighting that parents have agreed to this process when applying
- Most common questions and confusion related to kindergarten students. Further clarification here could be helpful
- Videos and/or presentations would be helpful - especially for EAL families
- information often leads to circles - click here and end up on the page started on - too many menus and links
- Ideally it is one central spot - schools can direct families to the process. Mirror the high school transfer process - that is a solid CBE example that supports 100% of schools.
- The visual and simplified content should help EAL families. Things need to be easy for parents to translate.

- Language translation more accessible on front page and Welcome Centre same messaging
- The information was clear, parents just seem to want to hear it straight from the school to ensure they understand it. Not sure why this is but we would just reiterate the same information. Often, they would try to argue that they should be an exception.
- Communication in different languages such as Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Arabic
- Simplified for Newcomer families
- Creating the dummy account to allow office staff to walk parent through the process
- Translations
- videos and less text

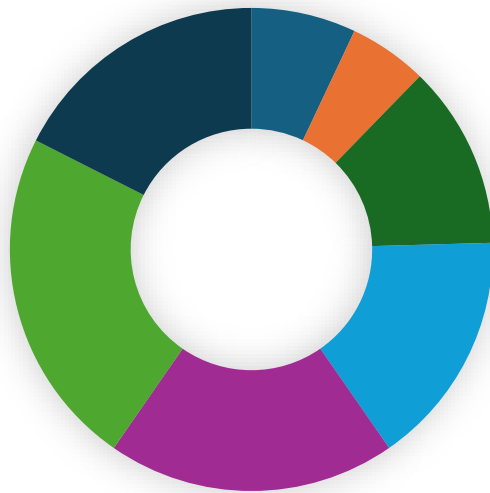
Lottery Timeline

17. Based on what you hear from families, how well do the current lottery timelines work?
(165 responses)



Answer Option	Very Well	Somewhat Well	Not Very Well	I'm Not Sure	Not Applicable	Total
Lottery start date (Wednesday before Teacher's Convention)	36.36% 60	28.48% 47	12.12% 20	9.7% 16	13.33% 22	165
Lottery result notification timeline (families notified within 10 business days of the draw)	35.37% 58	28.66% 47	17.07% 28	6.1% 10	12.8% 21	164
Family response window (10 business days after an offer)	27.44% 45	29.88% 49	23.17% 38	6.71% 11	12.8% 21	164

18. If you selected “Not Very Well” for LOTTERY START DATE, please tell us why. Select all that apply. (29 responses)



- The timeline is too short - 4 (13.79%)
- The timeline is too long - 3 (10.34%)
- The timing conflicts with other school or family commitments - 7 (24.14%)
- Families are confused about key dates or next steps - 9 (31.03%)
- Schools have limited time to communicate with families - 11 (37.93%)
- The timeline creates additional workload for schools - 13 (44.83%)
- Other - 10 (34.48%)

Other:

- We get the notifications out asap. Unable last year on lottery day as too busy. 2 staff did not attend convention to get this done for our parents. Earlier in week draw preferred.
- Because the lottery takes place right before convention, office staff usually have to give up their convention time or weekend to get the lottery results out quickly as parents flood the office with calls excepting results right away.
- High School registration begins just prior to the lottery dates, might be a bit disjointed in timing for Div IV
- This may not be in scope and not possible to adjust given legalities of the process and other system dependencies.
- Start Registration in Dec to give families and schools more time to go through the registrations. Give families clear # days to respond, or even better to include a deadline date. The term 'business days' is confusing for many families
- Schools have not received projections from planning yet.
- the turn around is tight for registration applications - the cut off to be included in the lottery is a Tuesday at noon - people that had questions or issues with their application they tried submitted on the weekend may not have it corrected by Tuesday
- Thursday and Friday of conferences should not be used by staff for responding to parents for lottery. Clearer communication that NO offers should go out until after Family Day would be equitable.
- My school is not in the lottery and I don't interact with our families about the process.
- Please have it start after Family Day so all schools can begin offering spots on the same date.

19. If you selected “Not Very Well” for LOTTERY RESULT NOTIFICATION TIMELINE, please tell us why. Select all that apply. (39 responses)



- The timeline is too short - 7 (17.95%)
- The timeline is too long - 15 (38.46%)
- The timing conflicts with other school or family commitments - 8 (20.51%)
- Families are confused about key dates or next steps - 15 (38.46%)
- Schools have limited time to communicate with families - 12 (30.77%)
- The timeline creates additional workload for schools - 11 (28.21%)
- Other - 7 (17.95%)

Other:

- Speaking from the Area office perspective, it would be beneficial for schools to send out the notifications in a shorter timeline. Perhaps, Admin Es could be given one day of convention to complete this work.
- For us to have 10 days to notify is fine, 5 (like last year) is too short.
- A long timeline to provide the lottery results makes parents impatient and call the school requesting updates.
- see above
- needs to be consistent - the range to respond is too large. some inform day 1, others day 10
- seems like a long time - some school process very quickly - others take to the very end - families hear from one school and must wait 2 weeks to hear from the other
- My school is not in lottery and I don't interact with the families in this process.

20. If you selected “Not Very Well” for FAMILY RESPONSE WINDOW, please tell us why. Select all that apply. (54 responses)



- The timeline is too short - 3 (5.56%)
- The timeline is too long - 33 (61.11%)
- The timing conflicts with other school or family commitments - 6 (11.11%)
- Families are confused about key dates or next steps - 19 (35.19%)
- Schools have limited time to communicate with families - 7 (12.96%)
- The timeline creates additional workload for schools - 17 (31.48%)
- Other - 9 (16.67%)

Other:

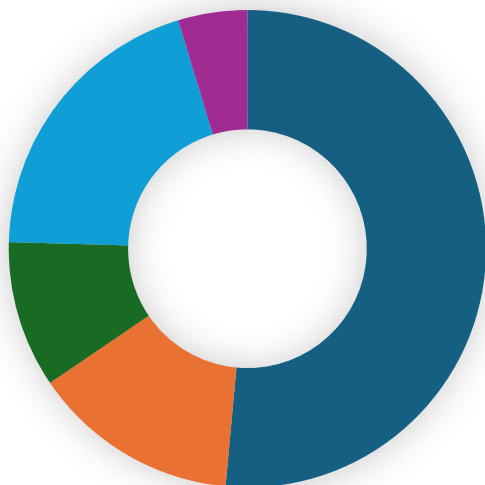
- If a family applies for more than one lottery, they need to have notification from all schools to make an informed decision. Some inform day 1, others day 10.
- We offer and wait 10 days, follow up by email/call, lots of work. Other schools have told me they offer (after 1st 10 days passed) verbally and give 24 hrs for reply. Not fair/consistent, though later offers should have shorter turn around.
- see above
- 7 days (not business days) is a better timeline so other families can be notified when families decline offer
- as long as families have heard from ALL schools applied for - they don't need 10 full days to decide
- The 10 days is confusing when parents are waiting to hear back from 3 alternative programs and not all offers go out at the same time.
- Same as previous question.
- Families do not respond within the 10 days. School have to contact families for their responses. Adding work to office staff.
- Parents continue to fail to accept and decline as they have multiple applications so if they do understand they wait for all to come in which may vary by ten days and so for a school to now do a second round of offers gets later and later.

21. How would shortening the family response window (e.g., from 10 days to 5 days) likely impact families and schools? (154 responses)



- It would improve efficiency and speed up placement processes - 70 (45.45%)
- It would be manageable with clear communication and reminders - 16 (10.39%)
- It could create challenges for families to respond in time - 32 (20.78%)
- It would increase stress or confusion for families - 12 (7.79%)
- I'm not sure - 24 (15.58%)

22. If the CBE shortens the amount of time families have to respond to lottery offers, when should the shorter timeline apply? (171 responses)



- It should apply to all offers, starting from the lottery date in mid-February - 88 (51.46%)
- It should apply only to callback offers after the final placements in early March - 24 (14.04%)
- It could create challenges and should not be changed - 17 (9.94%)
- I'm not sure - 34 (19.88%)
- Other - 8 (4.68%)

Other:

- Families might know of one offer, but not others and this could create stress if they are waiting for a particular offer.
- Should apply after initial 10 days. If a spot is available allows a school to move on down the list and not wait
- apply to current up to September
- use 7 days, this is one full week. remove 'business' days
- First 1 should be 5 days, 48 hours to follow.

- shorter timeline but be respectful of family dynamics - some working evenings, some days, some weekends, etc. - must have availability over a full rotations of shifts
- Ideally there is symmetry with dates: IB/AP applications + high school transfers + lottery = it gets confusing when all of the dates are different. Junior high transfer dates - I just use the high school date - this could be better communicated
- But once again is dependent on offers going out at a consistent time e.g. after Family day so that all alternative programs have equal chance of filling their spots

23. Is there anything else you would like to share about lottery timelines and communication with families that hasn't been covered in this survey? (53 responses)

- No or "No thank you" (5)
- Not applicable or N/A (2)
- Again, decisions about waitlisted students needs to happen much sooner. Programs of choice are able to create full classrooms so their staffing needs are met during ram time where community schools in close proximity of programs of choice are often left waiting until the last minute to lose students making staff decisions more difficult.
- Call back responses should be done in 24- 48 hours
- less time to accept would be great. 10 days is so long - parents having 5 business days is an ample amount of time to accept.
- Waiting for families to select a school when they already have made their choices is stressful. Emailing them multiple times and then once they accept or decline, needing to wait another 10 days for the callbacks can be a challenge
- Waiting 10 days for a response and sending reminders is too long when other families are eagerly awaiting a potential callback.
- From a high school perspective, we would like all the offers and denials sent out simultaneously and then from that have the five-day window.
- Should clarify whether it is an offer when it is the student's designated high school. A number "decline" to go to the overflow school thus bypassing the High School transfer process. Are we offering placement vs. telling them that they are going to their designated school?
- Allowing callbacks from another alternative programs after a student has already accepted placement in another program is an ongoing concern. Can there be some clarification shared with families about how accepting placement in one alternative program means their registration in that program is confirmed and closed for the year?
- Walk zones should not be a part of the lottery process.
- Short response time needs to be clearly and repeatedly sent to families using multiple medium
- Alternative Programs should have a different date than Regular programs. This will help families make decisions and not "wait" to hear before accepting regular ed programs.
- Shorter timelines will make the response more of a priority for families. When given too much time the urgency dissipates
- It would be preferred to have a school FIRM date that all families are receiving offered; ex: the Wednesday after Family day, all families receive notice; this would allow for Admin E to attend convention, plan for the process, and implement with the supporting staff in the school; AS WELL all families are receiving the same information within 2 days not 10, and they can make decisions quicker because they are not having to wait to receive all offers
- There are complications when a student has submitted an expression of interest for a program and the family tries to wait to see if other offers are imminent.
- There is just a lot of to and fro with families about choosing their program. Parents are offered so many choices and they change their minds all the time which has us doing the same work over and over in some instances, As a public system why do we strive to offer something for every different taste instead of perfecting the delivery of a solid standard education in each setting that does not cater to every possibility? Why the perceived need to specialize? Those

are some thoughts that i realize don't help with the process as it is. I worked in the office during teachers convention in order to complete the lottery work in the timeframe that it is set up but that was fine by me.

- The 10 day response time should begin when offer is sent to families. Lottery the day after long weekend and convention is better. Also having parents "acknowledge and accept" that they clearly understand lottery process in PS.
- If a family applies for four schools that are all in lottery, they should not be expected to respond to any offers before they receive all of them and can make an informed decision.
- I like the idea of shortening the timeline. Families need to make decisions faster so schools can get their numbers and staffing sorted out.
- A consideration needs to be made for HS. They hold a lottery and then transfer process occurs so they are moving students around twice. In addition, there is extra strain at HS if students apply to IB and then refuse a placement with IB. This puts a lot of extra work on the staff in HS. I would suggest a separate session to understand the barriers lottery creates at the HS level.
- Best practice for waitlist processes would be helpful, we seem to just be creating and refining our own and I think some system direction would be helpful... for example mid year transfers
- I would love to see the lottery timeline be moved for schools who do not have special programs. If the special programs schools could go first and then after their deadline for acceptance is complete, then the regular program schools would be able to remove those students before doing their own lottery. This would create far less work for our lotteries.
- Final decisions impact community and overflow schools. It is important final decisions are clear and well communicated so community schools know which students have been selected to through lottery and which students will be attending community or overflow schools.
- Clean, predictable timelines! Templates, guides and consistent messaging
- The timing of lottery around convention makes for huge workload for schools when staff are supposed to be engaging in convention offerings. This creates a disadvantage for schools who honour this time and wait to process offers until after family day. Office staff should not feel they need to work on this long weekend to keep up with other schools. There should be a standard date for offers to go after Family Day and a clear window so that all alternative programs have equal access to families applying.
- Sticking to timeline and consequences for families that does not respond by deadline.
- It would more efficient if there was a set lottery notification and family response date, rather than 10 business days. We all end up with different dates and it's confusing. If all schools said that lottery results will be shared by (i.e.) Feb 18 and all family responses must be in by (i.e.) March 4, then we're all working with the same timeline.
- Information for schools about holding some space for new registrations that are complex learners... often they register with CBE after the Feb lottery takes place. Community school (closer walk zone) does not have space, but medically complex, severe social/emotional/behavioural and/or students with cognitive and/or intellectual disabilities in inclusive settings are not able to attend a school that may be in close proximity to walk to
- Automate the process, shorten the timeline, families not responding creates a lot of confusion
- In my experience, schools start receiving queries regarding registration in October/November. Has a feasibility study been conducted around opening registration in December?

- Yes, it is very difficult to plan for staffing when we allow other alternative programs to do call backs up until September. If there are call backs I don't believe schools should be able to offer placement to kids in other alternative programs. We consistently lose 10 kids a year to the same alternative program when they have many other students they could offer placement to.
- We are not currently in a lottery so my experience is not sufficient to respond to some of these questions.
- I don't think so
- Lottery start date on the Wednesday before Convention should occur earlier like the week before Convention as many families plan trips around this time.
- Can the CBE put a message on lottery school websites that say something like "school lottery draws have been completed, please check your email for updates (or acceptance). We found some parents are not checking emails and losing out on placement. And if feeder schools could send out that reminder as well.
- The lottery is challenging for community schools, particularly small schools who are directly impacted by LATE additions to lottery schools. Lottery schools could maybe have a time cap vs. a number cap so that other schools are not so directly impacted.
- the lottery timeline blocks other schools from completing their head count for Regular school
- I think schools should not pull students in the Fall
- give schools the ability to choose which fields from the reg form we want in our excel export to make the spreadsheet manageable without a lot of not needed info. Sort forms by years, not name, to make it easier to get the form you need.
- Could we have alignment on the date when successful applications are communicated to family. To ensure Support Staff will not feel pressure to complete this during convention.
- I wonder about the need for students to accept placement. This is their designated school. From my perspective, the accepting of placement should only be in relation to the High School Transfer process.
- A shorter notification and response window (ex: 5 days in place of 10) would provide a more efficient process for schools and in turn simplify the call back process. Consistency between ALL schools will be key in this process.
- Thank you for this thoughtful work, articulation of the options (video was great!) and presentation in this survey.
- As a regular program school in lottery, we run a lottery the same time as alternative programs. We then notify successful families who do not reply because they are waiting for their preferred choice (alt program) to offer them placement. We also consequently turn many families down and send them to our overflow school, only to turn around a few days later and call them back, do the transfer form process etc. etc... because a student that we offered placement to takes an offer from an alt program. We could avoid the extra work for reg program schools AND the disappointment to families who are overflowed because they didn't get an initial spot with us, if we simply had alt program schools run their lottery FIRST. Last year we ran lottery for 100 spots with 140 K registrations. We overflowed 40 only to have 36 of the "accepted" students accept alt programs. By the time we called the others back, many had moved on to catholic or private K programs. We ended up only getting 75 students
- Lotteries are confusing and there are a multitude of practices at schools for sharing info and even conducting the lottery. It would be great to have more standardized processes and tighter

timelines. Lottery callbacks can take over offices for months, not really allowing a school to know their final numbers until right before our September count date. That makes staffing challenging.

- For those that are not lottery schools, the lottery timelines impact when we can start processing registrations. Some schools are more impacted than others by families that want to explore options for their children. The shorter the timelines, the better so we know who is attending our school in time for RAM considerations and to start running scenarios with a fulsome picture of enrollment.
- Private school enrollment deadlines (and \$ deposits) are due in the first weeks of January. These families want the information prior to the winter break.

Insights from open-ended and ‘Other’ open field responses

Participants provided generous responses to open-ended questions (10, 13, and 23) and ‘Other’ open text fields (7, 8, 12, 16, 18, 19, 20, and 22). A summary of high-level insights about communication and the lottery process, grouped under themes, is provided below. Suggestions for how to address many of these needs have been provided by participants within the detailed comments above.

This summary was created with the assistance of Microsoft Co-Pilot, a tool that uses artificial intelligence (AI). Any content generated by Microsoft Co-Pilot was reviewed and edited by CBE communications and engagement staff.

Lottery Communication

Clarity, consistency, and supporting tools and resources

- Many parents struggle to understand the lottery process – this is not limited to EAL families and those with literacy needs
- Need simple, clear, and consistent CBE-wide messaging for staff and families
 - Centrally approved, ready-to-use communication tools and resources, like templates (e.g., letters, emails, and website text), flat sheets, easy-to-read and printable maps, website banners, talking points, presentations, and other resources

Equity and access considerations

- Simpler, more accessible information for families about the lottery: overflow, lottery zones, transportation eligibility, and how siblings factor into the lottery process
 - Multi-lingual materials and content that can be translated by website translation tools
 - More visuals, videos, and/or digital tools (e.g., interactive flowcharts, a demonstration SchoolEngage page for school staff to walk families through the process, etc.)

Lottery Process

Need for clarity and consistency across the system

- Standardize overflow, lottery zones, and sibling rules and processes across schools to reduce complexity, inconsistency, and confusion among staff and families

Improving school experience – Efficiency, automation, and workload reduction

- Current process is complex, time consuming, and stressful; it negatively impacts administrative workload and creates operational challenges
- Reduce the need for manual spreadsheets and school-by-school workarounds
- Automate prioritization based on address and siblings in PowerSchool
- Provide information about leading practices around waitlist management to improve efficiency of callback process and reduce endless movement on waitlists

- More guidance around supporting and managing unique needs and circumstances, like complex learners and mid-year transfers

Equity and access considerations

- While acknowledging transportation cost realities, the use of walking distance to determine lottery priority level creates inequities
- Review use of walking distance (proximity) in lottery priority levels, especially in areas where affordable housing is limited within walking distance of schools; some recommended not using walking distance at all
- Process changes should aim to reduce inequities for lower-income families and those unfamiliar with the system and how to navigate it (e.g., newcomer families, those with limited English proficiency, and those unfamiliar with Canadian school systems)
- Ensure alternative program access is not negatively affected by lottery zone rules
- Special considerations may be required for high schools, as they hold a lottery and then transfer process, and have unique circumstances related to the International Baccalaureate Program (IB)

Timelines, calendars, and predictability

- A single, system-wide lottery timeline with aligned offer and response dates
 - Shorter notification and response windows that still respect diverse family contexts (e.g., shift work, parenting rotations); 10 business days is too long
 - Earlier sharing of process information, ideally November – December
 - Coordination across regular and alternative programs to avoid delays
 - Move lottery timing to be after the Family Day long weekend, so staff can engage with the Teachers' Convention and do not feel pressure to work over the long weekend

Training and supports for school leaders and staff

- A variety of training resources and opportunities on lottery processes, tailored to role (e.g., administrative staff, school leadership) – could include Quick Byte videos, “101” sessions, and Q&A opportunities
- Manuals, checklists, maps, flowcharts, and digital tools to support lottery delivery
- Opportunities for more collaboration between lottery and overflow schools