



GUIDANCE: Equitable Selection and Enrollment Process

Updated 1/25/2019

Idaho Public Charter School Commission

304 North 8th Street, Room 242

Boise, Idaho 83702

Phone: (208)332-1561

pcsc@osbe.idaho.gov

Alan Reed, Chairman

Jenn Thompson, Director

PURPOSE

Charter schools enroll students based on an equitable selection process outlined in Idaho Statute and Administrative Code. The purpose of these laws is to provide transparency of the enrollment process (not just the data going in and the data coming out) and to ensure consistency in enrollment practices across all charter schools in Idaho.

This guide will help you navigate the process of collecting requests for admissions and processing those requests through the registration process. As always, the PCSC staff is happy to answer any questions you have and/or direct you to the experts who can best help you.

Establishing the Deadline for Request for Admissions

IDAPA 08.02.04.203

- The school's board must formally identify the enrollment deadline each year (via motion and vote). This motion must take place more than 3 months prior to the deadline.
- The school's board must establish capacity by grade level. This is necessary because the equitable selection process (lottery) must be conducted by grade level.
- The board may choose to reduce the number of open seats below the stated capacity. Schools may not enroll more students than their stated capacity in any grade level.
- Once the enrollment deadline and capacity per grade level are made available to the public, they cannot be changed for that enrollment year.

Notifying the Public of the Deadline

IDAPA 08.02.04.203

- The community in the school's primary attendance area (as established in the school's Performance Certificate) must be notified of the enrollment deadline 3 months prior to the deadline.
- Notification must consider the language demographics of the community.
- Notification must be posted in highly visible and prominent locations within the primary attendance area.
- Notification must include press releases or public service announcements to media outlets for broadcast or print publication at least 3 times no later than 14 days before the deadline.
- All notifications must include a non-discrimination statement. As per code: ". . . all prospective students will be given the opportunity to enroll in the public charter school, regardless of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, social or economic status, or special needs."

Requests for Admissions

IDAPA 08.02.04.203

- All requests for admissions must be submitted in writing (electronic or hard copy).
- Requests for admission must be received by the enrollment deadline in order to be included in the lottery (consider using a date/time stamp).
- Requests shall contain the name, grade level, address, and telephone number of the prospective student.
- Requests for more than one child in a family are to be submitted in the same written request, with student information listed separately.

- Requests for admission received after the deadline are added to the waitlist, after the lottery, in the order in which they were received.

Weighted Lottery

I.C. §33-5206(11)(a)

- A charter school may choose to weight its lottery to the benefit of educationally disadvantaged students, students who are homeless or in foster care, students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, and/or students who qualify as at-risk. Please see Statute for specific definitions.
- If a charter school intends to weight its lottery, the intent to do so must be stated in the school's original charter or the original charter must be formally amended to include this statement. Please contact PCSC staff for recommended language.
- If the school chooses to use a weighted lottery, the school must maintain a statutorily compliant policy that defines how the weighting will occur. This policy must be reviewed by the PCSC before weighting is allowed and a current copy must be on file with the authorizer at all times.

Enrollment Preference Categories

I.C §33-5206(11)(a)

Returning Students

- Once a student accepts an offered seat, that student remains enrolled each year unless the family chooses to withdraw the student or the school chooses to expel the student for a qualifying offense.
- If you choose to conduct an "intent to return" survey of enrolled families to help you identify those who intend withdraw at the end of the year, be sure to collect any withdrawals in writing.

First Preference – Children of Founders and Full-time Employees

- This preference category should be identified prior to the lottery.
- The children of full-time employees may be included in this 10% only if so noted in the school's original charter or if the original charter has been formally amended to include this category. Contact the PCSC to discuss the amendment process if you would like to add this preference category. See Idaho Code §33-5202A(5) for the definition of "Founder".
- The total number of children enrolled in the school based on this preference category may not exceed 10% of the school's total enrollment cap for any given school year.
- A child who is offered a seat based on founder's or employee's preference is counted as part of the 10% each year he/she remains enrolled in the school.
- Be sure your board has established a clear definition of founder in policy.

Second Preference – Siblings

- This preference category may only be assigned to a student if he/she has a sibling currently enrolled in the school or a sibling already selected during the current lottery.
- Sibling preference does not apply simply because a student *has* a sibling. Rather, it applies when a student *becomes* a sibling of a student already selected for a seat.
- If this is the school's first lottery, or if a family of siblings are all new applicants, sibling preference cannot be assigned to any student before the lottery begins but will be assigned to all siblings of a selected student at the time that student is selected during the lottery.

Third Preference – Transfer Agreements

- This preference category should be identified prior to the lottery.
- This preference category only applies if a pre-existing written agreement between both charter schools has been adopted by the school's board and is incorporated into the school's charter on file with the authorizer.
- Students eligible for this preference category must have been enrolled for at least 1 year in a charter school with which the receiving school has a written transfer agreement.
- Students eligible for this preference category must transfer directly between the charters as outlined in the agreement.

Fourth Preference – Residence in the Primary Attendance Area

- This preference category should be identified prior to the lottery. The school's primary attendance area is defined in the school's Performance Certificate.

Fifth Preference – All Other Students

- All students for whom a request for admission was received by the deadline who do not qualify for other enrollment preference categories are included in this category.

Conducting the Equitable Selection Process (Lottery)

[IDAPA 08.02.04.203](#)

General Information

- The equitable selection process (drawing of the lottery) must be conducted by a neutral third-party.
- All students eligible for preference categories must be identified prior to conducting the selection process. (Remember that some students may not be eligible for sibling preference until the selection process has begun).

Ordering Grades

- First, randomly order each grade level your school serves.
- Include all grade levels your school serves in this process, even if you don't have more students than seats in every grade. Because sibling preference is awarded to all children in a family when one child in that family is selected, failing to include all grades served in this first step impacts when a student becomes eligible for sibling preference, and therefore, would negatively impact his/her draw order in the final selection list.

Selecting Students in the First Drawn Grade Level

- Begin randomly selecting students in the first grade level drawn
- Place each student at the bottom of the highest preference list for which he/she is eligible.
- As students are drawn, their siblings become eligible for sibling preference and may be moved to the bottom of that enrollment category in their respective grade levels at that time.
- Randomly select all of the students who submitted a request for admissions by the deadline, regardless of how many seats are open.
- Place any students in that grade level who submitted a request for admissions after the deadline at the bottom of the fifth enrollment preference category, in the order in which they were received by the school.

Selecting Students in the Second Drawn Grade Level

- Begin randomly selecting students in the next grade level drawn.
- Place students at the bottom of the highest preference list for which he/she is eligible.
- As students are drawn, their siblings become eligible for sibling preference and may be moved to the bottom of that enrollment category in their grade level.
- Note that this may require returning to a previously selected grade level to move students who now have sibling status to a higher placement on the final selection list than they originally received.
- When the equitable selection process has been completed for all grade levels, siblings have been adjusted appropriately, and late applicants have been added to the bottom of the list, the school's Final Selection List is complete.

Offering Seats

- The first enrollment offer is made to the student with the highest draw order on the Final Selection List, and then to the second highest, and so on, until as many offers as the school has capacity for have been made.
- Families must be notified, in writing, of offers within 7 days of selection.
- To accept the offer, the letter must be signed by the legal guardian of the child and returned to the school by the date noted on the letter.

Requesting Records

I.C. §33-209

- Once a signed acceptance letter has been received by the school, the school can request the student's records from his/her previous school.
- The request should be sent in writing.
- All public schools in Idaho have 10 business days to transfer the requested records.
- Once received, records should be reviewed and considered against the school's Student Placement policy. Reviewing a student's academic performance can help identify any acceleration or retention needs.
- Records should be reviewed and considered against the school's disciplinary policies to determine whether an incoming student would be best served by a having a behavior plan or other intervention in place on the first day of attendance.
- Incoming files should be reviewed by the Special Education Director to verify that all necessary accommodations and modifications are in place on the student's first day of attendance.
- Alerts should be flagged for severe allergies, medical conditions, and active custody orders.
- Be sure that both certified and classified staff are properly trained to implement any interventions and respond to any alerts to ensure a safe and effective learning environment for all students.

Registration Paperwork

- Registration paperwork must include the data required for student demographic reporting; see the [ISEE reporting requirements](#) for details.
- Registration paperwork must include medical information and emergency contacts.
- Registration paperwork must include a Home Language Survey. A statewide format is provided by the SDE's [English Learner Program](#).