

# Collegiate Charter School of Lowell – Enrollment Policy

(as approved by Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – Charter School Office – 12/3/12)

Collegiate Charter School of Lowell (“the School”) is a public college preparatory school that provides top-quality education on a non-selective basis to all students, on a space available basis, and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement. The School will implement and follow their Student Recruitment and Retention Plan as submitted, as outlined in M.G.L Chapter 71, Section 89(f); CMR 603 1.05(f).

## 1.) Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment

- a) A student applying for enrollment must be a resident of Massachusetts.
- b) Proof of residency will be obtained as part of the enrollment process, except in the case of homeless students. Examples of residency proof will include utility bills, signed leases and mortgage bills.
- c) Students are required to successfully complete the grade prior to the grade they are applying to be admitted.
- d) Student must be 5 years old by September 1 of the previous year to be admitted into the Kindergarten.
- e) The School does not administer required tests to potential applicants or predicate enrollment on results from any tests of ability or achievement (603 CMR 1.06(2)).
- f) The School does not require potential students or their families to attend interviews or informational meetings as a condition of enrollment (603 CMR 1.06(2)). Informational meetings will be scheduled for parents/guardians who want to visit the School, but these will not influence the enrollment process.

## 2.) Enrollment Process

- a. The enrollment period will be advertised widely throughout the sending district, our school website, Facebook page, community based organizations, mailings through third party mail house and will include public information sessions and school tours for interested families. Applications will be available at the school during the enrollment period. The date of the enrollment period and the date of the application deadline will be publicized at least one month in advance. Our School shall give reasonable public notice, of at least one month, of all application deadlines. Applications submitted after the deadline for any enrollment period, will be notified by phone and mail that the application will be held for the lottery following the next enrollment period.
- b. The School will enroll new students in grades in grades K-6, will backfill student in grades K-6 annually as stipulated in (603 CMR 1.06(4)(d).
- c. Any information that is requested on the application form, such as, language spoken or race/ethnicity will not be used to discriminate and will not be used for selection purposes. This information will help us evaluate the effectiveness of our recruitment plan.
- d. Students who are chosen via Lottery will be notified of acceptance via US mail and will have seven (7) days from the date the letter was postmarked to accept or decline the offer via telephone call to the school registrar.
- e. Students who are on the Waiting List and become eligible to fill an empty seat will be notified via telephone of acceptance. Parent/Guardian will have 48 hours to accept or decline enrollment via telephone call to the school registrar.
- f. The School does not furnish any student records or personal information for “directory information” purposes as per our Student/Parent Handbook. However, changes recently made in the charter school statute now require the release of student names and addresses for the purpose of recruiting students. As amended by Chapter 12, Section 7, of the Acts of 2010, the charter school statute now requires that both school districts and Commonwealth charter schools provide the names and addresses of students to a third party mail house for mailings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 89(g). This requirement is consistent with federal and state law regarding student records.
- g. Attached is a form (page 6) for parents to sign if they want to opt-out of the release of their student’s directory information to an approved Mail House.

## 3. Lottery Procedures

- a. All eligible applications received by the deadline will be entered into a public lottery. Applicants will be placed in the lottery by their grade as of the next school year.

- b. The School will determine the number of seats available each year by grade level prior to the start of the new school year. This number will be determined prior to notification of the scheduled lottery.
- c. Notice of the lottery will be publicized at least one week prior to the lottery.
- d. One lottery for every grade will be held at the end of each enrollment period if there are more applicants than seats available. Additional students not selected via lottery will be added to a Waiting List for applied grade level. A waitlist would be needed at grades K-6 where a backfill is mandatory to avoid the need of an application process during the school year.
- e. Students who have completed the enrollment process will be separated into one of the below groups:
  - **Siblings** (students who share a common parent, either biologically or through legal adoption) of students who are already in attendance at the School in the year of application, will be given preference for admission over non-sibling students. It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to inform the School of any sibling(s) currently on the Wait List.
  - **Residents of Lowell** will be given preference for admission over non-resident students.
  - **Non-residents** will be defined as Massachusetts residents who live outside of Lowell.
- f. Each application will be assigned a random identification number for the lottery. Parents or guardians of each student are entitled to know his or her lottery number in advance of the drawing to ensure the transparency and fairness of the process. As each student number is drawn, he/she will be assigned the next available opening for his/her particular grade, or placement on the appropriate Waiting List. Each of the three lottery groups will establish a fair and random list of students by grade ranked in ascending numerical order according to their lottery draw.
- g. Students whose lottery numbers were selected for admission will be notified via US mail. Parent/Guardian must accept or decline admission within seven (7) days of the date the letter was postmarked via telephone call to the school registrar.
- h. Students whose lottery numbers were selected to be placed on the Waiting List will be notified via US mail of their waiting list number.
- i. An unbiased person will draw these numbers by grade at a publicized, public meeting at the school.
- j. If the principle enrollment process fails to produce an adequate number of enrolled students, the lottery process may be repeated if a Waiting List does not exist and the required lottery process is strictly followed, including public notification and deadlines (603 CMR 1.06(5)).
- k. Once a student is attending the school, they may remain at the school even if their town of residence, within Massachusetts, changes.
- l. Any student for whom enrollment into the School would cause the sending district to exceed their tuition cap, they will not be offered admission but will remain on the Waiting List. If those students are siblings of students currently in attendance at the school, the state may pay the child's tuition, subject to appropriation (M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 89(i); 603 CMR 1.06(4)(e)).
- m. Admission is subject to completion of an application, proof of residency, successful completion of previous grade, and a birth certificate for Kindergarten applicants.

#### 4.) Waiting List Policy

- a. If a student stops attending The School or declines admission, the next available student on the Waiting List for that grade will be offered admission until the vacant seat is filled.
- b. No student will be admitted ahead of other eligible students on the Waiting List unless said student is either a sibling of a currently attending student or a resident of the city.
- c. Students on the Waiting List will be contacted by phone with an offer of admission to the school, in similar fashion to our lottery. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the school with any change of contact information.
- d. Any student who is offered a seat at the School and declines admittance, will need to reapply for admission and proceed with the lottery process.
- e. Any student who signs up for enrollment will be part of a lottery, provided they submit the application on time and meet the other legal requirements. If a seat is no longer available, student will be placed on the Waiting List. The student's name will be added to the existing Waiting List in the order his/her name is drawn in the lottery, while also taking into account sibling and resident preference. The student's name will remain on the Waiting List until his/her name comes to the top of that grade's Waiting List and an opening in his/her grade is available. The School will maintain a rolling waitlist from year to year. The Waiting List will advance all students one grade level each year, so students only need to take part in the lottery process once. Students, who are on the Waiting List as non-siblings

and become a sibling due to the acceptance of their brother/sister, will be given sibling status. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school if this occurs. Our wait list will be retained from year to year providing the student meets all of the eligibility criteria outlined in this policy and by law.

- f.** The School will keep accurate and secure electronic and paper record of the Waiting List. The Waiting List will contain the names, home addresses, telephone numbers, grade levels and sibling status of students who entered the lottery but did not gain admission.
- g.** When a student stops attending the school for any reason, the school will attempt to fill vacant seats up to February 15<sup>th</sup>. In grades K-6 the School must replace any student who leaves the school with a student in the same grade level, if the replacement takes place on or before February 15<sup>th</sup>. If a student leaves the school after February 15<sup>th</sup> that vacancy will be filled the following school year with a new student in the subsequent (next) grade level. Any student who leaves the school in grade K-6 will be replaced on or before February 15<sup>th</sup>. Parents/guardians who have a child on the Waiting List are encouraged to contact The School once a year to update their child's information and track their child's movement on the Waiting List.