

November 3, 2012

To: All Prospective Orcutt Academy Parents
From: Joe Dana, Director of Charter Programs
Re: Enrollment Lottery Procedure for 2013-2014

On October 10, 2012, the Orcutt Union School District Board of Trustees approved revisions to Element Eight of the Orcutt Academy Charter that will change the procedure for the charter school's enrollment lottery for 2013-2014. Following is an explanation of the changes and a description of how the enrollment lottery will proceed.

For the Orcutt Academy's K-8 Campus (OAK-8)

Change: Residents of the Orcutt Union School District now will have a weighting of 3 in the lottery, while residents of other school districts will have a weighting of 2.

Description of lottery for OAK-8: After preferential exemptions (children of founders, children of staff, and siblings of current Orcutt Academy students) are accounted for, all available K-8 vacancies will be filled and the wait list established via public enrollment lottery. In this lottery, district residents will have a 3-to-2 lottery weighting advantage over non-district residents. The lottery will take place on Wednesday, February 6, 2013. (Note: If there are more applicants in any preferential exemption category than capacity in any particular grade level, applicants in that category will be put in a separate, equally-weighted random drawing to fill the grade level and begin the wait list.)

Following the lottery, applicants selected in the lottery will be required to complete registration documents and submit proof of meeting age requirements (i.e., minimum age for public school admissions) by a published deadline. Once the requirements are verified, and registration and the necessary paperwork completed, candidates are officially admitted to OAK-8.

For Orcutt Academy High School (OAHS)

Change: Residents of the Orcutt Union School District now will have an exemption from the enrollment lottery.

Description of lottery for OAHS: Admission to OAHS would feature several steps:

- Graduates of the K-8 campus will matriculate to OAHS provided they meet the OAHS admissions requirements.
- Immediately prior to the enrollment lottery on February 6, preferential lottery exemptions will be applied. First, children of founders, children of staff, and siblings of current Orcutt Academy students will become candidates for admission. The district resident preference will come next; however, since the number of district resident applicants likely will exceed the number of vacant seats, a separate, single-weighted drawing for district residents only will determine who become candidates for admission and the sequenced order of the wait list.

- After the drawing for district residents, an equally-weighted lottery for all other applicants to the high school will be held. This lottery will determine the order of the remainder of the wait list.
- Following the lottery, OAHS Principal Ted Lyon and his staff will hold registration events at which candidates will submit proof of meeting admissions requirements. Once the requirements are verified, and registration and the necessary paperwork completed, candidates are officially admitted to OAHS.

This is a complex process, and procedures for admissions and the lottery will be specifically explained at all information nights and immediately prior to the enrollment lottery. In addition, we are providing here the answers to the following **frequently asked questions** about enrollment and admissions at the Orcutt Academy.

Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions on Enrollment

When and where can I obtain an Orcutt Academy enrollment application for 2013-2014?

All those seeking enrollment as new students at the Orcutt Academy in 2013-2014 need to fill out a separate enrollment application. Applications will be available beginning Monday, November 5, 2012, in each of the following locations:

- In the office at the Orcutt Academy's K-8 campus, 3491 Point Sal Road in Casmalia (school hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday)
- In the office of Orcutt Academy High School, 610 Pinal Street in Old Town Orcutt (school hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday)
- In the lobby of the Orcutt Union School District, 500 Dyer Street in Old Town Orcutt (office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday)
- Online at the Orcutt Academy website, which can be accessed from the Orcutt Union School District website, www.orcutt-schools.net

All applications, even those for the K-8 campus, must be returned to the office of Orcutt Academy High School.

What is the deadline for applications?

All applications must be returned to the office of Orcutt Academy High School by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 5, 2013.

Is any advantage given for returning an application early?

No. All applications received by the application deadline receive equal treatment.

How many students will be admitted into the Orcutt Academy for the 2013-2014 school year?

The Orcutt Academy's K-8 campus (OAK-8) typically has nine seats open in kindergarten and possibly one or two seats open in other grade levels. These seats are filled first by students with lottery exemptions and then by students who are participating in the enrollment lottery.

Orcutt Academy High School (OAHS) typically has 150 seats open in ninth grade and a handful of seats open in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. The ninth grade seats are filled first by matriculants from OAK-8, then those students who have exemptions from the lottery, and then all other applicants via the enrollment lottery. For a more complete description of the lottery event and subsequent admissions process, please see above.

Questions on Enrollment Lottery

When and where will the Orcutt Academy's enrollment lottery for 2013-2014 take place?

The lottery will occur at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 6, in the Multi-Use Room of Orcutt Academy High School.

How is the lottery conducted?

For the third year, the lottery will be conducted using a lottery software program. The program randomizes selection of students and makes possible differential weighting for residents and non-residents (for the K-8 lottery).

For purposes of a lottery exemption, how do you define "resident"?

Our definition of residency is aligned with the California Government Code Section 244 definition of residency, which essentially states that residents are those who live within the school district boundaries. It is important to note that under this definition those who are employed, but who do not live, within Orcutt Union School District boundaries are not considered residents.

For purposes of the lottery, are students currently attending schools in the Orcutt Union School District under an interdistrict agreement with a neighboring school district considered "residents"?

No, they are not. As mentioned above, a student must be living within district boundaries in order to be considered a "resident".

We are district residents, and we would like our child to attend Orcutt Academy High School. All district residents will be admitted, right?

Not necessarily. District residents have a preferential exemption in the lottery. However, as mentioned in the description of the lottery, OAK-8 matriculants will become candidates for admission and other students with preferential exemptions (children of founders, children of staff, and siblings of current students) will become candidates before children of district residents who do not fall into one of the above categories are considered. Accordingly, it is likely that there will be more district resident applicants than there are

seats available for them. Thus, a drawing of district resident applicants will need to be held to determine which applicants become candidates for admission and which go onto the wait list.

For purposes of a lottery exemption, how do you define “sibling”?

The definition of sibling we are using is “each of two or more children having one or both parents in common through birth or legal adoption.”

For purposes of a lottery exemption, how are “children of founders” and “children of staff” defined?

Children of founders are defined as children of the persons who were members of the original Orcutt Academy Steering/Advisory Committee. Children of staff are defined as the children of all teaching, Classified, and administrative staff who work at the Orcutt Academy on a daily and/or regularly scheduled basis and are considered part of the school staff. Staff of other school sites in the Orcutt Union School District are not considered Orcutt Academy “school staff”.

How many children of founders and children of staff are admitted?

In the current (2012-2013) school year, we have no children of founders, and three children of staff attending the Orcutt Academy. The current Orcutt Academy Charter allows no more than 3 percent of the school’s total enrollment to come from the category of children of founders.

Do students in the Orcutt Academy Independent Study Program automatically gain admission into the Academy’s K-8 and high school campuses?

No, they do not. If interested in the K-8 or high school campuses, students in the Academy’s Independent Study Program need to submit an enrollment application and are subject to the same lottery provisions as other students.

Questions on the Wait List

Describe the wait list. Do students on the wait list have a chance to be admitted?

The wait list is an ordered list by grade level, with the order established by a drawing at the enrollment lottery event on February 6. In other words, the student who is No. 1 on the wait list will be the first person contacted if/when there is an available seat at his/her grade level.

OAHS typically does go onto its wait list to admit students. Once the lottery confers them status as applicants for admission, students need to show evidence of meeting the school’s entrance requirements. If they do not produce this evidence, they lose their seat and the next person on the wait list becomes a candidate for admission. In addition, students admitted to OAHS sometimes opt to enroll at other high schools, in which case OAHS staff contact students on the wait list. Also, if vacancies emerge during the school year, OAHS will go onto its wait list to fill them.

OAK-8 typically goes onto its wait list a handful of times during the school year. Because the school is so small (total enrollment of 81, with just nine students per grade level), there is not a great deal of student movement in and out of the school.

How far onto its ninth grade wait list does OAHS typically go?

To fill its ninth-grade class for the current (2012-2013) school year, OAHS went approximately 60 deep on its wait list in the weeks and months following the enrollment lottery. For 2013-2014, there is no way to know how many students on the wait list will be admitted.

How long does a student preserve his/her position on the wait list?

Students retain their position on the wait list for the entirety of the following school year. In other words, a student who is drawn onto the wait list on February 6 will hold his/her position for the entire 2013-2014 school year.

Questions on Admissions Requirements for OAHS

What are the admissions requirements for OAHS?

For ninth grade, the admissions requirements include (1) a 2.0 grade point average or higher in core subjects (English, Mathematics, Science, and History/Social Science) in eighth grade and (2) readiness to take High School Algebra I or higher in mathematics in ninth grade. Once they become candidates for admission, applicants will need to provide proof of meeting these requirements. This proof typically is done by presenting a current eighth-grade report card.

Additionally a student may not exceed the maximum age requirements set by law. If an applicant is 19 years of age at the time of application, his/her parents should contact Director of Charter Programs Joe Dana at 938-8934 to discuss whether the student will exceed the maximum age limitation.

What if admissions requirements are not met?

Following the lottery, OAHS will hold a registration day for all of those who are candidates for admission. Candidates who are not able to show proof of meeting the admissions requirements will lose their seats.

Other Questions

Will the Board of Trustees expand the Orcutt Academy in the future so more seats are available?

There is no plan currently under consideration to expand K-8 programs at the Orcutt Academy. Meanwhile, the Board is firm on its imposed school size limit of 600 for Orcutt Academy High School. The Board ideally would like to serve all students who would like to attend the Academy, but it also believes that a large reason for the Academy's success is its small school size.

Can special provisions for enrollment be made for children who are suffering hardship, children of military families, or children facing other special circumstances?

With regard to enrollment, the Orcutt Academy is legally and ethically bound to adhere to the lottery and admissions guidelines established by Element Eight of the Orcutt Academy Charter. The Academy is not able to supercede these guidelines in order to admit a child facing special circumstances.

Who can we contact if we would like to talk to someone about enrollment?

The person to contact is Joe Dana, director of charter programs. Mr. Dana can be reached by phone at 938-8934 or by e-mail at jdana@orcutt-schools.net.