

PAULO FREIRE SOCIAL JUSTICE CHARTER SCHOOL (PFSJCS)

Enrollment Policy and Procedures Approved by the Board of Trustees 8/23/12

Procedures Updated 6/27/18

POLICY

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Charter schools are public schools and are therefore open to all Massachusetts students on a space available basis. This means that PFSJCS may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, socio-economic status, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or in a foreign language, or prior academic achievement when enrolling. Moreover, PFSJCS may not set admissions criteria that are intended to discriminate or that have the effect of discriminating based upon any of these characteristics. M.G.L. c. 71, § 89(1); 603 CMR 1.06(1). Any and all information requested in the application, such as language spoken at home or race/ethnicity, is not intended and will not be used to discriminate. Paulo Freire Social Justice School will have and implement a student recruitment and retention plan as outlined in M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 89(f); CMR 603 1.05(f).

Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School shares the mission and focus of the school with all prospective students and their families.

Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School requires:

1. The applicant student must have successfully completed (or is expected to complete) the grade preceding the grade to which the student seeks admission. The age cap for high school students is 22 years of age.
2. Students to be residents of Massachusetts at the time of application, and must maintain Massachusetts residency to attend public school in the state. Reasonable proof of residency is required (except for homeless students) at the time an offer of admission is made and may include, for example: mortgages, utility bills, and signed leases.
3. That primary preference for admission be given to siblings of students "currently attending" the school in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations. Proof of sibling status is required at the time an offer of admission is made.
4. That secondary preference for admission is given to students who are residents (as defined in 603 1.06(4)) of Holyoke, Chicopee, West Springfield, Westfield, South Hadley

and Northampton at the time that they are offered admission to the school. Paulo Freire does not integrate its enrollment policy with other school districts.

Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School suggests:

5. Parents/guardians of all new applicants and the applicants to attend information sessions. However, the school does not require potential students or their families to attend interviews or informational meetings as a condition of application or enrollment. 603 CMR 1.05(3)(a).

Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School will not:

1. Give enrollment preference to children of staff members or Board members;
2. Make statements in meetings intended to discourage, or that have the effect of discouraging, parents/guardians of students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, or any other protected group of students from submitting an application to the school. See M.G.L. c. 71 § 89(1).
3. Administer tests to potential applicants or predicate enrollment on results from any test of ability or achievement.
4. Require dual parent/guardian signatures.
5. Use financial incentives to recruit students.
6. Require submission of the student's social security number.

## PROCEDURES

### OUTREACH

Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School provides information about the school to those who are interested throughout the year. Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School provides applications at an Information Session, which is held in November of each year for interested applicants. Applications and information are also available in both Spanish and English on our website ([paulofreirecharterschool.org](http://paulofreirecharterschool.org)) and are mailed to all the middle and high school guidance offices throughout our geographic area and also through access to mailing lists from sending districts through a third party mail house.

The recruitment and enrollment process is an extensive outreach effort that includes advertisement and formal, public information sessions. Attendance at Information Sessions is

recommended for students and their families but is not required. PFSJCS will strive to make accommodations for families with individual hardships that desire additional information but cannot attend the public information session scheduled.

#### ENROLLMENT PROCESS

1. For a given school year beginning in November, PFSJCS will accept application forms from all new applicants. All applicants will be notified in writing of the rights of students with diverse learning needs, homeless/foster care and military connected students to attend the charter school and to receive accommodations and support services, including students who may have disabilities, require special education, or are English language learners. 603 CMR 1.05(4). Information regarding the availability of services is presented in the school's outreach materials, the student handbook, and on the school's website. 603 CMR 1.05(4). Returning students do not have to reapply. \*Proof of residency or sibling status needs to be established at the time an offer of admission is made. PFSJCS will accept application forms until a date set after January 1 and shall conclude its principal enrollment process no later than March 15 of each year 603 CMR 1.05(3)(c). Application deadlines will be set in a public notice at least one month in advance. PFSJCS will schedule recommended parent meetings and student meetings for new applicants following receipt of applications. Attendance at these meetings is not required for admission. \*With exception of homeless students. Homeless students shall be immediately enrolled.
2. Students, whose applications are received by the deadline, will be entered into the lottery.
3. PFSJCS will publicize all lottery enrollment deadlines and the fact that there will be a lottery if there are more eligible applicants than there are available spaces within a given application process, with reasonable public notice of at least one week.

After the application deadline passes, Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School will divide all applications into three categories under 603 CMR 1.06(4)

- *Siblings* – Students who share a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption. Whether the children reside in the same household has no bearing on determining if the children are siblings for purposes of sibling preference.
- *Residents* - Students who reside in Chicopee, Holyoke, Northampton, South Hadley, Westfield, and West Springfield.
- *Non-residents* - Students who live outside the six communities. Non-Residents enrolled in district, charter, private or parochial schools or enrolling in schools in the district get equal preference.

Preference for admission is given first to applicants in the "Siblings" category followed by applicants in the "Residents" category and then followed by applicants in the "Non-Residents" category without regard to when their application was submitted as long as it was prior to the application deadline. Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School will not offer admission to applicants on a first come first serve basis. (Families who missed the deadline will be notified and asked if they want their application held for a future lottery should one be required.)

## LOTTERY

The school will determine the number of spaces available each year by grade level. 603 CMR 1.05 (10)(c). If there are more eligible applicants than there are spaces available, Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School must hold a lottery to determine which applicants will receive an offer of admissions as well as place applicants on a waitlist

Three separate drawings will take place coinciding with the three categories of: Sibling, Resident and non-Resident. Each year the school will enroll new students in grade 9 through grade 11. As previously mentioned, the school must give reasonable public notice of the lottery at least one week before the lottery date. The lottery will be held in public at the school, located at 161 Lower Westfield Road, Holyoke. Charter schools must have a neutral individual, without any connection to the school; randomly draw the names and/or numbers of all students who submitted applications before the deadline. After the available slots are filled, the individual shall keep drawing the names and/or numbers of the remaining applicants in each category and grade and place them on a waiting list in the order that they are drawn, taking into account sibling and resident preference. Parents have the option to opt out of having their children's names announced publically. An "opt out" choice will be included on the Application. Those who opt out will be assigned a number in lieu of the student's name. Parents attending the lottery will be told their number before the drawing begins.

Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School's policy regarding the disclosure of student information will be followed in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 89(g)(n). Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School will provide a form for students and parents to consent or deny disclosure of student information, including the public announcement of a student's name during the enrollment lottery (M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 89(g)).

Upon request the school will provide the names and addresses of students to a third party mail house for mailings unless the parent requests that the school withhold the child's information (M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 89(g)).

Students chosen through the enrollment lottery will be notified of admission by telephone (if possible) to be followed by a written notification. A written intent to enroll form will be sent to all with the written notification requesting return within 14 days. If the form is not returned in 14 days the parent will be contacted via telephone and given another 3 days to respond. No response at that point will be assumed to indicate an intention not to enroll.

## WAITING LIST

Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School will maintain waiting lists for “Siblings”, “Residents” and “Non-Residents”. These lists do not roll over from one year to the next. The school shall maintain waitlists only for the school year for which the students applied. 603 CMR 1.05(10)(a). PFSJCS must always accept “Resident” students before accepting “Non-Resident” students unless the “Non-Resident” student is also a “Sibling”.

If a student stops attending the charter school or declines admission, the next available student on the waitlist for that grade, taking into account the current status of enrollment preferences, will be offered admission until the vacant seat is filled up until February 15<sup>th</sup>. No student may be admitted ahead of other eligible students who were previously placed on a waitlist during a prior enrollment process, except in cases where enrollment preferences change or as described in 603 CMR 1.05(10)(b). 603 CMR 1.05(8). This process applies to grades 9 through 11 only. A vacancy not filled after February 15 moves into the subsequent grade, to be filled the following September if such grade is not in the last half of the grades offered and is not grades 10, 11, or 12. Seats for students who have accepted an offer of admission in PFSJC but have never attended are exempt from this provision. 603 CMR 1.05(1)(c).

Students on the wait list will be offered admission by telephone (if possible) to be followed by a written notification. A written intent to enroll form will be sent to all with the written notification requesting return within 14 days. If the form is not returned in 14 days the parent will be contacted via telephone and given another 3 days to respond. No response at that point will be assumed to indicate an intention not to enroll.

Students who decline admission based upon their written response or failure to respond within the specified period of time will be removed from the wait list. Students who have declined an offer of admissions would need to reapply for admission. Students who have withdrawn from the school would need to reapply for admission.

Using information from student applications, Paulo Freire Social Justice School will keep an accurate record on our waitlist containing the names (first, middle, last), dates of birth, cities or towns of residence, and grade levels of students who entered the lottery but did not gain admission. Parents are required to notify the school in a timely manner of any such changes.

## ADDITIONAL LOTTERY(S)

Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School may hold additional lotteries to fill openings under the following conditions:

1. If the enrollment process fails to produce an adequate number of enrolled students, or if a waiting list does not exist.
2. If after the application deadline, the school receives a large number of additional application forms for the upcoming school year.

Any such additional lotteries will strictly follow the required lottery process, including public notification and deadlines. Application deadlines will be set at least one month in advance and a public notice of at least one week will be provided prior to each enrollment lottery.

#### ENROLLMENT CONFIRMATION

Families will be notified at the lottery and by phone and mail of their admission status (accepted or placement on waiting list). A written intent to enroll form will be sent to all with the written notification requesting return within 14 days. If the form is not returned in 14 days the parent will be contacted via telephone and given another 3 days to respond. No response at that point will be assumed to indicate an intention not to enroll. If a student is selected from the waiting list and if the family is notified before August 15<sup>th</sup>, the family has 5 days to confirm enrollment. If the family is notified after August 15<sup>th</sup>, the family will have 2 days to confirm enrollment.

The total number of students attending PFSJCS in a given school year cannot exceed the total number of students in the school's pre-enrollment report submitted to the Department in the previous spring in accordance with 603 CMR 1.08(5) and the total number of students specified in the growth plan in the school's charter; PSJCS will expand enrollment up to 375 students in grades 9 through 12.

The school offers transportation to students in the district where it resides (Holyoke), but does not offer transportation to students from other districts. Charter School Technical Advisory 07-2: Transportation.

#### ENROLLMENT OR TRANSFER

PFSJCS will assist the students and families in transitioning back to the school of origin or new school by providing the necessary documentation in a timely manner including students who are homeless or in foster care.