

SABA Policy Code 4200: Admissions and Enrollment Policy

Purpose

This policy is in place to address the process for handling admissions at School of the Arts for Boys Academy (SABA). The goal of this admissions policy is to declare the process and methods that will be used to admit students in a fair and consistent way that does not offer priority to any student except those specifically noted in North Carolina law. The school will comply with all applicable federal and state laws related to admissions and enrollment. Applicants who are not domiciled in North Carolina, including foreign exchange students, are not eligible for admissions or enrollment in the school.

Non-Discrimination

A charter school shall not discriminate against or limit the admission of any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, color, gender, need for special education services, sex, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, race, creed, religion or ancestry. A 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 that school.

Enrollment Eligibility

All student applicants must be residents of the State of North Carolina at the time of enrollment. At the time of enrollment, families must provide proof of residency, which includes the following: copy of deed or record or most recent mortgage payment; or copy of lease agreement; or a utility bill dated within the past 30 days, including: gas, water, electric, landline phone, cable, or satellite; or a valid North Carolina driver's license or North Carolina photo identification card; or a vehicle or property tax bill (dated within the past year); or a bank or credit card statement with a North Carolina address (dated within the past 60 days). Students in temporary housing, as defined by McKinney-Vento, are not required to submit proof of residency documentation.

Open Enrollment Period

SABA is a nonprofit, tuition-free charter school authorized by the state of North Carolina. As a charter school, **SABA** will be open to all students who would otherwise qualify for enrollment in North Carolina Public Schools. The “**Open Enrollment Period**” for the first year of operation will be determined prior to June 30 by the school and included in the notice of Open Enrollment. For all subsequent years, the Open Enrollment Period is from the first week in January through the last week in April until 5:00 p.m. of the current school year.

Notice of the Open Enrollment Period and application process will be designed to inform the persons most likely to be interested in the school. The school will provide notice of open enrollment on the school's website and by (a) printing a legal notice of the

enrollment period in a local newspaper of general circulation; and (b) posting a written notice of the Open Enrollment Period at the school.

No criteria for admission will be used except the completed application. The application may be completed online through our website [enter website] unless a family is unable to access the site. In that case, we will provide a paper application to parents when requested. The application will include the student's name, parent/guardian names, current address of student, phone number of parent/guardian, email of parent/guardian, county of residence, current grade level, student's date of birth, the name of any siblings already enrolled at the school, lottery preference options, and a declaration of the student's residence in the state of North Carolina.

All applications received after the Open Enrollment Period ("late applications") will not be eligible to participate in the random selection process. If seats are available, late applications will be added to the end of the accepted list in the order received. If no seats are available, the late application will be added to the end of the waiting list or, if the late application is entitled to preference, inserted in the waiting list immediately before all applicants on the waiting list with a lower enrollment preference category.

Grade Level for the Lottery Application

Parents may not choose which grade they would like their child enrolled in for the coming year, they must enter the actual current grade and student will be entered into the lottery for the next grade level. Parents wishing to have their child considered for retention must still submit their student for the subsequent grade level. If the student's current school recommends a student for retention and has it documented in the student's file, the student will be moved to the appropriate grade if they have been admitted to school and will retain enrollment status with School. If the student is on the wait list at the time the retention decision is made, they will be moved to the correct grade level and placed on the wait list of their new grade based on the number they were pulled during the lottery.

Returning Students

Following the first year of operation, current students at School will not be required to re-enroll. They will be asked to sign a non-binding letter of intent for the coming year during January to allow the school to plan appropriately for the lottery.

Enrollment Priority

State law (G.S. 115C-218.45) allows certain enrollment priorities for admission to charter schools.

The following groups will have enrollment priority at **SABA** in the order that follows as space permits in each grade:

1. Children of full-time employees and board members (may not exceed 15% of total school population)
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students who were admitted to the charter school in a previous year (as determined by Charter School law G.S. 115C-218.45(f)(1))

Preferences apply to both the lottery and subsequent waiting list.

Siblings

Siblings include any of the following who reside in the same household: half siblings, stepsiblings, and children residing in a family foster home.

1. If multiple birth siblings apply to the school at the same time, and a lottery is needed, they will be bundled together under one unique lottery registration number. If the multiple birth siblings' registration is selected when there is still at least one spot remaining in any of the programs, classes or grade levels to which they have applied, all multiple birth siblings shall be admitted;
2. If siblings other than multiple birth siblings apply to the school at the same time, and a lottery is needed, the school will decide, on a year to year basis, whether to allow families the option of bundling the sibling applications.
3. If the school chooses not to allow bundling or if a family chooses not to bundle an application, each sibling will be assigned independently.
4. If the school allows bundling and a family chooses to bundle a sibling application, they will be grouped together under one unique lottery registration number based on the sibling applying at the highest grade level. If the siblings' registration number is selected, then all of the bundled siblings shall be admitted to the extent space is available in all of the programs, classes or grade level to which they have applied.

Weighted Lottery

SABA will reserve 60% of lottery enrollment each year to students who are educationally disadvantaged. Parents have the option of their student(s) being considered for this lottery by confirming that they receive benefits through SNAP, TANF, WIC, FDPIR, are homeless, enrolled in HeadStart, a migrant, or in foster care. A completed and submitted free and reduced lunch application by the end of the lottery period will also be accepted.

Educationally Disadvantaged status is applied to any student who falls into one or more of the following classifications:

1. Economically Disadvantaged – any student who qualifies for Free and Reduced-Price lunch;
2. English Learner – any student with a Home Language other than English and whose W-APT/Screening score identifies them as EL per NC DPI definitions;
3. Students with disability – any student with a medical diagnosis of a disability, or an IEP or 504 noting a disability identification or accommodation;

4. Immigrant – any student who was not born in the United States and who has not attended U.S. schools for more than three full school years;
5. Migrant or Homeless – any student who has no permanent home address.

In each open enrollment period, SABA will implement a weighted lottery which will support the enrollment of educationally disadvantaged students. A student who is eligible and opts into a weighted lottery is given a statistically higher chance of being selected through a random, general lottery. Student A, who qualifies for the weighted lottery, is weighted two times (2x) in a general lottery compared to Student B who does not qualify. For example, if two (2) markers are placed in the lottery for Student A and only one (1) for Student B and the lottery randomly pulls markers for available seats, Student A has a higher likelihood of being selected based on their additional weight.

The weighted lottery is an optional process. The school's application will explain what the weighted lottery is and the eligibility criteria. The application will state the weighted lottery is optional and choosing not to participate, if eligible, will not hinder chances in the general lottery pool. Once a student is enrolled through the weighted lottery, school staff will verify weighted lottery eligibility. The verification form will state no specific information will be obtained beyond eligibility status. The information provided will not be retained for any purpose other than to provide auditability of lottery integrity. School staff will assist families in the verification process as needed. If a family is unable to verify eligibility, after staff assistance, that student will be moved to the end of the waiting list for the particular grade level.

SABA has set a goal of enrolling approximately 60% educationally disadvantaged students each year.

Lottery Procedures

Step 1: Setup

A list with the name of each student who submitted an eligible application during the Open Enrollment Period will be created. The list will include, but not be limited to, the student's name, birth date, grade level to which the student is applying, street address, and names and grade levels of any siblings who are also applying for admission to the school. From this list, a card (for individuals) or surname card (for siblings) will be created for entry into the random selection process.

Step 2: Admission of Applicants

A neutral third-party person will perform an electronically random selection of the names of each applicant. When a card is drawn, the student(s) will be accepted into the appropriate grade(s) if space is available.

Step 3: Waiting List Priority

If a card is drawn and there is no space available in the appropriate grade, the applicant(s) will be placed on the waiting list in the order in which they are drawn. After the random selection process is complete, late applications will be processed in accordance with the procedures above. When a seat becomes available in a particular grade due to attrition, erosion, or other event, if that particular grade has a waiting list, that available seat will be filled by the first student on the waiting list for that particular grade. If a waiting list does not exist for that particular grade, but exists for another grade, the school may (subject to applicable enrollment limits and Board approved offered seats) fill the available seat using the first student on the waiting list in a different grade, the grade deemed most beneficial to student and school considering class size, teacher capacity, and other school operational factors.

Class Size and Offered Seats

Class size and offered seats will be approved by the school Board of Directors. In no event will a change in the class size or number of classrooms violate any provision contained within the school's charter or applicable law. The school's openings by grade level change daily and will be posted at the lottery. Parents can contact the school registrar to obtain updates.

Lottery Results

The school will post the results of the lottery on the website within five business days of the lottery. If a student has been admitted to the school, the parent/guardian of the student will be contacted via email unless they indicated on their application that they did not have access to email. If the parent is unable to receive email, an acceptance letter will be mailed to the child's residence.

The results and the wait list will be updated monthly to allow parents to determine their current place on the waitlist. The school will post the results of the lottery on the website within 5 business days of the lottery. If a student has been admitted to the school, the parent/guardian of the student will be contacted via email unless they indicated on their application that they did not have access to email. If the parent is unable to receive email, an acceptance letter will be mailed to the child's residence.

The results and the wait list will be updated monthly to allow parents to determine their current place on the waitlist. Parents of students placed on the waitlist will not receive communication via email or mail as to their student's place on the waitlist. They will be asked to look at the waitlist information placed online to determine their spot on the waitlist.

Accepting a Seat

Prior to the start of school, accepted students must confirm their intent to attend the school within two weeks of acceptance by returning certain initial forms, including an Admissions Form, Official Release of Records Form, and proof of residency documentation. Additional documentation, such as immunization records, will be requested through the enrollment process. Families will be updated through email of all required documentation and relevant deadlines.

One month prior and throughout the school year, the process will be accelerated and families will have 5 school days to verbally accept the seat. The school will include multiple contact points in communication to the family.

The school will send all applicants a reminder to parents/guardians that if the student does not attend the first day of school or call in to request an excused absence by the date and time indicated, the student may forfeit his/her registered status in the school. As part of the enrollment process, the school staff will communicate or meet with families, parents/guardians and students prior to the first day of school. The school will send all applicants a reminder to inform parents/guardians of the importance of being present on the first day of school. If the student does not attend the first week of school or call in to request excused absences by the date and time indicated on the reminder, the school will contact the family to determine if they are still interested in attending. Families will be given **five school days** to confirm their intent, after which time the student's seat will be forfeited.

The school may attempt to contact all applicants who have not responded to inquire whether the applicant is still planning to attend. If families do not respond within the deadline specified in the acceptance letter or decline the seat by contacting the school, the seat will be filled by the next person on the waiting list. The declining family will need to reapply if they change their mind.

Students Applying after the Open Enrollment Period

Any students applying after the open enrollment period will be placed in their respective grade if there is still space available. Otherwise, they will be placed directly after any wait-listed students from the lottery in the order the application was received. If enrollment priority applies to the student, he will be moved to the next available enrollment priority spot on the waitlist.

School's Right to Refuse Enrollment

School reserves the right to refuse to enroll any student currently under a term of expulsion or suspension by his or her school until that term is over.

School reserves the right to refuse to enroll a student if a parent willingly and knowingly provided incorrect information on the enrollment application.

Handling of Errors

School Errors

If any mistake is made by the school in administering the lottery (or if any discrepancy occurs in the lottery process as a result of the actions of School that is not corrected during the lottery), such mistake or discrepancy will not invalidate the lottery and the lottery results will stand with respect to all applicants who were admitted at the appropriate grade level through the lottery. The mistake or discrepancy will be corrected at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors (after recognition of the mistake). If a mistake is made by an applicant resulting in the applicant not being placed at the appropriate grade level in the lottery, the applicant will not be admitted and may submit a corrected application, which will be subject to the process followed for students applying after the enrollment period.

If too many students were included in the lottery at a grade level or if a student name was duplicated in the lottery at a grade level, the student or students who should not have been included (or the duplicate with the lower priority placement number, as applicable) will be removed, and any applicants with placement numbers behind the applicants who were removed will be advanced in order on the list.

If an applicant is left out of the lottery by mistake, the number of students who were included in the lottery will be determined. For each applicant not included by mistake, a random application number from the full pool of applicants received will be assigned, and the applicant will be assigned that number as his or her lottery placement number and appropriately placed as if they were pulled at the same time as the randomly assigned placement number. Any applicants with placement numbers on the wait list behind the applicants who were left off by mistake will be moved down in order on the list. As noted above, lottery results will stand with respect to all applicants who were admitted at the appropriate grade level through the lottery.

Parent Errors

If a student name is duplicated in the lottery and School administration determines that the student was intentionally registered more than one time, the student will be assigned the lowest priority placement number assigned to the student in the lottery.

If an applicant has been incorrectly placed in a grade because a parent wishes to have their student retained, the applicant will not be admitted and may submit a corrected application, which will be subject to the process followed for students applying after the enrollment period.

Withdrawal Process

Students may be withdrawn from the school at any time in accordance with the procedure outlined below. Only the enrolling custodial parent/guardian may withdraw a student.

1. The school will verify that the withdrawing parent/guardian is the custodial parent/guardian.
2. The withdrawing parent/guardian must complete a withdrawal form and provide a signature to confirm the withdrawal decision.
3. The school will confirm receipt of the completed withdrawal form and signature and may follow up with the parent to further discuss the nature of the withdrawal. If resolution is not made as a result of the follow up conversation, the school will remove the student from the school's roster.

Conflicts or unanticipated circumstances

In the event of any conflicts between this policy and State law or DPI policy, the State law or DPI policy shall take precedence. In the event of any unanticipated circumstances or conflicts within this policy, the admissions process will be executed in the manner most consistent with the mission of the school as determined by the school's Board of Directors.

Approved and Adopted: November 21, 2020

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