Liberty Tech Charter School
LOTTERY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policy

If the number of timely applicants received by Liberty Tech Charter School exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building, Liberty Tech shall ensure that such applicants have an equal chance of being admitted through a random-selection lottery. Class size is at the discretion of the Principal, with Board approval, as long as within legal limits.

To participate in the lottery, a student's application must be received prior to the enrollment application deadline as established by the school's Board application deadline. The lottery will be open to the public and advertised in advance. An unbiased third party will witness and certify the validity of the lottery. Preference in the lottery is given to students of Liberty Tech board members, students of full-time staff, and siblings of current students.

Procedures

During Open Enrollment

Applications will be collected and qualifications will be verified.

Sibling, by definition, is a:

1. Biological (including half-sibling) or adoptive sibling.
2. Step-sibling residing in the same household.
3. Foster child residing within the same household.

Sibling notes:

- Step-siblings living in different households are not considered for a sibling preference.
- An alumnus of the school with a sibling applying for the following year does not qualify as a sibling for entrance preference. Sibling preferences are only applicable for students who are eligible to enroll based on age.
- Same-grade siblings will be treated as one single applicant unit rather than as multiple applicants. When that applicant unit is drawn in the lottery, the same-grade siblings will be numerically ordered on the waiting list or conditionally accepted, depending on where in the lottery that applicant unit was drawn. Same-grade siblings will be added alphabetically by first name.
- Siblings of current students must submit an application to the school during the open enrollment period to be considered for admission.

Post Open Enrollment

Upon closing of each Open Enrollment period, if the number of qualified applications exceeds the number of available seats for any or all grade levels, a random selection (Lottery), open to the public, will be conducted. All qualifying applicants will be contacted with the date, time, and place of the Lottery via email and/or web posting.

Stakeholders will be invited to the Lottery, including families, community leaders, and representatives from the Georgia Charter Schools Association (GCSA).

A calculation review will be performed to ensure that the total number of children of the charter school's founders and children of employees is less than 10% of total enrollment.

Prior to the Lottery

Chips will be uniquely numbered. Each family will be assigned a random number, which is recorded on an application roster along with the student's name, grade level, and parent/guardian contact details by the registrar. All chips will be the same weight and size.

Lottery Day

It is not necessary for an applicant's parent/guardian to be present at the Lottery for the applicant to participate. The procedure will be explained to the audience.

Preferences

- Students who are children of current Liberty Tech board members or full-time staff, and students who are siblings of current Liberty Tech students, receive preference and are pulled in an initial priority drawing.
- The remainder of applicants are pulled during the second drawing.

Drawing to Select Students

To make this process as transparent as possible, students with priority are drawn and placed on lists first. Chips are drawn at random. Students admitted through a preference, and the reason for that preference, are read aloud and added to the class list for the appropriate grade level.

The random lottery to select remaining students is then conducted. A third party draws names, passes the chip to the caller, and verifies the caller is reading the correct number. The third party and caller have no access to applicants' names.

- As each family number is selected, the student's assigned number is placed on the grade list according to availability. A sibling is placed based on available space.
- Numbers are recorded as they are pulled until all seats are filled. Once all seats are filled, drawing continues, and these numbers are placed on a waitlist in the order they were drawn.
- A student cannot lose their seat on the grade list after it has been awarded and enrollment paperwork has been completed by the deadline.
- Applications received after the Open Enrollment period are placed at the end of the waiting list after the lottery has concluded, in the order received.

If a grade is not at capacity at the end of the lottery, additional students are added as qualified applications are received, in the order received.

If additional seats become available after the Lottery, they are filled from the waiting list, in order. Sibling preference is applied to the waiting list only at the time of the lottery; the waiting list order is not adjusted afterward, even if one sibling is later placed on a grade list.

Applications are valid for one year only. New applications must be submitted for the following year's consideration. The waiting list does not carry over from year to year.

Post-Lottery: Waitlist

A waitlist submission form is available on our website under the Admissions tab. Please print, complete, and return the form to julie.herbert@libertytechcharter.org. Forms received are date- and time-stamped and

added to the relevant grade waitlist in the order received. These are valid until March of the current school year.

When a spot becomes available, we will offer it to the student at the top of the list. They will have 3 days to accept from the date of the offer, and all required paperwork listed in the offer letter must be provided on or before the deadline listed in the offer email. Failure to adhere to the dates and instructions in the letter will result in the offer becoming void, and we will move on to the next person on the waitlist.

Appendix - Relevant References and Examples

(1) O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066 (2009) - Admission, Enrollment, and Withdrawal of Students

(a) A local charter school shall enroll students in the following manner: (1)(A) A start-up charter school shall enroll any student who resides in the charter attendance zone as specified in the charter and who submits a timely application as specified in the charter, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. In such case, all applicants shall have an equal chance of being admitted through a random selection process unless otherwise prohibited by law; provided, however, that a start-up charter school may give enrollment preference to applicants in one or more of the following categories, in the order of priority specified in the charter:

- A sibling of a student enrolled in the start-up charter school;
- A sibling of a student enrolled in another local school designated in the charter;
- A student whose parent or guardian is a member of the governing board of the charter school, or is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee at the charter school; and
- Students matriculating from a local school designated in the charter.

Georgia Department of Education - How does a charter school lottery work?

If the number of applications to a charter school exceeds the capacity of the school, all applicants have an equal chance of being admitted through a random selection process (lottery). The lottery is conducted in the spring before the school opens, and the charter school governing board is required to hold the lottery in a public space. While the Charter Schools Act allows a limited number of preferences, those preferences must be applied before the lottery is conducted. For example, if a charter school's charter permits enrollment preference for siblings of enrolled students, those siblings are automatically admitted and the spaces they take are excluded from the number of available spaces in the lottery. Weighted lotteries are not permitted under Georgia law.

(2) Charter Schools Program, Title V, Part B, Non-Regulatory Guidance, U.S. Department of Education, July 2004

C-1. What is a lottery for purposes of the CSP?

A lottery is a random selection process by which applicants are admitted to the charter school.

C-2. Under what circumstances must a charter school use a lottery?

A charter school receiving CSP funds must use a lottery if more students apply for admission than can be admitted. A charter school with fewer applicants than spaces available does not need to conduct a lottery.

C-3. Are weighted lotteries permissible?

Weighted lotteries (giving preference to one set of students over another) are permitted only when necessary to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section

504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution, or applicable state law. A charter school may also weight its lottery in favor of students seeking to change schools under the public school choice provisions of ESEA Title I, for the limited purpose of providing greater choice to those students - for example, giving each Title I transfer student two or more chances to win the lottery, while other students have only one.

C-4. May a charter school exempt certain categories of applicants from the lottery and admit them automatically?

A charter school that must use a lottery generally must include all eligible applicants in it. A school may exempt only students already deemed admitted and who do not need to reapply, specifically: (a) students enrolled in a public school at the time it converts to a charter school; (b) siblings of students already admitted to or attending the same charter school; (c) children of the charter school's founders (so long as this exemption constitutes only a small percentage of total enrollment); and (d) children of employees in a work-site charter school (same limitation). Recruitment must not discriminate against students by race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disability, though schools may target additional recruitment toward groups with historically limited access. Once admitted through an appropriate process, a student may remain enrolled through subsequent grades; a new applicant, however, is subject to the lottery if applications exceed available spaces as of the closing date.

C-5. May a charter school create separate lottery pools for girls and boys to ensure gender balance?

No. The legislation requires one lottery providing qualified students an equal opportunity to attend. Separate lotteries by gender are precluded, and a school may not weight its lottery in favor of one gender. Schools seeking gender balance should instead target additional recruitment efforts.

C-6. May a tuition-based private preschool that becomes a public charter school at the kindergarten level allow its preschoolers to continue without a lottery?

No - since the preschool is private, charges tuition, and does not admit all students, allowing automatic elementary admission would violate the statute. All applicants to the elementary program must be selected by lottery if applications exceed spaces. The statute does not, however, preclude holding the lottery early (e.g., at preschool enrollment age), provided the school informs applicants that winning the lottery does not require preschool enrollment, and provided the school remains responsive to new families who were not aware of the earlier lottery.

C-7. May a charter school receiving its final year of CSP funds select students without a lottery?

A charter school in its final year of CSP funding may select students for the upcoming year without a lottery, provided it obligates all grant funds before those students enroll. If the school carries over funds or extends its grant period, it must continue to meet all program requirements, including holding a lottery if oversubscribed.

C-8. What other statutory or regulatory authorities apply to admissions policies?

To be eligible for federal start-up grants, a charter school's admissions practices must comply with state law and applicable federal laws. Lottery exemptions are permissible only to the extent consistent with state charter school law, other applicable state law, the school's charter, and any applicable Title VI desegregation plans or court orders. Admissions practices must also comply with Part B of IDEA and federal civil rights laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

C-9. What are a charter school's responsibilities regarding outreach and recruitment?

ESEA Section 5203(b)(3)(I) requires CSP applicants to inform students in the community about the charter school and give each an equal opportunity to attend. Section 5203(b)(3)(E) requires involving parents and community members in planning, program design, and implementation.

C-10. May a charter school receiving CSP funds set minimum eligibility criteria for admission?

The ESEA does not specifically prohibit minimum qualifications for lottery eligibility, but schools must still inform the community and provide an equal opportunity to attend. Minimum qualifications are permitted only to the extent they are (a) consistent with the statutory purposes of the CSP, (b) reasonably necessary to achieve the school's educational mission, and (c) consistent with civil rights laws and IDEA Part B.

(3) Georgia Charter School Implementation Grant Application - Public Random Drawing (Lottery)

A lottery is a random selection process by which students are admitted to the charter school. The federal CSP program requires a charter school receiving CSP funds to hold one lottery providing qualified students an equal opportunity to attend. Charter schools cannot create separate lottery pools for any purpose, including balance by gender, disability, language, nationality, or poverty. A school seeking to avoid imbalance should do so through recruitment efforts that do not discriminate by race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disability - while still being permitted to target additional recruitment toward under-represented groups.

The CSP limits lottery exemptions to currently enrolled students (including students residing in the attendance area of a public school converted to a charter school) and siblings of currently enrolled students. Children of founders and teachers may also be exempted, provided this category is less than 10% of total enrollment. Weighted lotteries are allowed only for the reasons stated above (Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, Equal Protection, or applicable state law). Schools that exempt students or give preference for other reasons are not eligible for CSP grant funding.