


<b>Year: 2023</b>	
<b>Policy Number: 3500</b>	
<b>Section:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administration <input type="checkbox"/> Business Procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Community Operations <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Students <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction	

**SUBJECT: Student Admissions and Enrollment**

Admission to Health Sciences Charter School shall be open to all age-appropriate children for grade levels offered in accordance with the school’s charter without charge for tuition. The school will remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of children and youth experiencing homelessness by developing and implementing practices and procedures consistent with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act and applicable state law. The school will ensure that all identified homeless children and unaccompanied youth receive a free and appropriate education and are given meaningful opportunities to succeed in the school. It is the policy of the board that the school develop and implement practices and procedures that control the admission and enrollment of students, including public notice and lottery selection to be used when the number of applicants exceeds the number of available spaces for grades offered. Detailed application, lottery selection and admission practices and procedures will be available to parents and the general public at the school’s main office at 1140 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, NY 14209. Application guidelines can also be found on the school’s website at [healthsciencescharterschool.org](http://healthsciencescharterschool.org)

**Non-Discrimination**

Health Sciences shall not discriminate against or limit the admission of any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, race, creed, religion or ancestry. The school may not require any action by a student or family (such as an admissions test, interview, essay, attendance at an information session, etc.) in order for an applicant to either receive or submit an application for admission to the school.

**Open Enrollment Period and Notice**

Open Enrollment Period is from the first day of school of the current school year until 5:00 p.m. on April 1 of the current school year. Notice of the Open Enrollment Period and application process will be designed to inform all persons most likely to be interested in the school. Health Sciences will provide notice of open enrollment on its website. As part of the enrollment process, the administration and staff will communicate with families through the automated-call system and letters will be sent home. Applications are accepted year-round through:

1. Applying online through the online application at: [www.healthsciencescharterschool.org](http://www.healthsciencescharterschool.org)
2. Making an appointment to complete the application in-person at the school.

Occasionally, Health Sciences Charter School has seats available at some grade levels during the course of the academic year and the school shall use the applicable grade-level waitlist if one exists (as described below) or continually recruit and enroll students in order to fill any such seats.

## **Enrollment Lottery**

Generally, Health Sciences Charter School seats are very limited and the number of students who apply is greater than the number of seats available. When this occurs, the school will hold a lottery in accordance with its Charter. In order to participate in the lottery, applications must be completed online or received by Health Sciences Charter School by April 1<sup>st</sup>. If the number of applications submitted by April 1<sup>st</sup> exceeds Health Sciences Charter School's enrollment capacity, a lottery will occur. Notice of the date, time, and place of the lottery will be provided in accordance with Public Officers Law section 104, and the lottery will be held in accordance with section 119.5 of the Commissioner's Regulations.

The lottery is a random selection process conducted using technology-based software and overseen by a neutral third party to assign seats as described below. By March 15<sup>th</sup>, the date, time and location of the lottery shall be posted in the same manner in which the school posts notices of regularly scheduled Board of Trustee meetings and in accordance with State regulations.

During any school closure period pursuant to an Executive Order of the Governor related to the COVID-19 crisis, the lottery will be held remotely by videoconferencing and the public shall have an opportunity to view it live. In this event, the notice of the lottery will also be posted on the school's website and the videoconference shall be recorded and later transcribed.

## **Special Circumstances**

**Trauma-informed care note:** Proof of residency documentation and a birth certificate may not be obtainable for all students. This will not be a hindering requirement for admissions.

## **Random Selection Process**

The lottery process shall be open to the public, and the school will notify all applicants of the time and location. A neutral third party will be present and shall conduct the random selection process. This person will not be related to any student, staff member or employee, board member, or anyone applying to the school. Names will be randomly selected until all offered seats have been filled. Any remaining names will be placed on a waiting list. After all eligible names have been randomly selected, and any remaining names placed on a waiting list, the school will add to the waiting list the names of applicants who submitted applications after the open enrollment period and in the order in which they were received.

## **Enrollment Preferences**

Health Sciences follows a strict protocol regarding student admissions and enrollment based on the NYSED guidelines. Health Sciences Charter School is committed to a policy of educational equity. Upon timely receipt the required paperwork where applicable (e.g., birth certificate, custodial paperwork, and/or other school records establishing designation into one or more of the categories below) students will be given preference in the following order:

1. *Returning students:* All currently enrolled students are automatically granted admission for the subsequent academic year upon timely completion and acceptance of their intent to return form.
2. *ELL Students and Siblings:* Any ELL Students and/or sibling(s) of a student already enrolled in the school, who applies to Health Sciences within the application deadline, will be provided that space if available, have preferential placement and subsequently be assigned a seat in the

school and will not need to enter into the admissions lottery. A “sibling” is defined as a student who shares a biological or adoptive parent or a legal guardian with a current student. Parents/Guardians must provide documentation to show “sibling” status by providing a birth certificate and/or a proof of residency sharing the same household address.

*(Acceptable forms of proof of residency are limited to a lease or deed, notarized letter stating where the child is living, pay stub, utility bill, license, permit, non-driver ID, or state or other government issued ID. If documentation is unable to be provided, the applicant would be placed back into the general lottery and the application will then be processed under general applicant guidelines.) In the case there are no open slots in a particular grade level, qualifying siblings would be placed first on the wait-list*

3. Eligible children whose primary residence is within City of Buffalo School District boundaries.
4. Eligible children whose primary residence is outside the City of Buffalo School District boundaries.

*\*\*By law, students residing in the Buffalo Public School District (“BPS District”) are considered Buffalo Public School District students. If there is conflicting information as to a student’s primary residence, the school will make a final determination using its best judgment.*

### **Weighted Lottery:**

Health Sciences Charter School is committed to enrolling students with disabilities and English language learners commensurate with grades 9-12 enrollment percentages in the Buffalo Public School District. In addition to targeted outreach and recruitment efforts, the school uses a weighted lottery for the applicants with disabilities or who are English language learners in order to increase those students’ chances of being randomly selected for an available seat.

To identify as many students with disabilities and English language learner applicants as possible, Health Sciences Charter School shall include the following on its application:

Optional Application Questions: Health Sciences is committed to enrolling students with disabilities and English language learners, and answering the following questions helps the school identify eligible students. **You are not required** to answer these questions but doing so may provide the school with information that may increase your child’s chances of being admitted.

1. Does the student have an individualized education plan (IEP)?
2. If your child is currently in pre-k or not yet enrolled in kindergarten, does your child currently receive early intervention services (such as special education, speech and language, occupational or physical therapy) through the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) process?
3. Does the student receive special education services?
4. Does your student have a disability or impairment?
5. Do you have concerns about your child’s development, learning, and/or behavior that you believe required a special education evaluation or special education services?
6. Does your child currently receive services related to being an English language learner?
7. Is your child’s native language a language *other than* English?
8. Is your child currently in a Spanish-speaking pre-K program or daycare center?
9. Is your child still learning to speak English?
10. Does your child speak a language other than English at home most of the time?

11. Does your child speak a language other than English with family most of the time?
12. Is your child unable to learn effectively in English?

*\*\*If you answered “yes” to any of the questions and you are offered a seat through the lottery or waitlist process, you will be required to provide appropriate documentation related to your answers prior to your child’s enrollment. If a seat is offered based on insufficient information, the offer will be rescinded, and the seat will be offered to the next student on the waitlist.*

Prior to April 1<sup>st</sup> each year, the school identifies targets for enrollment of students with disabilities and English language learners, and applies weights based on gaps between the actual current enrollment and the targets for each of the two subgroups. The targets are established by the enrollment and retention targets set forth in the NYSED Charter Schools Office performance framework at ([http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/regentsoversightplan/section3/PerformanceFramework20\\_19.pdf](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/regentsoversightplan/section3/PerformanceFramework20_19.pdf)).

If the school is more than 5% below the target for a subgroup, a weight of two will be applied. If the school is more than 10% below the target for a subgroup, a weight of three will be applied. If the school is more than 15% below the target for a subgroup, a weight of four will be applied. Students who meet both subgroup criteria will be awarded no more than a weight of four:

<b>Difference between Actual and Target Enrollment</b>	<b>Weight Applied</b>
Actual subgroup enrollment is between > 5% and 10% below the target	2 x 1 lottery entry
Actual subgroup enrollment is between >10% and 15% below the target	3 x 1 lottery entry
Actual subgroup enrollment is between > 15% below the target	4 x 1 lottery entry

**Waitlist:**

During the lottery process, names will continue to be drawn in the same manner while applying the same preferences and weights after all available seats have been filled in order to form numbered waitlists, one for each grade level. These waitlists will be the only official, legal document identifying the names of students by grade level with applications to Health Sciences Charter School pending acceptance for the subsequent school year, or when vacancies arise. The waitlist expires annually immediately prior to the next year’s lottery drawing. Whenever a vacancy occurs after the lottery, Health Sciences Charter School shall follow the waitlist order and notify a parent via email and/or text message that a seat has become available and is being offered to the student. In addition, the school may contact the parent via phone call. A parent has three business days from the time of the first notification as recorded by the school to accept the seat by contacting the school per the instructions in the offer. A parent may request and the school may grant an extension of no more than two additional business days in order for the parent to make a final decision regarding acceptance. If a parent declines the offer, the student is determined to not be eligible, or the school does not receive a response from the parent within three business days, the seat shall be offered to the next student on the waitlist.

## **Record Keeping**

The school shall keep written and/or electronic documentation related to this policy sufficient for the authorizer to identify the process used and compare the process used to the lottery procedures required by the school's Charter. Records include: applications; targeted recruitment activities; lottery weighting and waitlist processes; logs related to parent contacts and offered/accepted/rejected seats; relevant data stored in and formulas used by School Mint; names and titles of third-party lottery administrators/overseers; recordings (if any) related to remote lotteries; records related to posted notices; and any other records that the school deems to be material of the lottery process.

## **Appeals**

Any parent or guardian may contest or appeal the random selection process, in writing, to the School's Board of Trustees. Following receipt of the parents/guardians' written appeal, a board designee will contact the parent/guardian to discuss the nature of the concern or objection. The Board or its' designee will make final decisions. If a parent or guardian is unsatisfied with their local appeal, they may visit the school website where they can access a link to the Board of Regents to make any further appeal.

## **References:**

US Constitution, Fourteenth Amendment New York Constitution, Article XI  
Title IX of Education Amendments Act (20 USC 1681 et. seq.) The Civil Rights Act of 1964  
The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act (42 USC §11434a[2]) Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 791 et. seq.)  
Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1974 (20 USC 1703 et. seq.) The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC 12101 et. seq.) New York Education Law Article 56  
New York Executive Law Article 15, N.Y Public Officers Law 104 8 N.Y.C.R.R. 119.5  
The school will comply with all applicable federal and state laws related to admissions and enrollment.

**Adopted: 01/14/2016 Revised: 8/10/2023**