

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School
Policy S11: Admissions and Enrollment Policy
Adopted: September 17, 2020
Amended: August 31, 2022

I. General Provisions:

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School 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 Southwest Georgia STEM Charter will adhere to the enrollment procedures set forth in this policy.

II. Enrollment Eligibility/Criteria.

- A. Any student in Pre-K through ninth grade who resides with a parent/legal guardian within the State of Georgia provides a timely and valid evidence of proof of Georgia residency shall be considered eligible for enrollment except as set forth herein. Valid evidence of proof of residency shall be defined as forms of evidence required by other public schools in the State of Georgia.
- B. Notwithstanding the enrollment criteria set forth above , a student shall be restricted from enrolling when Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School determines that:
 - i. The student is currently subject to a disciplinary order in another school or school district, including a short term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion; and
 - ii. The offense 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 Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School's Code of Conduct.
 - iii. Such enrollment restriction shall remain in place for the time remaining on the existing disciplinary order.
 - iv. Moreover, if upon receipt of an enrolling student's disciplinary record or other evidence from the student's prior school or school district Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School determines that the student's prior conduct:
 1. Constitutes a violation of the Code of Conduct for off-campus behavior;
 2. Could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony; and
 3. Makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or disrupts the educational process.

Then Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School shall enroll the student, but shall hold a disciplinary hearing in accordance with its

tribunal policy to determine whether a violation of the Code of Conduct has occurred and, if so, the appropriate sanction. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School shall not have any other enrollment criteria.

III. Application Process

There will be an open application period each year during which time students interested in attending Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School may submit a basic pre-enrollment application.

A. The application process will begin on the fourth Monday of January and will end at 5:00 p.m. on the second Friday of February of the current school year. In the event that the last day of open enrollment falls on a school holiday during any school year, the last day of open enrollment will be changed to the first day the school resumes regular operations following the school holiday.

B. The pre-enrollment application shall only ask for basic information such as name, grade and contact information.

C. All students currently enrolled at the time of the deadline for pre-enrollment application will be automatically placed for the following school year unless the student's parent has notified the school of their intent to withdraw prior to the close of applications.

D. All other applicants will be enrolled based on the priorities set forth below and based on a random lottery to be held in accordance with the Enrollment Lottery process set forth in this policy.

E. No student shall be denied enrollment for declining to provide a social security number. In the event that an individual does not provide a social security number, the School will:

- i. Request the Social Security number
- ii. Give notice that providing the Social Security number is voluntary
- iii. State the purpose for which the Social Security number will be used.
- iv. Inform the parent that the school is authorized to request the student's social security number pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150 (d).
- v. Provide the parent with a form stating that the parent does not wish to provide a social security number.
- vi. Assign a temporary alternate number for the student.

IV. Enrollment Priorities

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School will grant priority admission/enrollment based on the following enrollment priorities/preferences and in the following order:

- A. Currently enrolled students
- B. A student whose parent or guardian is a current member of the governing board of Southwest Georgia Charter STEM or is a current full-time teacher, professional, or other employee at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter. The following classes of individual receive this level of priority admissions:
 - 1. An appointed member of the Governing Board;
 - 2. A full-time teacher;
 - 3. A full- or part-time teaching assistant or paraprofessional;
 - 4. Personnel holding a regular, full- or part-time position, hired for the performance of professional, administrative, after school, athletic, or secretarial services;
 - 5. Full-time janitorial or maintenance staff;
 - 6. A full- or part-time, regularly-scheduled school nurse or other medical professional; and
 - 7. Other employees, under contract, who hold regularly-scheduled part-time jobs at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School.
- C. A sibling of a student enrolled in Southwest Georgia STEM Charter. The definition of a qualified sibling includes:
 - 1. Biological siblings that share parents;
 - 2. “Half” siblings that share a single parent;
 - 3. “Step” siblings that share a parent or parents through marriage; and
 - 4. Children who share a parent or parents through adoption or guardianship.
- D. All other eligible students

V. Admissions Lottery and Enrollment Process

A. Pre-Lottery Procedures

- 1. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter’s admissions application can be found on the school's website or obtained in the main office. All completed applications should be submitted to personnel in the main office, mailed to the school to the attention of the School Leader, or emailed to enrollment@sowegastemcharter.org by the deadline posted for the current school year.
- 2. If there are more applications than available openings for any grade level, a random enrollment lottery will be held on the 2nd Saturday following the closing date for open enrollment. Students/parents or guardians do not have to be present during the admissions lottery in order for an applicant to secure enrollment.
- 3. To be considered in the lottery or enrolled without a lottery, a student must have a completed application on file. Failure to have a completed admissions/lottery application by the deadline (last day of established open enrollment) will exclude the individual from the admissions lottery process.

B. Lottery Procedures

1. The enrollment lottery will be held at 9:00 a.m. in the auditorium. Any seats that remain open after the admissions lottery will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis.
2. The enrollment lottery will be recorded and will be open to the public. In the event that large gatherings are not recommended at the time of the lottery, the lottery will be conducted on Facebook live.
3. Before the lottery, the School will designate the following individuals:
 - a) *one person to draw names/numbers*
 - b) *one person to record the names/numbers drawn*
 - c) *one person to announce the names/numbers to attendees*
4. Randomization: Randomization shall be done through manual methods, preferably by the use of assigned numbers with cards drawn manually from a clear container. Randomization will not be performed prior to the lottery; it shall be done at the announced lottery in full view of the public. If the labeling is done by number rather than by name, families/individuals will be informed of their numbers prior to the drawing
5. Sequencing: Each number drawn will represent an entire family. All family members will be placed across grade spans when their number is drawn. Due to complications for sibling preference, enrollment offer lists will not be fully compiled until ALL families have been drawn. Once all families have been drawn, each grade will be sorted by priority group and draw order.

C. Post-Lottery Procedures

1. Parents/Guardians of students who are selected in the lottery will be expected to complete an enrollment packet and register during the established registration period. Enrollment packets may be obtained from the administrative office or through a request to receive one via email. Completed enrollment packets and requested information should be submitted during registration. Documentation needed for enrollment will be listed on the school website.

D. Errors in the Enrollment Lottery

1. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter will take immediate action to correct any errors. The Board of Directors will have the final decision regarding remedies to correct all lottery application errors. Remedies may include but are not limited to the following:
2. Adding a student to the top of the waitlist or admitting a student even though the school is oversubscribed.
3. Redoing a grade-level lottery to ensure fairness for all stakeholders involved. If the school needs to redo one or more lotteries, it will make a concerted effort to provide all stakeholders clear and consistent information.

VI. Waiting List

- A.** In the event that the number of applications for a grade level exceeds the number of seats, a wait list will be developed. The admissions lottery drawing process will be used to determine the order of the remaining applicant's position on the waiting list. Once the lottery has been completed, any new applicants will be placed at the end of the waiting list.
- B.** The wait list is separate from the list of students admitted through the lottery. Each family will be aware of the position of its student (s) on the waiting list at the conclusion of the admissions lottery drawing process.
- C.** Those offered the opportunity during the school year to enroll from the waiting list will have three days to complete the registration process before the opening will be offered to the next student on the waiting list. The wait list will be updated each time students on the waiting list are admitted, and parents/guardians may contact the administrative office at any time to determine the position of their child/children on the waiting list.
- D.** It is the responsibility of a waitlisted parent or guardian to maintain accurate contact information including a phone number, address, and an email if possible. The office will contact the next person on the waitlist if a seat becomes available. The office will contact waitlisted parents by phone, and if available, by email. Every effort will be made to reach the individual in person; however, if this is not possible, a message will be left on the phone and/or email. The parents/guardians will be given 72 hours to contact the administrative office to accept the opening. If contact or a decision is not made within this time frame, the next child on the waitlist will be extended an offer.