

The Anchor School Student Enrollment & Lottery Policies

Last reviewed/approved January, 2025

Policy Statement:

The Anchor School (TAS) shall abide by the provisions stated in Federal and State law regarding enrollment and shall forbid discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. As such, TAS will adhere to the following enrollment provisions:

Official Attendance Zone

The official attendance zone of TAS is any residence within the state of Georgia.

Enrollment Eligibility & Criteria

Any student who resides with a parent/legal guardian within the official attendance zone and provides a timely and valid evidence of identification, proof of age, and proof of residency within the official attendance zone shall be considered eligible for provisional enrollment except as set forth herein.

As evidence of identification and proof of age The Anchor School shall request:

- A valid photo ID card for the person(s) named in the proof of residence document.
- An official birth certificate for the student(s) listed in the application.

Valid evidence of proof of residency shall be defined as:*

- Signed copy of current lease or rental agreement or signed copy of deed, current mortgage statement (No more than 30 days old.) OR current utility bill (Gas, water, or electric only. No more than 30 days old. Phone or cable bills cannot be accepted.).
- If the parent(s)/guardian(s) are not the property owner/lessee, but parent(s)/guardian(s) and student reside with another person who is a property owner/lessee, an Affidavit of Residency form must be completed as required, notarized, and submitted with the application and all other supporting documentation.

*Any students that meet the criteria for homelessness under the McKinney-Vento will be enrolled immediately even if they are unable to produce evidence typically required to prove residency.

The enrollment criteria above notwithstanding, The Anchor School (TAS) *may restrict a student from enrolling* under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.2 when TAS determines that:

1. The student is currently subject to a disciplinary order in another school or school district, including a long-term suspension or expulsion; OR
2. The action which led to the suspension or expulsion in the other school or school district was an offense for which suspension or expulsion could be imposed pursuant to The Anchor School's Discipline Policies.

The Anchor School shall not have any other provisional enrollment eligibility criteria. The three required documents outlined above (proof of age, proof of identification, and proof of residency) represent the provisional enrollment packet.

Additional student records will be requested to complete the registration process – as outlined in the registration checklist.

Pre-Enrollment Process

There will be an open pre-enrollment period each year during which time students interested in attending The Anchor School may submit a basic pre-enrollment application. The dates and times for this open enrollment period shall be established by the school's administration. The pre-enrollment application shall only ask for basic information such as name, grade, address, contact information, and eligibility for federal services such as WIC/SNAP/TANF and Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility (to allow us to implement our weighted lottery preference for Economically Disadvantaged students).

All students currently enrolled at the time of the deadline for pre-enrollment applications will automatically be placed for the following school year.

All other applicants will be enrolled based on a weighted random lottery to be held in accordance with the provisions set in the Enrollment Lottery Section of this policy and applicable law.

Enrollment Priority

As allowed by law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1)) The Anchor School may give enrollment priority to applicants in either of the following categories, as prioritized in the Charter:

1. Currently enrolled students, so long as the student remains eligible according to the eligibility criteria;
2. Sibling of a student enrolled in the charter school;
3. Student whose parent or guardian is an employee of the charter school.

To clarify the above general terms set out in the Charter, and to fairly and consistently provide for statutorily-authorized priorities, the Governing Board finds that the following definitions are in the best interests of The Anchor School and shall control in the interpretation of the Charter's specified enrollment priorities.

- Siblings are defined in Georgia Department of Education in SBOE Rule 160-4-9-.04: a child who shares at least one common biological or legal parent whether through natural or adoptive means, including:
 - biological siblings that share parents
 - half siblings that share a single parent
 - step siblings that share a parent or parents through marriage even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution
 - children who share a parent or parents through adoption or guardianship
 - foster children awaiting permanent placement
- Employees of the charter school will be defined as any full- or part-time employee.

The following do *not* qualify for enrollment priority:

- members of the governing board of the charter school;
- members of committees of the board who are not directors of The Anchor School governing board;
- Contractors or subcontractors;
- Volunteers;
- Other vendors or service providers.

Upon the parent or guardian's separation of employment with The Anchor School, their children will no longer receive priority by virtue of their previous employment; however, their children may receive priority by virtue of being a current student, or sibling.

Enrollment Lottery

As defined in The Anchor School (TAS) charter, a random lottery process will be implemented to fill student vacancies in such cases where the numbers of pre-enrollment applications exceed the capacity of any TAS program, class, grade level, or building in accordance with SCSC Rule 691-2-.03.

- TAS shall implement a weighted lottery in accordance with State Board Rule 160-4-9-.04(o) and pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1), State Board Rule 160-4-9-.05(2)(g), and the school's charter, TAS will implement a weighted lottery to give Economically Disadvantaged students a higher weight, determined annually by the board, in the enrollment lottery.
- Public notice will be given of date, time, and location of the lottery electronically and posted in the school at least one month in advance, so all interested parties can attend if desired.
- The lottery will be open to the public.
- It is anticipated that the lottery will occur by March 15 each year.
- An unbiased third party will witness and certify the validity of the lottery.
- In an open and transparent process, individual names will be drawn at random.

Waiting List

- The waitlist will be established for each grade based on the results of the lottery, and then on a first-come first-served basis.
- Wait list positions will not be secured from year to year.
- Students who are not offered seats for the academic school year for which the lottery was held will remain on the waiting list until the end of that academic school year unless otherwise requested by the parent/guardian to be removed. The waiting list shall be cleared at the end of the academic year for which the lottery was drawn and shall not carry over from one year to the next; students who remain on the waiting list at the end of the academic year will be required to submit an application again for the next school year.

Notification

- Parents/guardians will be notified by phone, email, and mail of each child's admission status and will have 7 calendar days after the date of initial notification to return a decision on their enrollment offer.
- If no decision is returned within 3 days, The Anchor School will make three attempts to contact the family via email and phone (three emails and three phone calls) before the 7-day deadline.
- If no decision has been returned by the one-week deadline, the child's admission space or waitlist order will be given to the next eligible candidate.

Enrollment

Once a student has been accepted through the lottery or otherwise, they will be required to complete a comprehensive registration packet with all the necessary documentation needed for public school.

Enrollment is provisional until all documentation is received to confirm residency, grade level, and qualification for educationally disadvantaged status, where applicable.

The Anchor School shall not charge tuition or enrollment fees.

The Anchor School shall not require its students to provide materials or equipment to participate in the educational program of the school. All required textbooks and other reading materials must be provided to the students free of charge.

Reregistration:

- The Anchor School will communicate reregistration timeline and processes on our website, via email, physical letters home, via text message and/or in our monthly phone calls from teachers.
- For any families that do not reregister one week before our deadline, we will text and call (two times for each), as well as remind them through normal school interactions (such as student drop off/pick up) prior to the deadline. However, we will not hold seats for currently enrolled students after the lottery has taken place.