

Chicago magnet schools attract parents

by UPI

CHICAGO -- Parents in Chicago are waiting to learn if their children have won the lottery to get into magnet schools and those for gifted students. Karen Moran has 5-year-old twin daughters and has spent hours weighing the merits of various public and private schools. "I've spent more time on this process than in I did trying to get into college or law school," Moran told the Chicago Tribune. "There's so much stress and uncertainty right now, I feel sort of panicked about what's going to happen." Competition has been tough for years for elite private schools. What is new in Chicago is the competition to get into some public programs, both magnet schools where students are admitted by lottery and gifted and classical schools where admission is by exam. Last year, 995 children applied for 36 openings at Drummond Montessori, a public school. That makes it more selective than Harvard, which admits about 9 percent of applicants. For city officials, the crush is reason to celebrate. Mayor Richard Daley, responding to reports that some parents lied on magnet school applications, suggested it was a first for Chicago that people were willing to cheat to get their children into public schools.

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