

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #295 (2008-2009)

April 13, 2009

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD POLICY REVISION, SECTION 332.2 LOTTERY PROCEDURES - OPEN ENROLLMENT (FIRST READING)

ASD Goal: Ensure public accountability through effective communication with students, staff, parents, community and government at all levels.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Policy Committee's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading a revision to Anchorage School Board Policy 332.2, Lottery Procedures - Open Enrollment. (Attachment A)

PERTINENT FACTS:

Prior to the last revision of the lottery policy, specific dates of March 15 and August 15 were set for the spring and fall lotteries. This created confusion and inconsistency in situations when those dates fell on the weekend. Therefore, the School Board changed the policy to call for the superintendent to set lottery dates for a specific day each year during the last two weeks of March and first two weeks of August. That worked well, even with school starting earlier, until the calendar cycle was such the actual lottery date in the fall of 2009 will need to be July 31 to enable registration to occur as scheduled for lottery students. Thus, the Policy Committee recommends that the fall lottery date be set in Board Policy to occur the week before registration rather than the first two weeks in August.

CC/RG

Attachment

Prepared by: Rhonda Gardner, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction

Approved by: Carol Comeau, Superintendent

332.3 Lottery Procedures - Open Enrollment

a. Purpose

(1) To provide an equal opportunity for all students who request participation in one of the Anchorage School District's programs or schools other than the assigned District program or school and to provide grade level and gender balance. No student shall be denied participation because of a physical, mental, or learning disability, or special need.

b. Responsibilities

(1) Standard Schools

Requests for registration shall be made through the Attendance Zone Exemption Application process. Approval or denial shall be based on the school's total space availability and the achievement of gender and grade level balance.

(2) Alternative Schools/Programs

To promote equal educational opportunities for all students, it is the goal of the school system to provide all interested students with a fair opportunity for access to alternative schools/programs. To carry out this goal, the Superintendent or designee should assist each alternative school/program in developing equitable recruitment strategies and to recruit a pool of applicants which reflects the diversity of the school system as a whole.

Administrators of each alternative school/program will inform the parents and students on the wait list of openings as they occur and will require an information session. An "alternative school/program" is defined as: 1) an optional program and/or charter school, or 2) the K-12 language immersion programs. All parents and students are required to attend an information session prior to enrollment when appropriate. For primary grades, the parent information session may not be appropriate for their attendance. These sessions will be designated to familiarize the parents and students with the new school or program and to identify the student's needs. Approval or denial shall be based on the school's/program's total space availability; and the grade level of the applicant (to ensure grade level balance); and consideration given to the promotion of gender balance.

Each year, the Superintendent or designee shall assess the extent to which each alternative school's/program's enrollment reflects the diversity of the school system as a whole. Based on this analysis, the Superintendent or designee may set recruitment goals for groups that are underrepresented in alternative schools/programs. "Recruitment" may include efforts such as targeted mailings, but shall not create any priority or preference for admission.

c. How to Apply

(1) Standard Schools

Parents of children requesting an Attendance Zone Exemption to another standard school outside their assigned attendance area will complete an Attendance Zone Exemption form and submit it to the building administrator. If no space is available, the request will be held for inclusion in the next Lottery Process for that school. The parent must submit a completed Lottery Application form at the time of the request. If space is available, approval will be based on space availability, grade level, gender balance, and reasons stated on the request.

(2) Alternative Schools/Programs

Parents of children requesting entrance into an alternative school or program must complete and return an application on the approved Lottery Application form to the administrator in charge of the alternative school/program of their choosing.

All applications received prior to the designated lottery date will be entered in the next available lottery. The building administrator will keep a copy of the applications on file in the school office. Information available to the Alternative Program Advisory Committee is the standard lottery application form and student generated writing sample. At the time of the application, parents are given a copy of the Open Enrollment Lottery Procedures. In addition, at the time of application, parents should be given any available written information regarding program philosophy, program goals, and parental and student commitments that are a part of the particular alternative program guidelines.

Any required orientations, information sessions, or visits should be explained to the parents at the time applications are submitted.

At the time of approval for entrance into the alternative school, the parents will complete an Attendance Zone Exemption form.

Parents must give written permission to share their name, address, and phone number in a "waiting list directory" in order to facilitate communication among parents. This information will be kept at the individual schools as well as at the offices of the appropriate Instructional Division Executive Director and the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

d. Time Period for Lotteries

The administrator of the school/program will conduct two (2) lotteries annually for all schools if the applications received to attend any school or program exceed the available openings at that school or program.

(1) Schedule for Lotteries

No later than five months prior to each of the ~~spring and fall~~ lotteries, the superintendent will establish the date of the lottery and deadline for application and will ensure these dates are published.

a) The ~~spring~~ lottery will be held during the last two weeks of March.

b) The ~~fall~~ lottery will be held ~~the week prior to fall registration~~.

c) Additional lotteries may be held if needed.

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e. Priorities – The following priorities apply only to the drawing process for placement on a wait list. The priorities do not guarantee placement in the desired school or program.

(1) Siblings within that specific alternative school/program and attendance area children will have the same priority.

(2) Districtwide

(3) The building administrators may preempt the process with the approval of the appropriate Instructional Division Executive Director for the following reasons:

a) Grade level balance.

b) Documented hardship (extenuating circumstances, medical, safety, psychological, or curriculum considerations).

c) The achievement of gender balance.

f. Drawing Process

(1) All drawings will be by grade levels K-12. Grade levels are drawn first to determine draw order for the lottery.

(2) When a student's name is drawn, it is placed on the appropriate schools' waiting list in numerical order.

(3) Students will be enrolled in the standard school or alternative school/program from the approved waiting list in numerical order.

(4) Students' parents must annually acknowledge their interest in remaining on a school's/program's waiting list by notifying the principal/designee of their interest. Future drawings will add to the approved list. Student's remaining on a waiting list will retain their place on the list; the grade level list will move up a grade annually.

(5) Pre-kindergarten students are eligible for the lottery only in March preceding eligibility for school entrance and if the program begins in kindergarten. The first lottery for which pre-kindergarten students will be eligible will be the one in March preceding their intended enrollment. For example, for kindergarten students for the 200X-200Y school year, the first eligible lottery will be March 200X. Students wanting consideration for early entry to either kindergarten or first grade will be allowed to enter the lottery. Their space will be reserved pending approval by the Executive Director of Elementary Education or the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction until the ~~fall~~ lottery preceding their intended enrollment.

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g. Continued Participation

Students who have been chosen to attend a school or program must register in that school or program within two (2) school days after notification. In the case of pre-kindergarten students, they will notify the school within the two-day period of their acceptance, but actual registration will take place during the normal kindergarten registration period in August of each year. Those students who do not enroll within the designated period will be withdrawn from the waiting list and they must reapply if they wish to attend. If an attempt to contact a parent/guardian to offer a space to a waiting list student is not successful, the student will remain on the list through the next lottery period. If an attempt to contact a parent/guardian is again unsuccessful during the next lottery period, the student will be removed from the waiting list. If students are already in the program and are withdrawn for any reason, they must follow the lottery procedures if there is a waiting list. Positions may not be reserved because of a student's withdrawal from the program. No student will be allowed to accept a place in more than one program at the same time. All schools will turn in their waiting lists to the appropriate Instructional Division Executive Director and the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction within five (5) days of each lottery.

h. The Lottery Process

(1) All new applications will be held without priority ranking numbers between scheduled lotteries.

(2) At lottery time, the initial step will be the drawing for position according to grade level. The lottery will then proceed as follows:

a) Draw grade levels to determine order of the drawing;

b) Draw siblings and attendance area children if applicable to the school/program;

c) Draw Districtwide applications.

(3) Siblings and attendance area (if there is an attendance area) names will be drawn and assigned the lowest available waiting list numbers. Where families have more than one child, the lowest available number will be assigned simultaneously to each grade level. To be eligible under this section, the sibling must be on the rolls for the school/program at the time the other entering sibling is enrolled.

(4) Names of children from the rest of the District will be drawn second and assigned waiting list numbers in sequence behind siblings and attendance area children's names.

(5) After each lottery, families will be notified of their status on the list and advised that they must notify the principal/designee if they wish to remain on the list. At that time they should provide updated information (address, telephone number, etc.) if necessary.

i. Waiting List

(1) The names will be entered into the waiting list two (2) times each year in March/April and August of each year for grades K-12 after the scheduled lottery is held. A copy of the list will be forwarded to either Elementary, Middle Level, or Secondary Education and the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. The Assistant Superintendent for Instruction will compile a listing of all students on wait lists and will include a listing of each program for which the student has applied.

(2) Names will be numbered consecutively within each grade level based on the lottery draw.

(3) An indication will be made after the last number entered from each lottery so that it will be possible to determine which names were entered from every lottery (i.e., Spring 200X; Fall 200X, etc.)

(4) Students will be enrolled in the school/program from the approved waiting lists in numerical order unless the administrator preempts the waiting list to ensure gender balance as stated in the criteria description below, or for documented hardship. As openings occur in a particular grade level, the parents of the next student on the waiting list will be notified of the opening and must accept or reject the school/program within two (2) school days. Registration should occur as soon as possible after that date but no later than five (5) days after acceptance.

(5) When an opening occurs and no names remain on the waiting list, a special lottery will be held for that grade level only after soliciting for interest from students in the school and/or the District.

j. Criteria

(1) Space availability will be determined by weighing the following factors:

a) Overall program capacity as established by the District for zone exemptions and enrollment of the school; and

b) Grade level and individual classroom enrollments must be balanced within the program and school. The classroom and grade level restrictions that may be applied are the standard pupil teacher ratios for the coming school year.

(2) Gender Balance

In order to provide gender balance, the administrator shall preempt the waiting list if more than two-thirds (2/3) of the class is of one gender in order to ensure a minimum of two-thirds (2/3) to one-third (1/3) gender ratio.

k. Preemption Policy

(1) The administrator shall preempt the lottery procedure in the interest of achieving gender balance within a school or program. For purposes of this policy, gender classifications are (1) female and (2) male. Gender imbalance occurs when the student body in a particular school or program has more than 2/3 of either gender.

(2) The procedure for preemption the normal lottery process is as follows:

a) When a gender imbalance exists or would exist without preemption in a grade level at the time of the lottery, the administrator will fill the available spaces in the grade level by taking the numerically lowest ranking students of the minority gender until the occurrence of one of the following:

1) gender balance is achieved; or

2) all spaces in the grade level are filled.

(3) After balance is achieved, the administrator will fill the remaining available spaces in the grade level by following normal lottery procedures.

(4) The preemption policy becomes effective only when a gender imbalance exists in a grade level.

(Section 332.3 - Approved April 9, 1984; Revised October 11, 1993; Revised February 28, 1994; Revised October 30, 1995; Revised March 3, 2003; Revised January 9, 2006; Revised October 8, 2007; Revised November 12, 2007)