

South Carolina Bridge Connections Academy Enrollment and Lottery Policy

Purpose

South Carolina Bridge Connections Academy (“SCBCA”) is committed to maximizing open enrollment within its annually set enrollment limits, while carefully considering student/teacher ratio to ensure students are provided with quality instruction and support. Enrollment shall be open to any child who resides within the state and is eligible to attend public school, subject to space limitations. Each year the school will conduct an open application period and as needed, hold a public random selection process, both as set forth in this policy, thus providing all applicants with an equal chance of admission in accordance with state law and authorizer requirements.

Nondiscrimination Assurances

SCBCA does not discriminate against any person on the basis of ethnic group identification, race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, physical or mental disability, athletic performance, language proficiency in English or another language, prior academic achievement, or age in the admission to, participation in, or receipt of any educational services or activities. SCBCA will ensure student demographics comply with the terms set forth in the Charter and the racial composition requirements outlined in South Carolina charter school law.

Notification of Enrollment and Admission Procedures

SCBCA will ensure active communication of enrollment and admission opportunities and procedures to parents and the school community to ensure that students and parents have an equal chance to learn about and apply to the school. The school will notify the Sponsor of its enrollment procedures and dates of its annual enrollment period no less than sixty (60) days prior to the first day of each annual enrollment period, in accordance with South Carolina law. The enrollment cycle will be displayed on SCBCA’s website prior to and upon commencement of the opening of an enrollment cycle.

Open Application Period

Each year, SCBCA will have an open application period for the following school year which will take place in the spring. During this period, applicants who are interested in enrolling must complete the online registration form which will be made available on the school’s website under “Enrollment”. No applicants will be enrolled during the open application period. At the conclusion of the open application period, the school will determine the total number of applicants eligible for the lottery by grade level or cluster, as well as determine which applicants are eligible for the enrollment priorities as set forth in this policy.

Lottery Procedure

Upon accounting for returning students, if there are more completed applications than available spaces at the end of the application period, a random lottery will be conducted. The lottery will be held in a public forum on a specific, publicly announced date and time with at least one school administrative staff member and one outside observer in attendance. The lottery may be conducted by grade level or in one (1) grade cluster comprising of grades 9-12.

The order in which grade levels are drawn, and the total number of students selected for each grade level may vary each year in consideration of the school's overall enrollment limit, the expected number of returning students and any of their eligible siblings who complete an enrollment application during the open application period, and/or other operational factors.

Randomization of Lottery

To ensure a random lottery without the possibility of human bias and error, SCBCA will utilize a computer-generated randomization. The program will randomly select a student name from the pool of enrollment applicants for a specific grade level or cluster until the number of available slots are filled, or the pool of enrollment applications is exhausted.

Enrollment Priorities

SCBCA will give enrollment preference to students enrolled in the school the previous school year who remain in attendance through subsequent grades. An enrollment preference for returning students excludes those students from entering a lottery.

SCBCA will prioritize the enrollment of certain students in accordance with its charter and as permitted by state laws and regulations. Enrollment priority will be given to:

- Siblings of students currently enrolled and attending, or who, within the last six years, attended the school for at least one complete academic year. If multiple sibling applicants are eligible for the lottery, they will be treated as one common entrant for lottery drawing purposes, and if one sibling is selected, all siblings shall be enrolled.
- Children of employees (up to 20% of enrollment)

A student eligible for multiple enrollment preferences may be enrolled based on only one of the preferences, at the charter school's discretion.

Lottery Selection Process

As each student in a grade level or cluster is selected, siblings of that student who have also completed the applicable registration will be accepted if a space in their grade level or cluster is available.

The parents/legal guardians of selected students will receive an email within seven (7) business days after the lottery and must accept the offer of enrollment by replying to the email by a set deadline. A parent/legal guardian who has not confirmed attendance by the set deadline will forfeit their student's space to the next eligible student on the waitlist.

When all available spaces in a grade level or cluster have been filled, students not selected in the lottery will be placed on a waiting list in the order of their lottery number. The parents/legal guardians of students who are not selected will receive an email notification within seven (7) business days after the lottery that their students are on the waitlist. These students will be given an opportunity to enroll as space becomes available in their respective grade level or cluster. The parents/legal guardians will be subsequently notified when an opening in the student's grade level or cluster becomes available. The parent/legal guardian must confirm student attendance by completing all enrollment requirements by a set deadline or will forfeit their student's space to the next eligible student on the waitlist.

Waitlists

Students who are eligible for one or more enrollment preferences, but who were not exempt from the lottery process and were not selected in the lottery will be placed on the Preference Waitlist. These students will be offered the first opportunity to enroll as space in their respective grade clusters becomes available. Students on this list with the lowest lottery number will be placed first.

When all slots are filled via the lottery, students not selected will be placed on the waitlist in the order of their lottery number. These students will be offered the opportunity to enroll after students on the Preference Waitlist, as space becomes available. Again, students on this list with the lowest lottery number will be placed first.

SCBCA will continue to accept applications after the open application period. If the school is not over-subscribed by the end of the open application period, no lottery will be held and SCBCA will continue to accept applications and admit eligible students in the order in which enrollment applications are received and based on availability in their respective grade clusters. If the school is over-subscribed, these students will be placed on the waitlist in order of the time/date stamp automatically recorded when they complete the enrollment application. These students will be offered the opportunity to enroll after all students on the waitlist as a result of the lottery, based on the availability of space in their grade cluster and their place on the waitlist. Students who complete the process first will be offered the space first.

The waitlists are for one school year only and will not carry over from school year to school year. A new application must be submitted each year.

Appeals

Pursuant to applicable law, any decision to deny admission to a student (other than a denial of admission due to results of a lottery) may be appealed to the Sponsor. The appeal must be in writing and state the grounds on which the appeal is based. The decision made by the Sponsor will be binding on the student and the school.

There is no appeal to the Sponsor when an applicant is denied admission because of lottery results.