

2024 Lottery Guidance and Overview

A. Key Dates

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|---------------------------------|---|
| → February 2, 2024 | Deadline for accepting applications from families |
| → February 9, 2024 | All applicant information entered into Student Choice System (SCS) |
| → February 12-16, 2024 | Charter lottery window
<i>(inclement weather dates February 19-23, 2024)</i> |
| → February 28, 2024 | Parent notification letters sent. <i>If your lottery is held on a make-up day, the deadline for sending parent notification is March 6, 2024.</i> |
| → March 6, 2024 | Lottery placement status, indicating whether a student was waitlisted or accepted, must be entered into SCS by 4 p.m. <i>If your lottery is held on a make-up day, the deadline for indicating lottery placement status is March 8, 2024.</i> |
| → February 2 and April 24, 2024 | On a rolling basis, update lottery status to include acceptance and decline in SCS. All confirmation status information must be entered by the April 24 th date. |
| → April 8, 2024 | Deadline for families to confirm or decline acceptance |
| → February 2 - April 24, 2024 | SCS check (weekly) |

B. Lottery Process

1. School broadly publicizes application and confirmation deadlines.
 - Evidence of public announcements should be documented and maintained at the school.
 - At a minimum, these deadlines need to be posted on the school's application, the school's webpage, and in the main office.
 - School applications must be made available to all interested parties. Applications may not ask for any identifying student information i.e. race, religion, special education status, home language, free/reduced meal status, test scores, previous grades, parent income status, etc., except in the case of Board-approved lottery preference waivers based for certain identifiers like economic status or EL status. Such confidential information may not be used in any potentially discriminatory manner. Charter schools are open to **all**

students, with no entrance criteria. Schools must accept applications and conduct a lottery for all students even if the school does not plan to enroll students at a particular grade level.

Best Practices: Written announcement is posted in local papers, community fliers, bulletins, and communicated to hard-to-reach families (students in group homes or foster care).

2. School receives completed applications by posted deadline.
3. If the school is under-subscribed at the end of the application period, the school should continue rolling admissions throughout the enrollment period until capacity is reached. As long as students are interested in the school, the school is expected to seat a minimum of 95% of its cap or 20 students below the cap where the larger number serves as the minimum.
4. The lottery is a system of random selection of applications to identify students for enrollment and generate the school's waiting list. During the lottery process, all completed and accepted applications submitted during the enrollment period are publicly drawn in random order until capacity is reached. The remainder of the applications are placed on the waiting list.

Best Practice: There is software and electronic programming that can assist with lotteries. This eliminates much of the possibility of human error (not allowing for a name to be entered twice or not at all). With this process, it is a best practice to project the system on a screen for families to view.

Virtual Lottery Guidance: Every lottery must still be open to the public, and the lottery randomization must be presented for attendees to view. **Every school conducting a virtual lottery must schedule a check-in with their assigned lottery monitor no later than 48 hours prior to their scheduled lottery for a practice run of the lottery process.**

5. The waiting list ranks applications that were submitted during the enrollment period. These applicants should be identified by number and by grade. As spaces become available at the school, they should be offered to the applicants in the order of placement on the waiting list.
6. Schools should arrange their waiting list by lottery results. However, if applications are received post-enrollment period, these applicants should be added to the waiting list in the order they were received.

Examples:

- a. During the enrollment period, a school was over-subscribed by 4 students. The 4 students that were not selected for that school year will be placed onto the waiting list numbered 1-4. In September the school receives a post enrollment period application. That applicant must be given number 5 on the waiting list. If another application is submitted in November, that applicant is given number 6 on the waiting list. However, applications don't roll over from one year to the next. If an applicant is seeking placement in the following year they must submit a separate application for that period during the application period.
- b. During the enrollment period, a school was neither under-subscribed nor over-subscribed; (the school had an exact number of applicants for the number of available spaces on the enrollment deadline date). An application is submitted the day after the enrollment period deadline. That applicant becomes number one (organized by grade level) on a waiting list. The school may continue to develop its waiting list (organized by grade level) based on submission dates of the applications throughout the school year.

Even if a school does not plan to accept students in a particular grade, the school must collect applications and order them on a waitlist. This applies to “conversion charters” and to schools that serve grades 7-8 and/or 10-12 but use the City Schools Choice process for 6th and 9th grade.

C. Entering Data into the Student Choice System

Student identification numbers for all applicants are necessary, as the tool works off of the student ID. Student identification numbers will auto-populate other demographic fields (address, phone number etc.). **There is a search function**, “Search SMS for Student”, that allows you to use other information to find a student ID if you don't know the number. This is on the left side of the tool. Use the staff comments field to add information useful to your school's process.

You can change demographic fields (for new addresses, phone numbers, etc.).

For Non-City Schools students and new students (kindergarten, etc.) the tool can generate temporary identification numbers automatically. ***This function should be used only for students who fit this category.***

You can download the information into customizable spreadsheets so that you can store the information in the way you prefer. Use the “search charters apps” function to do this. To print reports showing:

- All students—leave fields empty and click on export to excel.
- Priority status—complete “priority status” field. Example enter “sibling” and click export to excel to generate a report for all siblings.

- Specialized group reports—complete multiple fields and export to excel. For example, for a list of students applying to 2nd grade who are also siblings, enter both the “grade applying for field” and “priority status” field and export to excel.

The screenshot shows a web application interface for searching charter applications. On the left is a sidebar menu with the following items: 'Charters' (selected), 'Add New', 'Search Charters Apps', and 'Search SMS For Student'. The main content area contains search filters: 'Application SY' (dropdown menu showing '2014-2015'), 'Last Name:' (text input), 'First Name:' (text input), 'Student Number:' (text input), 'Early Admission:' (text input), 'Current Grade:' (text input), 'Grade Applying For:' (text input), 'Priority Status:' (text input), and 'Unique Priority Status:' (text input). Below the filters is a 'Search' button. At the bottom of the form area are two buttons: 'Export to Excel' and 'Ignore Paging' (with a checked checkbox).

To update lottery placement and confirmation status after the lottery, use the “search charter apps” function and click on search. An embedded table will appear on the screen. In the table you will be able to enter the information. The embedded table is sortable. Additionally, you can generate the same kinds of reports as in the bullet above and update information in that way— all siblings first, all kindergarten, etc. Again, click on search and make lottery placement status changes (i.e. number on the offered seat list, wait list, etc.) in the embedded table. After you’ve done this you can save and export to excel to print out updated reports with that information

After the confirmation deadline, you will be able to use the tool to see if a student has accepted more than one placement. All information must be accurate prior to the confirmation deadline in order to ensure the proper placement of students. Changes made after the confirmation deadline will not be reflected in a student’s placement. To change a student’s placement after the confirmation deadline, the family will need to go through the summer transfer process in the Office of Enrollment and Attendance.

D. Notifying Families

All families should be notified the results of the lottery. At this time, schools will ask for families who were accepted to confirm their enrollment. All schools will have the same deadline (aligned to choice deadlines) for parents to confirm or deny the seat. It is critical that this is consistent in order for there to be transparency and equity for the process. Schools must get written confirmation from the parent in order to enroll the student and should not assume that just because the student was accepted that the student will choose to enroll.

If a student is entering grade 6 or grade 9, in addition to getting the written confirmation, the school must also get a decline form if the student participated in the City Schools Choice

process. The Office of Enrollment and Attendance will provide a decline form to schools where this applies.

E. Accepting Students

Schools should be in constant communication with families to ensure they are committed to the school. Schools must get written confirmation from the parent in order to enroll the student and should not assume that just because the student was accepted that the student will choose to enroll. If a student is accepted from the waiting list, the schools should get the same written confirmation or denial of the seat.

Reminders:

- Schools may grant enrollment preference to siblings of current students during the enrollment period.
- If a parent submits applications for siblings within the enrollment period, if one of the siblings is chosen in the lottery, the other siblings may be enrolled as long as a slot is available in the siblings' grade levels.
- Schools may enact a "founder's preference" that exempts the children of the school's founders from the lottery for enrollment provided the founder is a City resident. According to federal guidelines, the founders must constitute a "small percentage of the school's total enrollment." A list of founders must be submitted to CITY SCHOOLS prior to receiving a signed/approved charter and will be attached to the charter agreement. The founders' list is final at that time.
- Schools may enact a "staff" preference where children of staff members may be exempt from the lottery provided the staff member is a City resident.
- Non-City Residents may apply to charter schools. These students may be enrolled AFTER all City Residents have been offered a seat. These applicants must go to the bottom of the waitlist. If accepted, these families will be charged tuition by the Office of Enrollment, Choice, and Transfers.
- The lottery must be conducted for **every grade** even if you are not planning on accepting students at that grade level.
- A waiting list is only valid for one school year. Schools must begin a new "enrollment-lottery-waiting list" process each school year.

F. Reporting Practices

1. Each school must have a written description of its enrollment process. This document should include timelines and important dates. This policy should be available for review by City Schools.
2. All schools must enter all applicants, and their enrollment status as either waitlisted or accepted, into the Student Choice System by the designated deadline.

3. If a school is under-enrolled, they should report the number of spaces still available organized by grade level.

G. Enrollment Audit

The Office of New Initiatives and the Office of Enrollment, Choice, and Transfers will conduct random auditing practices to ensure schools are conducting and implementing the lottery, enrollment, and waitlist procedures according to Maryland Charter Law.

Below are examples of auditing practices:

1. A representative from City Schools will witness each lottery.
2. A test application may be submitted to a charter school.
3. A school may be called and asked the procedures and criterion for entering the lottery.
4. A school's lottery results will be analyzed to ensure that all students who are applied are either on the accepted list or the waiting list.

A school's enrollment may be reviewed to see if the students from the waiting list are being enrolled according to their order

H. Conversion Charter Schools

Conversion charter schools must enter data on any out-of-zone students who apply, and **must conduct a lottery for those students if you have more applicants than space.**

I. Schools Using the Middle and High School Choice System

For schools, who use the Middle and High School Choice process for placements into 6th and/or 9th grades, you should only be entering data on applicants at other grade levels into the charter tool. You will need to conduct a lottery for those grades if you have more applicants than space. For further guidance related to the Choice process, please reach out to Dominick Bivens, dbivens@bcps.k12.md.us. For further questions related to the lottery for these seats, please reach out to Trevor Roberts, TLRoberts@bcps.k12.md.us.

J. Schools with Pre-K

Charter schools must conduct a lottery for pre-K seats. Even though the process is a blind lottery, under COMAR, schools must serve Priority I students. Once the lottery is pulled, the school must determine eligibility. For schools with Pre-K seats, all Pre-K students will be placed on a waitlist. The lottery establishes the order that schools will offer seats to eligible families. If a student is not eligible for Priority I, the student will remain on the waitlist until other priority windows open and at that point, can be offered seats depending on their eligibility for other priorities and their placement on the waitlist.

Once an entire class is enrolled, the charter school is responsible for sending a letter to all students who applied but did not gain enrollment into pre-kindergarten. The letter must inform families that all Priority I eligible students are guaranteed a seat in pre-Kindergarten at a City

School. The letter must define Priority I eligibility and give the family guidance on how to enroll in another school.