

ENROLLMENT & ADMISSIONS

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL FACT SHEET

RIGHT TO CHOOSE

In Arizona, families have the right to choose among district and charter public schools. Charter schools are open-enrollment tuition-free, public schools that operate based on a contract with their authorizer. Arizona is home to about 550 charter schools serving 180,000 students.

ENROLLMENT VS. ADMISSIONS

Enrollment is different from admission of a student. When a school admits a student, it offers the student a spot at the school. When a school enrolls a student, the student is indicating his or her intention to attend the school and be included in the school's student count.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Schools may not discriminate on the basis of disability and should not collect or use information about a student's special education needs for the purpose of making admission decisions.

LOTTERIES AND WAIT LISTS

If the applicant pool exceeds the school capacity, Arizona law requires schools to use a lottery. Schools are not required to maintain a wait list, but if one is kept, it must be clear and non-discriminatory.



Charter schools' admission and enrollment policies must be fair to *all* student populations and not discourage any student (except expelled students or those in expulsion proceedings) from seeking admission and enrollment. A school's policies should be readily available and accessible to parents.

ADMISSIONS

PREFERENCE TYPES

- Returning students
- Siblings of enrolled students
- Foster children
- Children, legal wards or grand-children of school or charter holder employees or board member
- Charter schools must enroll all eligible students, as long as the school has capacity.
- Schools can limit admissions to students by grade level, age, or gender if approved by its sponsor.
- All public schools can refuse to admit expelled students.
- State law outlines enrollment preferences.

ENROLLMENT

Except for homeless students, all public schools must obtain proof of the following in connection with a student's enrollment:



AGE & IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION

- A certified birth certificate, or;
- Other reliable proof (i.e. baptismal certificate, social security card application, original school registration record).



RESIDENCY DOCUMENTATION

- The Arizona Department of Education sets guidelines.
- Residency documents are different from citizenship or immigration documents, which schools **may not** request.



IMMUNIZATION DOCUMENTATION

- Arizona law requires schools suspend students who do not provide proof of immunization or an exemption.