**Best Practices for Modifying Enrollment Policy**

**to Include SB 6194 Changes**

Updated November 27, 2017

Under SB 6194, charter schools may include new preferences in their enrollment policies. Your enrollment policy should reflect changes dictated by the new law.

**Preferences:**

* You **MUST** preference siblings of already enrolled students.
* You **MAY** preference students that are “at-risk”.
* You **MAY** preference students that are the children of full-time employees.

**Key Definitions to include in your policy:**

* **"At-risk student"** means a student who has an academic or economic disadvantage that requires assistance or special services to succeed in educational programs. The term includes, but is not limited to:
  + students who do not meet minimum standards of academic proficiency
  + students who are at risk of dropping out of high school
  + students in chronically low-performing schools
  + students with higher than average disciplinary sanctions
  + students with lower participation rates in advanced or gifted programs
  + students who are limited in English proficiency
  + students who are members of economically disadvantaged families
  + students who are identified as having special educational needs
* **“Sibling”** - you should already have an operating definition for this. Be sure to put it on all enrollment forms and on your web posted policy.
* “**Children”** - in terms of their relationship to full-time employees; do step-children, foster children, children under legal guardianship, etc. qualify?

**Weighted Lottery Waiver**

All weighted lottery preferences must be approved by your authorizer in advance of holding the lottery. If you are a CSP subgrant recipient, you are required to work with OSPI’s CSP Grant Coordinator in order to submit a waiver to be approved the Department of Education. Since both of these processes can take time, it is recommended that you start them well ahead of your intended lottery date.

**Ways to verify students that get preferences, pre-lottery:**

* **Siblings-** On your enrollment form, you can ask families to identify if they have a child enrolled already, and/or if they are attempting to enroll two or more siblings in a given year.
* **Children of employees**- On your enrollment form, you can ask families to identify if they are a full-time employee of the school and the student’s relationship to them.

**Some ways to verify students that get preferences, post-lottery:**

*Note: You must make clear on all enrollment paperwork that you will ask for back-up documentation for preference indicated, if student is selected in lottery.*

* **At-risk students**:
  + Students that are ELL- Check EDS to see if student is in TBIP program - *Reminder: never ask about immigration status*
  + Students that qualify for SpEd - Check EDS to see if they have an IEP or ask parent for a copy
  + FRL - Check to see if they are on a Direct Certification list, or ask for proof of participation in SNAP or TANF; have family complete Meal Application
  + Students from chronically low-performing schools - look at the student’s previous school’s Achievement Index score on OSPI
  + If student is in Kindergarten, see if they attended Head Start and qualify for Direct Certification, have a pre-school IEP, or have family complete Meal Application

**Ways to conduct a lottery with preferencing:**

Pursuant to the guidelines for the federal Charter Schools Program grant, schools **CANNOT** hold a lottery that has “**set-asides**” or quotas that a school strives to fulfill with a particular student demographic. For example, you cannot say you want 30% of students to be English Language Learners and then automatically fill 30% of your seats with the first English Language Learners that submit enrollment forms. You can also not run a separate lottery for English Language Learners to fill 30% of spots and then a lottery for everyone else to fill the remaining spots.

You **CAN, pursuant to both federal CSP guidelines and Washington charter school law,** hold **weighted lotteries**. This means you can determine a system for weighting certain students based on the preference category they meet. This can take several forms:

* Multiple tickets per preference (e.g. three tickets for students with FRL, 2 tickets for ELLs, 2 tickets for SpEd students; one student can get multiple tickets)
* One ticket per preference (e.g. 1 ticket for FRL, 1 ticket for SpEd, 1 ticket for ELL; one student can get multiple tickets)

All students are put into the same lottery, some with multiple entries, if they have a preference weight, and the lottery is run. You should consider whether you are trying to mirror the demographics of a certain community (local district, state, etc.) or if you are trying to achieve a student population that serves a particular population at a greater rate to determine how to weight your preferences. You should also consider how you are utilizing your student recruitment resources, as this will also impact the demographics of the students participating in the lottery.

**Other considerations when crafting enrollment policy:**

* Be sure to include specific dates or date ranges (preferred) to specify when you are closing application period (e.g. Lottery will be 2 weeks after applications due ; Each year, we conduct lottery by third weekend in April).
* Consider using SchoolMint or another electronic service to help you easily do weighting and record keeping.
* Confirm how you will utilize your school’s waitlist. Does it expire at the end of the school year or roll-over? Do late-enrolling students with preferences get put at the bottom? Are there any exceptions to this?
* Keep in mind that this policy, unlike many others, must be accessible and understandable to your entire community. You should strive to remove any potential areas of ambiguity, favoring clarity over brevity.