

PAULO FREIRE SOCIAL JUSTICE CHARTER SCHOOL

Enrollment Policy *Revised 10.1.2019*

1. General Policy

Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School (PFSJCS) is a public high school preparing students in grades 9-12 for college success while inspiring them to be active and effective citizens. We achieve educational excellence and social responsibility for all our students through high expectations and a rigorous academic and social justice curriculum. Our students graduate with strong intellectual and ethical foundations necessary for future leaders of a global society. By enrolling students from communities that represent different racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds, as well as encompassing urban and rural settings, we are able to provide an enriched educational environment for sharing a wide range of personal experiences and perspectives while modeling social justice. PFSJCS honors and celebrates the diversity of our students, teachers, parents, and surrounding communities, and equally value their contributions to the educational process.

PFSJCS is unique and distinct from the traditional public high school as we provide a safe and secure alternative option for high school that is embedded with the philosophy of Paulo Freire; as well as restorative practices; where we foster excellence, equity, and respect for all individuals. At PFSJCS social justice means that all students, regardless of race, culture, religion, income, abilities, or sexual preference, have equal access to a quality education, necessary resources, and the opportunity to live productive and successful lives. Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School is founded on the belief that every student can succeed, and as educators our job is to help our students recognize themselves as the 'architect' of their own learning. In so doing, there is not one set educational model, we provide small class instruction and individualized support- each student works with an assigned mentor/advisor to create individual success plans-PFSJCS will address the individual needs of each student through: identification of strengths, abilities, and areas of concern; creating and monitoring student success plans; utilizing differentiated instruction; providing classroom and afterschool support systems; and assuring college preparation and support.

Ongoing recruitment work is an essential component of PFSJCS, reflecting our commitment to engaging the hardest-to-reach young people in an education program that couples high expectations with a rigorous academic and social justice curriculum, with intense support; to restore hope and cultivate a growth mindset, empowering students to progress toward graduation, postsecondary success, and livable wage jobs. Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School conducts ongoing community outreach and enrollment to give students, many of whom are not currently in school or have disengaged from school, multiple opportunities to re-engage in school at Paulo Freire.

The following outlines Paulo Freire's overall enrollment guidelines. PFSJCS will:

- Serve as a Commonwealth charter school targeting students in Chicopee, Holyoke, South Hadley and West Springfield.;
- Accept students in grades 9-12;
- Backfills vacancies across grades 9-12 and throughout the year through weekly application dates in accordance with G.L. c. 71, § 89(m);

- Backfill vacancies throughout the year in accordance with G.L. c. 71, § 89(m) but not in excess of the school's approved maximum enrollment of 320. For details, see projected growth plan;
- Enroll students to the school's approved maximum enrollment, but with the total number of students attending in a given school year not to exceed the total number of students reported in the school's pre-enrollment submission to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in the previous spring in accordance with 603 CMR 1.08(5);
- Conduct enrollment in tandem with the school's Recruitment and Retention plan as outlined in G.L. c. 71, § 89(f), and 603 CMR 1.05(1);
- Provide a free public option that, in accordance with 603 CMR 1.05(3)(a):
 - does not charge any fees for applications
 - does not offer financial incentives to applicants
 - does not administer tests to potential students prior to enrollment, and
 - does not predicate acceptance on test scores, ability or achievement of any kind.

Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter High School, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, homelessness, special needs, English language proficiency or foreign language proficiency, athletic ability or prior academic achievement when recruiting or admitting students in its enrollment activities.

PFSJCS actively seeks to engage students with diverse learning needs and backgrounds. Written notification of the rights of students with diverse learning needs to attend charter school and to receive accommodation and support services including English Language Learners, students that require special education and students that disabilities is available in the student handbook, student application, school's acceptance letter and on the school's website.

PFSJC will not disclose student information unless permitted by law. As required by law G.L. c. 71, § 89(g) and (n), PFSJCS will provide the names and addresses of students to sending school district, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, any other schools and school systems in which a student has previously been enrolled, any governmental departments, health or social service providers, or other offices whose activities bear directly on the programs or services with which the student is provided at the receiving charter school. Also as required by law (G.L. c. 71, § 89(g) and CMR 1.05(6)(e), PFSJCS will provide the names and addresses to a third-party mail house for mailings unless the parent requests that the school withhold their child's information. Furthermore, PFSJCS may provide all allowable directory information (including student names and addresses) under 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a) to third parties unless the parent requests that the school withhold their child's information. Parents wishing to request that their child's directory information be withheld may indicate their request in the application process or follow the process outlined in the family handbook to include a written or email request to school leadership.

While Paulo Freire Charter has ongoing communication with local districts, it's application and enrollment policy operates separately from that of the district (s).

Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School intends to provide transportation to all residents of its charter region in accordance with the Charter School Technical Advisory 16-1: Transportation.

2. Eligibility

In order to be **eligible for Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School**, all applicants must

- Be a resident of Massachusetts;
- Have completed or expected to complete 8th grade.

Students who may be considered homeless or precariously housed are eligible to apply and to enroll at Paulo Freire Social Justice Public Charter High School. However, in order to establish preference for admission base on residency, proof of residency from homeless students will be handled on a case-by-case basis to determine where the live.

As part of the application and enrollment process, students and adult supporters are encouraged, but not required, to attend PFSJCS information sessions to learn more about Paulo Freire. Applicants are also offered the chance to attend an orientation and school shadow day to encourage student knowledge and choice of PFSJCS. Additionally, under 603 CMR 1.05 (3)(a), PFSJCS will not administer tests to potential students, prior to enrollment, and will not predicate acceptance on test scores, ability or achievement of any kind.

3. Application

The PFSJCS's application will include the following information:

- Student name (first, middle, last);
- Date of birth;
- City or town of residence;
- Current enrollment status;
- Most recent grade level;
- Home address;
- Telephone numbers and email addresses;
- For students under 18, one parent/guardian signature is required, and only one unless otherwise required by court order;
- Notice of PFSJCS's non-discriminatory practices as follows: "Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed or religion, sex, national origin, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, homelessness, special needs, English language proficiency or foreign language proficiency, athletic ability or prior academic achievement."
- Notice that application will be destroyed after 3 years and that any non- admitted applicant has the right to request and receive the document prior to destruction.

The application, both online and in hard copy, will be available in multiple languages to reflect the major language groups of the sending districts. Any and all information requested in the application will not be used to discriminate. PFSJCS's student application does not require a student social security number.

4. Application Process for Current School Year:

In order to provide students with multiple opportunities to enroll, PFSJCS will have an application deadline every Friday. These application deadlines are posted on PFSJCS's website <https://paulofreirecharterschool.org> on the enrollment page. PFSJCS will always provide reasonable public notice of at least 30 days before all application deadlines. In order to apply to Paulo Freire Charter School, students must fill out and submit an application. Applications can be completed online on the enrollment section of the PFSJCS website: <https://paulofreirecharterschool.org> or through a paper-based application that can be picked up at the school. Online applications will automatically be submitted, paper application can be mailed or hand delivered to the school address.

If the number of applications exceeds the number of available seats, following each application deadline, Paulo Freire will hold a lottery. The date and time of the lottery will be posted on PFSJCS's website and be at least one week after the application deadline. For more details about the lottery see the section below outlining the lottery process.

In cases where no lottery is required, applicants will receive written notification as well as a phone call with notification of their enrollment status on the Monday following the application deadline. In instances where there is a lottery, students will receive notification of their enrollment status by written notification and a phone call the Monday after the lottery. Students not admitted, due to the number of available seats, will be placed on a waitlist in the order their names were drawn. For more information about the waitlist, see the below section outlining the waitlist.

5. Application Process for Upcoming Year (Principal Enrollment Process)

Any eligible student who wants to attend Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School is welcome to apply via the process outlined below. PFSJCS will accept applications to fill vacant seats in grades 9-10 and will backfill in grades 11-12 to its maximum enrollment and in accordance with the growth plan at the end of this document. The application process for admission to PFSJCS is not integrated with that of any public school district in the region in which Paulo Freire Social Justice School is located. In order to apply to PFSJCS, students must fill out and submit an application. Applications can be completed online via a link on the PFSJCS website: <https://paulofreirecharterschool.org> or through a paper-based application that can be picked up at the school. Online applications will be submitted automatically; paper applications can be mailed or hand delivered to the school address.

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. Charge an application fee for admission.
6. Use financial incentives to recruit students.
7. Require submission of the student's social security number.

Waitlists do not roll over to the next school year. Students who remain on a waitlist from the previous year must submit a new application and go through the lottery and waitlist process again for the upcoming school year.

PFSJCS will give reasonable public notice, of at least one month, of the principal application deadline. The principal application deadline will be no earlier than January 2nd of the school year preceding the upcoming school year. The principal enrollment process, including the lottery, will conclude no later than March 15th of the school year preceding the upcoming school year for which the principal enrollment process applies.

Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School is committed to ongoing recruitment and enrollment in order to re-engage existing and new students. Thus, enrollment will be more variable at PFSJCS than other public charter schools. While the principal application process will fill anticipated seats for September, PFSJCS anticipates that spaces will become available throughout the year. Enrollment for openings that occur during the school year will follow the Current School Year process described in Section 4.

6. Lottery and Waitlist

In cases when there are fewer spaces than eligible applicants, students will be admitted by a lottery process, under 603 CMR 1.05(6)(a) and (c). PFSJCS will follow all mandated requirements for operating a lottery and waitlist. Reasonable public notice of the date, time, and location, will be given at least one week prior to any enrollment lottery and will include the following details:

- Will occur in a public location, at Paul Freire Social Justice High School: 134 Springfield St Chicopee MA 01020 (603 CMR 1.05(9),
- The lottery will take place on school premises, at 134 Springfield St in Chicopee, Massachusetts. PFSJCS may conduct this lottery physically or electronically. If conducted physically, a neutral third party will randomly draw application numbers. If conducted electronically, a neutral third party will certify that the electronic mechanism for drawing application numbers is fair and random. In the order in which the neutral third party or electronic system draws application numbers, an enrollment list will be created.
- When necessary, all applications will be included in the lottery. Offers of admission will be made based on the number of seats available. Preference for admission will be taken into consideration when making these offers.
- Siblings, whether residents or nonresidents, of students who currently attend the school at the time an offer of admission is made receive a preference for admission over non-siblings and will be assigned Priority 1 status. "Sibling" is defined by having a common parent through biology or adoption, will receive preference over non-siblings. Proof of sibling status must be provided at the time an offer of admission is made and can be in the form of birth certificate, legal document, or other medical documents that identify sibling status.
- Residents of Chicopee, Holyoke, West Springfield or South Hadley, the towns indicated in Paulo Freire Social Justice's charter region, will receive preference over non-residents and will be assigned Priority 2 status. Reasonable proof of residency may be required at the time an offer of admission is made; options for proof of residency include two of the following:
 - A valid driver's license
 - Current vehicle registration
 - Valid Massachusetts photo identification card
 - Valid passport
 - A utility, cable, or cell phone bill dated within the past 60 days
 - A deed, or mortgage payment dated within the past 60 days, or a property tax bill dated within the last year
 - A current lease, Section 8 agreement, or residency affidavit
 - A W2, excise tax, property tax form dated within the year or a payroll stub dated within the past 60 days
 - A bank or credit card statement dated within the past 60 days
 - A letter from an approved government agency* dated within the past 90 days; approved government agencies include: *Departments of Transitional Assistance, Revenue (DOR), Children and Family Services (DCF), Transitional Assistance (DTA), Youth Services (DYS), Social Security, any communications on Commonwealth of Massachusetts Letterhead*
- All other students not described above are Priority 3.

Before the lottery takes place, priority status will be assigned to applications based on the priorities described above. After the initial lottery establishes an original rank order determined

randomly by hand or electronically, PFSJCS will restructure the list to create a prioritized enrollment list. To appropriately order students based on priority, PFSJCS will move students with Priority 1 status to the top of the enrollment list, in the same order in which their names were drawn during the lottery. Immediately following the last student with Priority 1 status, PFSJCS will place the list of students with Priority 2 status in the order in which their names were drawn during the lottery. Lastly, the remaining students with Priority 3 status will follow the list of Priority 2 status, also in the order in which their names were drawn during the lottery. Accordingly, the order of applicants on the prioritized enrollment list will be based on both priority status and the order that each applicant was drawn during the lottery. Next, based on the number of available seats, PFSJCS will determine which applicants will be offered admission. For example, if 50 seats are available and more than 50 eligible applicants apply, the first 50 students on the prioritized enrollment list will be offered admission to PFSJCS ("accepted students"). The applicants remaining on the prioritized enrollment list, beyond the number of available seats, will be placed on an active waitlist ("waitlisted students"). The names on the waitlist will be in the same order that the names appeared on the prioritized enrollment list, though the order is subject to change based on changes in the priority statuses of the waitlisted students which may occur over time. Pursuant to Massachusetts law, this waitlist will not roll over with each school year; students who are not offered admission to PFSJCS in the academic year for which they submitted their application are required to submit another application in a future application cycle and again proceed through the enrollment process.

- Notification of acceptance and start date will be sent to the address provided in the application and through phone outreach. Should a student be admitted to PFSJCS through a lottery process, acceptance of admission will be required within 5 days of notice. Failure to respond to notice of acceptance will result in the opening of slot. A student may accept their spot verbally via phone or by mail.
- Notification of acceptance during the summer will be sent to the address provided in the application and through phone outreach. Applicants will be given 10 days to respond from the day of notice; EXCEPTION: If a family is notified within the period of August 10-25th; acceptance of admission must be **made within 5 days, and no later than Aug. 27th**; if the family is notified after Aug. 27th, acceptance **must be made within 3 days**. Failure to respond will be considered a declination of offer of admission.
- Students who decline an offer of admission may do so in writing via email or mail. Students who decline admission or do not respond to the acceptance notification are encouraged to reapply in a future admission cycle.
- PFSJCS will keep accurate records of its waitlist at all times.
- If a student is accepted but fails to start attending within (7) seven school days of the anticipated start date, the student will be considered to have declined the offer of admission. This now vacant seat will be offered to the next student on the waitlist.
- As vacancies occur due to declined offers of admission or attrition, available seats will be offered to the next student(s) on the prioritized waitlist until the vacant seat is filled.
- In cases where offering admission to a student, who is not a sibling of another student who is currently attending PFSJCS, from the waitlist would exceed the district charter tuition cap, the student will be skipped but kept on the waitlist. In cases where the enrollment of a student who is a sibling of a student already attending PFSJCS would exceed the district charter school tuition cap, and the school has not admitted other students prior to admitting the sibling, the sibling may be offered admission and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will provide tuition for the sibling, subject to appropriation. G.L. c. 71, § 89(i); 603 CMR 1.05(10)(b).

Because PFSJCS offers weekly application deadlines and multiple enrollment opportunities as discussed above, it is possible that the school may conduct multiple lotteries in addition to the yearly principal enrollment lottery. Each lottery will be conducted using the fair and open process listed above, and any existing waitlist will be exhausted prior to conducting a new lottery.

In the case where there are vacancies and there is not a waitlist, PFSJCS, according to its Recruitment plan, will conduct ongoing outreach to the community to identify students to fill anticipated vacancies and to meet the requirements of G.L. c. 70 § 89(n).

7. 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 Sessions various times throughout the year for interested applicants. Applications and information are also available in both Spanish and English on our website (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.

PFSJCS will accept applications for Grades 9-12.

Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School (3501)
Grade span: 9-12
Max enroll: 320

Grade	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
9	83	80	81	81	82
10	80	80	80	81	81
11	65	80	79	80	79
12	55	60	78	78	78
Total	283	300	318	320	320

Those students for whom enrollment in the charter school would cause the sending district to exceed their tuition cap 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.

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 320 students in grades 9 through 12 over its five years of its charter period.

