

## **2.002 ADMISSIONS, WEIGHTED LOTTERY, AND ENROLLMENT POLICY**

Riverside Leadership Academy is a nonprofit, tuition-free charter school authorized by the state of North Carolina. As a charter school, Riverside Leadership Academy will be open to all students who would otherwise qualify for enrollment in North Carolina Public Schools. The school will not discriminate against any student on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion or ancestry.

Riverside Leadership Academy will open enrollment on January 01 of each year. The open enrollment period will end on February 28 of each year. The lottery date, time and location will be published on the school's website by January 15th of each year.

No criteria for admission will be used except the completed application. The application will be available and completed via our website. A paper application will be available upon request.

***If the number of applications exceeds the number of available spaces, a lottery will be held to fill vacant seats for the next school year. After seats are filled, the drawing will continue to determine the order of a waiting list. Current year waiting lists dissolve when the next enrollment period begins.***

### **I. Grade Level for the Lottery Application**

Parents/guardians will be asked to confirm both their student's current grade as well as the grade for the coming year. Parents/guardians wishing to have their student considered for retention must still submit their student for the subsequent grade level; if admitted, the student will be evaluated by the Executive Director and student's teacher before a retention decision is made. If an admitted student's retention decision was made after the student's name was drawn for enrollment in a specific grade level, the Executive Director reserves the right to withdraw or uphold acceptance.

### **II. Returning Students**

Once enrolled, students are not required to enroll during subsequent enrollment periods. In late winter or early spring, parents/guardians will be asked to sign a letter of intent for the coming year to allow the school to plan appropriately for the lottery.

### **III. Enrollment Priority**

Riverside Leadership Academy will follow all rules and regulations regarding enrollment priority as specified required by applicable North Carolina law.

Riverside Leadership Academy may give enrollment priority under the following circumstances as stated in G.S. 115C-238.29F(g). The priorities shall be executed in the following order as space permits in each grade:

- A. Children of Riverside Leadership Academy's current Board members and full time employees are admitted before the public lottery, regardless of impact on the enrollment cap for those grade levels in which they are admitted. Students given this priority must not exceed 15% of RLA's total school enrollment.
- B. Siblings of currently enrolled students who were admitted to the charter school in a previous year. For the purposes of this section, the term "siblings" includes any of the following who reside in the same household: half siblings, step siblings, and children residing in a family foster home.
- C. If siblings apply for admission to Riverside Leadership Academy and a lottery is needed, Riverside Leadership Academy will allow the family to enter one surname into the lottery to represent all of the siblings applying at the same time. If that surname of the siblings is selected, then all of the siblings shall be admitted to the extent that space is available and does not exceed the grade level capacity.

#### IV. Riverside Leadership Academy Weighted Lottery Policy

Riverside Leadership Academy will use a ***weighted lottery for economically disadvantaged students by weighting a student's individual chances in the general lottery***. Applicants can voluntarily identify as economically disadvantaged when applying for the weighted lottery. Only students who meet the criteria of being economically disadvantaged are eligible for the weighted lottery. The additional "weight" for economically disadvantaged students will be calculated each year to maximize the probability that 30% of the students enrolled at Riverside Leadership Academy will be economically disadvantaged. Riverside Leadership Academy will continue to use a weighted lottery and the 22% EDS target for students admitted through the lottery until 30% of the students enrolled at the school are identified as economically disadvantaged.

Riverside Leadership Academy will assess eligibility for the weighted lottery by using an optional form for economically disadvantaged status. The form will be clearly labeled as optional and will state that ***"No specific information from your weighted lottery application will be obtained beyond eligibility status, and the information will not be retained"***, in addition to stating that ***the family gives consent for the school to verify their economically disadvantaged status***. For economically disadvantaged students, Riverside Leadership Academy will verify the status by using household income and/or free and reduced lunch eligibility. The verification will not take place until a student has been enrolled through selection in the weighted lottery.

If a family is selected for enrollment through a weighted lottery, they must provide supporting documentation of eligibility during Riverside Leadership Academy's regular enrollment process. If a family is unable to provide the supporting documentation necessary to qualify for the weighted lottery, Riverside Leadership Academy will contact the family to offer assistance in the process. However, if the family is still unable to provide the documentation, the applicant will be returned to the general waiting list.

#### V. Multiple Birth Siblings

If multiple birth siblings apply to the school, their surname will be entered once to represent all of the multiple birth siblings. If the multiple birth siblings are pulled in the lottery when there is still at least one spot remaining in their grade level, all multiple birth siblings shall be admitted. If their application is pulled after the spots are all filled, they will be added to the wait list in the order they are listed on their application.

#### **VI. Other Siblings**

After year one, prior to the general enrollment lottery, the school will conduct a sibling lottery of the students admitted in the prior year if more siblings have applied than there are available spots. If there are more siblings that have applied than there are spots available, a grade level wait list will be started and students not receiving spots will be added to the wait list in the order in which they are pulled.

Once the sibling lottery has been completed (if needed) the general lottery will begin. Riverside Leadership Academy will place all applications received during the open enrollment period into one school wide lottery.

#### **VII. Lottery Results**

Riverside Leadership Academy's Board of Directors will hire a third-party firm to administer the public lottery to ensure transparency in the lottery process.

The school will post the results of the lottery on the website within 5 business days of the lottery. If a student has been admitted to the school, the parent/guardian of the student will be contacted via email unless they indicated on their application that they did not have access to email. If the parent/guardian is unable to receive email, an acceptance letter will be mailed to the child's residence.

#### **VIII. Enrollment**

Applicants drawn during the application process must accept or decline admission to Riverside Leadership Academy **within 5 business days and complete registration within 10 business days**. Should a parent/guardian decline the enrollment offer or fail to respond before the deadline, the school may offer admission to the next name on that specific grade's waiting list. Applicants who are accepted off the waitlist have 48 hours from notification to accept or decline admission and 5 business days to complete registration. If enrollment is declined and a parent/guardian later decides they would like to enroll their student after all, the parent/guardian must submit a new application and the student will be placed on the waitlist in the next available spot.

As spots at the school become available, the parent/guardian of the student will be contacted via email. If the parent/guardian does not have access to email and has specified that on their application, the school will mail a letter of acceptance to the child's residence.

#### **IX. School's Right to Refuse Enrollment**

Riverside Leadership Academy reserves the right to refuse to enroll any student currently under a term of expulsion or suspension by his or her school until that term is over.

Riverside Leadership Academy reserves the right to refuse to enroll a student if a parent/guardian willingly and knowingly provided incorrect information on the enrollment application.

If a student has accepted enrollment at the school, but does not attend in the first 2 days of school, the school will make reasonable attempts to contact the parents/guardians. If there is no response from the parents/guardians by the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of school, the school reserves the right to remove the student from their enrollment roster and offer the next student on the waitlist the spot.

**X. Handling of Errors**

**a. School Errors**

If the school or the 3rd Party contractor makes an error in the lottery, such as leaving a student out, the entire lottery for the affected grade level(s) will need to be redrawn.

If a mistake is made by an applicant resulting in the applicant not being placed at the appropriate grade level in the lottery, the applicant will not be admitted and may submit a corrected application, which will be subject to the process followed for students applying after the enrollment period.

If too many students are included in the lottery at a grade level or if a student's name were to be duplicated in the lottery at a grade level, the student(s) who should not have been included (or the duplicate with the lower priority placement number, as applicable) will be removed, and any applicants with placement numbers behind the applicants who were removed will be advanced in order on the list.

**b. Parent/Guardian Errors**

If a student name is duplicated in the lottery and the school administration determines that the student was intentionally registered more than one time, the student will be assigned the lowest priority placement number assigned to the student in the lottery.

If an applicant has been incorrectly placed in a grade because a parent/guardian wishes to have their student retained, the applicant will not be admitted and may submit a corrected application, which will be subject to the process followed for students applying after the enrollment period.