



# VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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# AGENDA ITEM

**Agenda Item:** H

**Date:** November 6, 2023

**Title:** Best Practices on Administration of Lotteries for College Partnership Laboratory School Admissions

**Presenter:** Andy Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent of Strategic Innovation

## **Purpose of Presentation**

For information only: No action required.

## **Executive Summary**

On October 3, 2023, the College Partnership Laboratory School Standing Committee (“Standing Committee”) directed staff at the Virginia Department of Education (“VDOE”) to provide Lab School Lottery Admissions best practices to the College Partnership Laboratory School Applicants.

The proposed best practice document would be included as an Informational Addendum to the College Partnership Laboratory School Application (“Application”). Virginia State Law that governs the administration of University Laboratory Schools states that each applicant shall include a plan to conduct a lottery should the school experience applications in excess of the declared number of seats. It also states that laboratory school admission be opened to all students in the state.

Since the October 3, 2023, meeting, VDOE staff, along with support from the Office of Attorney General staff, has reviewed Virginia State Law and has proposed the following best practices.

## **LOTTERY SYSTEM POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Virginia State Law that governs the administration of University Laboratory Schools states that each applicant shall include a plan to conduct a lottery should the school experience applications in excess of the declared number of seats. It also states that laboratory school admission be opened to all students in the state.

The following is a suggested lottery policy and procedure for a College Partnership Laboratory School. This process is provided for the following purposes:

1. To provide the opportunity to administer an application and admission process where each student applicant has an equal opportunity to be admitted to the school. There are no qualifying requirements other than residency in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
2. The Lottery process is impartial and is intended not to advantage any particular student or student demographic. [while protecting the Governing Board and partnering school administration(s) with anonymity.]
3. To protect the privacy of the student applicants, including but not limited to protections afforded by FERPA.
4. "A College Partnership Lab School is subject to all federal and state laws and regulations and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination".

The Laboratory School may develop and propose their own plan for a lottery; however, the school must provide an opportunity for all interested students in the Commonwealth to apply.

#### BEST PRACTICES FOR LOTTERY PROCESS FOR LABORATORY SCHOOLS

1. Determine the number of new students that will be admitted each year. This is the number of seats you will offer. State law requires that "Enrollment...shall be open on a space-available basis to ANY student who is deemed to reside within the Commonwealth."
2. Declare the date that the application process will open and the date it will end as well as the date of the lottery should it be necessary. As you receive applications, it is advisable to time stamp the date and time of the receipt of the application. This is done prior to determining student residency.
3. Identify who will be monitoring the lottery process. This is usually a neutral party or an employee of the VDOE. "For College Partnership Lab Schools that form a collaborative partnership with one or more local school divisions...enrollment in the "lab School" shall be administered by one of the partnering divisions." 22.1-349.3 (B)
4. Conduct your marketing campaign and student recruitment process. This process can begin prior to the date that the application process opens, or it can begin with the initiation of the application process.
5. The Virginia College Partnership Laboratory School Law states that these schools will be available to all children in the Commonwealth of Virginia. For purposes of the application, use general information to determine student eligibility such as the student's name, age (some schools ask for a birth certificate), parent/guardian name, address (to determine residency) and a number where the parent/guardian can be reached at the conclusion of the lottery. If at the end of the application period, you have more qualified applications than you have seats then you will conduct a lottery. If you do not have more applicants than you have available seats, then you will conduct your admission process in the order that applications were submitted based on their date

and time stamp. Qualification of students only refers to student residency that has been confirmed.

6. To prepare for the lottery, a roster listing each student's name is prepared. You can identify this list as the Qualified Applicant List. Give this list to the neutral party who will monitor your lottery.
7. In order to maintain student privacy and to facilitate randomization of the process, a ticket number composed of six to seven numbers are generated and is applied to a name on the list. In other words, each student's name is coupled with a different identifier number. This is called The Number Identifier List. This Number Identifier List is given to the neutral party who is monitoring the lottery process and is not shown to anyone else.
8. The lottery is run on the appointed day with the opportunity for interested individuals from the public to attend. It is very important that the neutral party attend. The Number Identifier List without the associated student name is generated by the neutral observer and given to whomever is running the lottery. The randomizing process of the Number Identifier List absent student names can take place using various software programs such as Excel. During the randomizing process the ticket numbers are randomized, and a rank order is created using only the list with the ticket numbers. Each applicant receives a rank order number. No ticket number is excluded.
9. A copy of this list is given to the neutral observer. The neutral observer provides the school administration with a copy of the newly rank-ordered list that pairs the student's name with their identifier ticket. This is now called the Master Admission List. The neutral Observer retains this list and gives a copy of it to the school administration.
10. The Administration begins the admission process. This process can be accomplished in any manner the Lab School desires. However, it is strongly recommended that the Lab School provide the parent or guardian of the student with a document that they will sign that either accepts or rejects a seat in the class. Many schools who run lotteries have an orientation period with the parents of students either in a group orientation meeting or one by one. It is advisable to secure the signed document of acceptance or rejection as soon as possible after running the lottery.
11. Each month after the lottery, the administration will send a report to the neutral observer providing updates on which students accepted or rejected seats until such time the class is filled.
12. Students who receive a randomized ticket number in excess of the declared number of available seats shall constitute the waiting list and that order will not change unless or until their rank order is accessed to admit students to the new class after a student on the Master Admission List declines the offer of a seat in the incoming class. The waiting list shall be maintained until the cohort of students for that class graduate. If there is a vacancy that occurs in the cohort class at any time after the beginning of class for the cohort then the waiting list is used to reach out to parents and students to determine whether or not they would like to transfer to the Laboratory School. "Parents shall be informed of their student's position on the [waiting] list." 22.1-349.3 (B)

**Background Information and Statutory Authority**

Section [22.1-349.3](#)(B) of the Code of Virginia states that “Enrollment in college partnership laboratory schools shall be open through a lottery process on a space-available basis to any student who is deemed to reside within the Commonwealth. A waiting list shall be established if adequate space is not available to accommodate all students whose parents have requested to be entered in the lottery process. Such waiting list shall also be prioritized through a lottery process, and parents shall be informed of their student's position on the list. For college partnership laboratory schools that form a collaborative partnership with one or more local school divisions in accordance with subsection G, enrollment in the college partnership laboratory school shall be administered by one of the partnering divisions.”