

June 30, 2018

Dave Machado, Director

Office of Charter Schools

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Dear Mr. Machado,

Enclosed please find requisite materials for our proposal to amend our charter and lottery policy to institute a priority lottery to improve socioeconomic diversity at The Exploris School. With over 20 years of experience and history, we feel confident that Exploris’s legacy, strong financial footing, award-winning curricula and educators, and clear mission and vision will enable us to integrate this new approach effectively.

Research demonstrates that charter schools can contribute to school segregation if they do not take active steps to address diversity and reduce barriers to access for students of all backgrounds. A diverse student body positively impacts all students, increasing their cognitive, social, and emotional skills while preparing them to be engaged citizens in our increasingly diverse society. Local and statewide comparison data reveal that (while we do manifest religious and cultural diversity to an extent) Exploris has significant gaps in both socioeconomic and racial diversity relative to traditional and charter schools across the state and in Wake. Beginning in 2014, the Exploris Board’s Educational Excellence Committee has worked in partnership with Exploris staff and administration to study and address the lack of diversity at the school. While some progress has been made, the data reveal that that there is still critical work to be done to achieve the goal of making Exploris a more diverse school. A priority lottery will enable us to more intentionally do this work.

We are including in this proposal to you:

1. Copy of the board minutes recording the board's adoption of the new policy (6/19/18)
2. Proposed revision to lottery policy and school charter.

Sincerely,

Ellie Schollmeyer, Executive Director

Tom Miller, Board Chair

**Insert Board Minutes once approved June 2018**

**REVISION TO CHARTER Enrollment section HIGHLIGHTED (page 4):**

**7. Enrollment**

**7.1** Admission and enrollment of students shall be as prescribed by the Charter School Act. Failure to adhere to the lottery requirements set forth in G.S. 115C- 218.45 is grounds for termination of this Charter.

* + - 1. 7.1 A - Lottery policy shall follow the Priority Lottery Guidelines as outlined in Parent and Student Handbook policies. Lottery priorities will include priority for children of full time employees, siblings of current students, board members, and economically disadvantaged students (in this order).

**The Exploris School  
Student and Parent Handbook Lottery Policy**

**Revisions HIGHLIGHTED. Previously adopted revisions HIGHLIGHTED**

**(Policy Code: STUDENTS 3010)**

**Lottery Selection**  
As required by G.S. 115C-29F(g)(6): During each period of enrollment, the charter school  
shall enroll an eligible student who submits a timely application, unless the number of  
applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. If there are  
more applications than spaces, the available spaces will be awarded by public lottery. Once  
enrolled, students are not required to reapply in subsequent enrollment periods; however,  
students who are placed on the waiting list must reapply for the lottery in subsequent school years.

Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, a charter school may refuse admission to any student who has been expelled or suspended from a public school under G.S. 115C‑390.5 through G.S.115C‑390.11 until the period of suspension or expulsion has expired.

**Enrollment Application Time Period**Requested applications for the upcoming school are available on the school’s website, and can be mailed or electronically sent upon request, beginning in November through the time the lottery enrollment closes the first Friday of February of the proceeding school year. Any applications received after the close of business on the first Friday in February will be placed on the waiting list in order of receipt.

**Lottery Process**  
Applications for enrollment will be made available from November through February. All  
applications must be received by the first Friday in February in order to be considered for the school’s lottery. The Lottery is conducted on the first Friday of March. The date and location are made public so that anyone may attend. The lottery is conducted by the organization’s Director and certified by an outside, unbiased volunteer. Following the lottery, parents are notified of their acceptance. Upon filling all the available positions, the lottery continues through the entire pool of applicants to establish a waiting list.

Any student receiving a seat either through the initial lottery or through the wait list will have a limited time to accept or decline the seat and, if offered the seat prior to the first day of school, must be present beginning the first day of school.

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Should a parent decline a spot, the open position will be offered to the next chronological applicant on the waiting list and these guidelines will apply.

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Outlined below are the time limitations to accept or decline a seat:

* From date of posting lottery results until June 1: 1 week to accept or decline a seat for the next school year
* From June 2 - to the first day of the new school year: 48 hours to accept or decline a seat for the upcoming school year
* After the first day of a current school year: 48 hours to accept or decline a seat for the current school year

**Lottery Preference**  
The charter school shall not discriminate against any student on the basis of race, ethnicity,  
religion, sexual identity, gender, gender identity or expression, or disability. Except as otherwise provided by law or the mission of the school as set out in the charter, the school shall not limit admission to students on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or athletic ability.

Siblings of already enrolled students, children of all full-time employees, children of the school’s Board of Directors, and applicants who are Economically Disadvantaged will receive priority enrollment in the following manner:

**Lottery Priorities**

Children of current staff and siblings are given priority over children of board members and students who are considered Economically Disadvantaged. Should a full-time staff member be hired after the annual lottery has occurred, space will be made available for said staff member’s children for the upcoming school year. Children of Board members are given the next preference followed by students whose families qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch. If there more applicants than spaces, the available spaces will be awarded by public lottery with prioirity in the following order:

1. Children of current eligible staff
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students
3. Children of current Board members
4. Children whose families are considered Economically Disadvantaged
5. All other applicants.

Siblings:​ It is the intent of Exploris to support whole families and create school community.  
All families with siblings of currently enrolled students must submit an application. Siblings  
of enrolled students will receive priority for admission during the lottery process if their  
applications are received by the designated deadline.

* If siblings apply for admission to a charter school for the upcoming school year and a lottery is needed under G.S. 115C-238.29F(g)(6), the charter school will enter one  
  surname into the lottery to represent all of the siblings applying at the same time. If  
  the surname of the siblings is selected, then all of the siblings shall be admitted to the extent that space is available and does not exceed the grade level capacity. Should the sibling’s requested grade level be full, the sibling’s name will receive priority status on the waiting list.
* If multiple birth siblings apply for admission to a charter school and a lottery is  
  needed under G.S. 115C-238.29F(g)(6), the charter school shall may enter one  
  surname into the lottery to represent all of the multiple birth siblings. If the surname of the multiple birth siblings is selected, then all of the multiple birth siblings shall be admitted.

Employees and Board of Directors:​ Exploris will limit to no more than 15% of the school’s  
total enrollment priority admission to children of full-time employees and the charter  
school’s Board of Directors.

Economically Disadvantaged Students: Exploris will institute a priority lottery for remaining available seats in order to achieve 25% of our students meeting the “Economically Disadvantaged” criteria, defined by meeting national Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) criteria, by the school year 2023-2024.

* We will achieve this by meeting the following interim goals[[1]](#footnote-1) https://ssl.gstatic.com/ui/v1/icons/mail/images/cleardot.gif

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scenario 2** | | **Total Students** | **Target ED %** | **Total ED Population w/ Priority Lottery** | **Number of New ED Students Added** | **Actual ED%** |
|  | 2018-2019 | 456 | 0% | 34 | 0 | 7.5% |
|  | 2019-2020 | 456 | 10% | 43 | 9 | 9.4% |
|  | 2020-2021 | 570 | 15% | 82 | 39 | 14.3% |
|  | 2021-2022 | 684 | 20% | 128 | 46 | 18.7% |
|  | 2022-2023 | 684 | 25% | 151 | 23 | 22.1% |
|  | 2023-2024 | 684 | 25% | 164 | 13 | 24.0% |
|  | 2024-2025 | 684 | 25% | 171 | 7 | 25.0% |
|  | 2025-2026 | 684 | 25% | 171 | 0 | 25.0% |

https://ssl.gstatic.com/ui/v1/icons/mail/images/cleardot.gif

* With each lottery, the Executive Director will work to identify number of FRL seats to make available per grade level in order to balance students admitted across grade levels, total seats available, school resources, and planned annual target.
* Student families will be asked to self identify as FRL eligible at the top of their lottery application. There will be a note on the lottery application stating that applicant will consent to verify status as FRL eligible by Exploris staff. No specific information from FRL application will be obtained beyond eligibility status, and the information will not be retained. Applicants will be provided with information on current federal FRL qualifications based on family size and income, and if they can then opt to complete a financial statement to verify FRL eligibility (which is a separate process and page from the lottery application page).

**Transportation**  
Board and school administration will work annually to identify transportation opportunities for children.

Legal Reference: Article 14A of Chapter 115C, G.S. 115C-218  
Adopted: 11/19/13  
Revised: 6/23/15

1. *In proposal to OCS, the student numbers and actual FRL numbers will not be stated. They only need to see year and target FRL% with the phrase “up to” preceding each target percentage.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)