

## Lawrence Family Development Charter School

### Enrollment Policy

#### General Enrollment

Lawrence Family Development Charter School (LFDCS) is a public school operating under a charter granted by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and serves students in K-1 through Grade 8. Admission to the school is open to all eligible applicants in grades K-1 through Grade 4 who are residents of Massachusetts and fills vacancies in Grades K-1 through Grade 4; LFDCS does not backfill in grades 5-8.

LFDCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language or prior academic achievement when recruiting or admitting students 603 M.G.L. Chapter. 71 89(1); 603 CMR 1.05(2).

LFDCS has developed and implemented an approved Recruitment and Retention Plan that targets underserved students. LFDCS's application process is not integrated with that of the Lawrence Public School district. Parents can obtain an application after January 15 for the upcoming school year by downloading the application from the LFDCS website at [www.lfdcs.org](http://www.lfdcs.org) which is found under Lottery Info or by picking up an application packet at 34 West Street, Lawrence, MA. LFDCS does not charge an application fee for admission or use financial incentives to recruit students.

Included in the application packet are descriptions of the rights of students with diverse learning needs to attend the charter school to receive accommodations and support services, including students who may have disabilities, require special education or are English Language

Learners. Information regarding the availability of services is presented including, but not limited to, the school's outreach materials, the LFDCS Student/Parent Handbook and the school's website. LFDCS will not admit students in excess of the school's approved maximum enrollment and growth plan specified in an approved charter amendment in 2010 to increase the number of students from 600 to 800 over a ten-year period ending in 2020.

Parent(s) have the right not to have their child's name used in the lottery—for example, a number would be assigned to their child in advance of the lottery. This option is a parent(s)' right under state and federal law ensuring the privacy of the child. If a parent chooses to exercise this privacy right, they are required to check off the box on the attached application form, and a number will be assigned by the Parent Liaison prior to the lottery. Parent(s) of student applicants are informed that the Lawrence Family Development Charter School in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 89(g) shall release the names and addresses of students to a third party mail house upon request unless the parent or guardian of said student objects to disclosure of such information. If a parent of a charter school student and or applicant wishes not to have their child's information released to a third party mail house, the parent needs to check off the box on the bottom of the application form.

### **Eligibility Criteria for Admittance**

Applicants must be a resident of Massachusetts to apply for admission and to attend LFDCS. Every applicant, regardless of sibling preference, residence or non-residence preference must complete an Enrollment Application prior to the deadline to be entered into the lottery. LFDCS also requests that proof of residency be submitted with the Application (verified upon acceptance to the school) in the form of:

1. A Utility Bill (not water or cell phone) dated within the past 60 days
2. A Deed, Mortgage Payment dated within the past 60 days or Property Tax Bill dated within the last year
3. A current Lease, Section 8 Agreement or Landlord Affidavit
4. A W-2 form dated within the year or a Payroll Stub dated within the past 60 days
5. A Bank or Credit Card Statement dated within the past 60 days
6. A Letter from an Approved Government Agency\* dated within the past 60 days

\*Approved government agencies: Departments of Revenue (DOR), Children and Family Services (DCF), Transitional Assistance (DTA), Youth Services (DYS), Social Security any communications on Commonwealth of Massachusetts Letterhead.

A child who is homeless is considered eligible to apply to the LFDCS lottery regardless of residency documentation, and the application of a homeless applicant will not be dependent on the submission of required documentation. Homeless applicants must provide reasonable proof (depending upon the circumstances or via an affidavit) of residency to receive an admission preference based on where they are temporarily living. Homeless applicants will receive a residency preference based on temporary residence in the City of Lawrence; however, Lawrence as a prior permanent residence does not provide a residence preference for admission.

Potential students for the K-1 and K-2 programs must submit a birth certificate for proof of being four years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> (K-1 program) of the enrollment year and five years old by September 1 (K-2 program) of the enrollment year. Potential students in grades 1-4 must submit transcripts or a report card confirming successful completion of the grade prior to the one for which they seek admission by the end of the current school year, or in special circumstances where Summer School is required for graduation, due one week before the first day of school.

LFDCS does not require potential students or their families to attend interviews or informational meetings as a condition of application, admission and attendance and does not administer tests to potential students or predicate acceptance for admission on results from any test of ability or achievement.

### **Application Process**

Applications (approved by the Massachusetts Department of Education along with a draft enrollment policy) can be either picked up from the Parent Liaison at 34 West Street, Lawrence, MA or downloaded from the LFDCS website at [www.lfdcs.org](http://www.lfdcs.org). After completing and signing the application, the application and proof of residency (confirmed if an admission offer is made) should be scanned and emailed to [parentliaison@lfdcs.org](mailto:parentliaison@lfdcs.org) or hand-delivered to the Parent Liaison at 34 West Street, Lawrence, MA on or before the application deadline which is the last Friday of February at 4pm. LFDCS will not set any principal application deadlines or hold any enrollment lotteries for student admission for the upcoming school year until after January 1, and shall conclude its principal enrollment process no later than March 15 of each year. LFDCS gives reasonable public notice of at least one month of the application deadline which is the last Friday of February at 4pm and accepts applications in anticipation of a public lottery held on the second Wednesday of March\* at 4pm each year. LFDCS publicizes, by January 15 of each year, the date of the lottery and the deadline for applications on its website ([www.lfdcs.org](http://www.lfdcs.org)), in

local newspapers, on local radio programs, in a notice to all current families and in a flyer or poster in local businesses and organizations. Applications will not be accepted after the initial application deadline.

**\*Due to state submission deadlines, the lottery for SY'2019-2020 will be held on Wednesday, March 6, 2019**

### Lottery Procedures

LFDCS will determine the number of spaces available each year in each grade. In cases where there are fewer spaces than eligible applicants, applicants shall be accepted for admission by a lottery process. The lottery is held at the LFDCS Upper School gymnasium located at 400 Haverhill Street, Lawrence, MA and conducted in public with a neutral party drawing potential students' names from the applicant pool each year certifying that the process is fair and that the selection is random. During the lottery, LFDCS will post a chart that identifies the number of slots available for grades K-1 through Grade 4. Sibling applicants (children that share a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption), residents or non-residents of students who attend the school at the time of an offer of admission is made receive a preference for admission over non-sibling applicants. Applicants who reside in the City of Lawrence receive a preference for admission over non-resident applicants; reasonable proof of current residency is required at the time an offer of admission is made.

All applicants will be drawn via the lottery to establish a random lottery order for each grade. LFDCS draws the lottery using applicant names unless a parent chooses to opt out of having their child(ren)'s name(s) publicly used at which time a number will be assigned, and the parent will be notified of that number in advance. Preference for admission will then be taken into consideration. Admission offers will be made based on the number of seats available for each grade. LFDCS will place the names of applicants not offered admission, following the lottery, in the order they were selected. If the lottery process in a given year fails to adequately draw the sufficient number of applicants for enrollment, the school will hold a subsequent lottery after public notice has been advertised for a month and the required lottery process is followed.

If admission was offered to an applicant from the waitlist who is not a sibling of another student who is currently attending LFDCS and would exceed the district charter tuition cap, the applicant should be skipped but kept on the waitlist. In cases where the enrollment of a student who is a sibling of a student who is already attending and LFDCS would exceed the district

charter school tuition cap and has not admitted other students prior to admitting the sibling, the sibling may be offered admission and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will provide tuition for the sibling, subject to appropriation.

### **Enrollment Process**

Once an applicant has been selected through the lottery process, a "Welcome Letter" is mailed to the applicant's address within 3 business days from the date of the lottery. Within 24 hours from the official lottery date, a chart is created with the list of applicants chosen from the lottery, and parent(s) may contact the Parent Liaison at 34 West Street, Lawrence, MA by telephone to confirm that their child has been selected or not selected from the lottery. Parents must notify the school of their acceptance within 10 school days of LFDCS' notification of their child's selection. Once a child is accepted, that child must finalize acceptance. Reasonable proof of current residency or sibling status is confirmed at the time an offer of admission is made. Once selected, LFDCS asks parents and students to meet with the Parent Liaison to finalize paperwork and review the Parent/Student Handbook. LFDCS shall place the names of applicants not offered admission following the lottery on a waitlist for the school year for which the applicant sought admission in the order the names are selected and will take into account sibling preference and resident and non-resident preference, which may change over time. Within 10 business days, a letter is mailed to those on the waitlist for the school year for which the applicant sought admission with an assigned grade and waitlist #. LFDCS will not accept any new applicants and will not process any new applications for a lottery until the initial waitlist is exhausted. If the principal enrollment fails to fill additional admission spaces, LFDCS may repeat the process more than once providing such process is fair and the school gives reasonable public notice at least one month prior to the application deadline. If spaces become available during the school year, LFDCS will repeat the enrollment process to fill these openings meeting the requirements of G.L.c. 70, Chapter 89(n). 603 CMR 105(8).

### **Waitlists**

LFDCS keeps a waitlist for the school year for which applicants sought admission for that year only. Applicants will be drawn from this waitlist during the school year for which the applicant sought admission if any openings occur prior to accepting new applicants according to sibling preference, resident and non-resident preference. If any openings occur in eligible grades, LFDCS will contact families by number rankings while taking into consideration preferences for admission. The order of the applicant's placement on the waitlist may change depending on the preferences that exist at the time an offer of admission is extended, such as an applicant moving up on a waitlist due to sibling status. If a student or applicant stops attending LFDCS or

declines admission, the next available applicant on the waitlist for that grade, subject to preferences at the time of admission, will be offered admission until the vacant seat is filled. No applicant will be admitted ahead of other eligible applicants on the waitlist unless said applicant is either a sibling of a currently-enrolled student or a resident of Lawrence. LFDCS maintains accurate waitlist records including applicant names (first, middle, last), dates of birth, home addresses of residence, telephone numbers, and grade levels of applicants who were part of the lottery but did not gain admission. Applicants accepted from the waitlist for the school year for which the applicant sought admission are notified immediately by telephone and in writing and must notify the school within 3 business days of their acceptance. If an applicant declines an offer of admission, the applicant must reapply if they wish to be considered again for admission. When a student stops attending the school for any reason up to February 15, LFDCS shall fill those vacant seats up to grade 4. LFDCS would draw from the waitlist for the school year for which the applicant sought admission depending on the grade by numerical rank, while also taking into consideration preferences for admission. Vacancies not filled after February 15 will move into the subsequent grade to be filled the following September in grades 1-4. Seats for applicants who have accepted an offer of admission to LFDCS but have never attended are exempt. Students who have withdrawn from the school would need to reapply for admission.

### **Application for Admission Requirements**

The application for admission must be filled out, signed and either scanned and emailed to [parentliaison@lfdcs.org](mailto:parentliaison@lfdcs.org)

or submitted in person to the Parent Liaison to be checked for accuracy along with a copy of the applicant's birth certificate (K-1 and K-2 applicants only) and proof of residency (confirmed upon acceptance). The application does not require submission of the applicant's social security number but requires the signature of one parent/guardian unless a court order indicates otherwise for an individual applicant. The application form includes all student information required by the charter school statute for the waitlist: student name (first, middle, last), date of birth; city or town of residence; grade level; home address and telephone number. The application form states a non-discrimination policy that states: LFDCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language or prior academic achievement when recruiting or admitting students 603 M.G.L. Chapter. 71 89(1); 603 CMR 1.05(2). There is also a notice on the application that states that LFDCS keeps a temporary file of the application packet for those who have been put on the waitlist for the school year for which the student sought admission. This application is kept on file until the last day of school of the school year for which the student sought admission. Before or on that date the parent(s) have the right to receive a copy of these documents; otherwise, the file is destroyed.

## Growth Plan Requirements – SY'2018-2019 through SY'2022-2023

LFDCS was approved in 2010 to increase enrollment from 600 to 800 students by 2020. Each year LFDCS increases its enrollment by 20 students and will continue this growth plan to 2020 or until the cap of 800 students is reached. LFDCS will not, in accordance with our growth plan, exceed the total number of students reported in LFDCS's pre-enrollment submission to ESE in the previous spring in accordance with 603 CMR 1.08(5).

### ANTICIPATED ENROLLMENT

#### Grades Served

SY2018-19

SY2019-20

SY2020-21

SY2021-22

SY2022-23

#### IDEAL COHORT SIZES

K-1

85

80

80

80

80

80

K-2

84

83

80

80



80

80

1

84

82

81

80

80

80

2

84

83

80

81

80

80

3

83

82

83

80

80

80

4

82

83

82

83

80

80

5

77

82

81

82

83

80

6

81

79

79

80

80

80

7

50

79

77

78

80

80

8

49

49

77

76

77

80

**TOTAL Enrollment**

759

780

800

800

800

800

The figures provided above are projections and are subject to change based on natural fluctuations in enrollment that may occur (i.e., retentions). The primary entry point is in Grade K-1 but LFDGS will backfill up to grade 4 (see green-shaded cells).

## ***Glossary***

***Siblings*** are potential students who currently have a sibling attending the charter school at the time of the lottery. Siblings are children that share a common biological or legal parent or legally through adoption as opposed to children who may live in the same house but do not share a common parent. If a student moves out of the city but remains enrolled, that student's sibling has preference in the admission even though they are non-residents at the time of the application.

***Residents*** are students that live in the city in which the charter school is located. Residents enrolled in district, charter, private or parochial schools get equal preference. Students must be residents of the city at the time of application.

***Non-Residents*** are students who live in Massachusetts but outside the city in which the charter school is located.