

PIONEER VALLEY PERFORMING ARTS CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL
Enrollment Policy and Procedures

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School is a public school serving students grades 7-12 from over fifty towns and districts in Hampshire, Hampden, and Franklin counties (and the towns of Petersham, Brookfield, and Sturbridge). The primary entrance point is grade 7 with vacancies filled for grades 8-11. Charter schools are public schools and are therefore open to all Massachusetts students on a space available basis. This means that Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed or religion, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or in a foreign language, or prior academic achievement when recruiting or admitting students. Moreover, PVPA may not set admissions criteria that are intended to discriminate or that have the effect of discriminating based upon any of these characteristics. M.G.L. c. 71, § 89(1); 603 CMR 1.06(1). Any and all information requested in the application, such as language spoken at home or race/ethnicity, is not intended, and will not be used, to discriminate. G.L. c. 71, § 89(m); 603 CMR 1.05(2).

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School (PVPA, PVPA Charter Public School) has an interest in making sure that all prospective students and their families understand the mission and focus of the school and are interested in being a part of the school community.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School requires:

1. Candidates for admission to apply for the grade immediately following their current grade and to successfully complete that current grade to be admitted for the following year. Successful completion can come in the form of transcripts, report cards, an affidavit from the sending school's leader, course completion from an approved homeschool plan, or an equivalent. This proof needs to be verified prior to the student attending PVPA and must be received no later than **two weeks prior to the first day of school**. Failure to provide proof of successful completion (or failure to demonstrate grade promotion) will result in rescinding the offer of admission and/or unenrollment from PVPA.
2. An applicant must be a resident of Massachusetts to apply for and to attend a charter school in Massachusetts.
3. An applicant must meet the requirements for reasonable proof of residency, with the exception of homeless students.

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School will not:

1. Give preferences to children of staff members or Board members;
2. Make statements in meetings intended to discourage, or that have the effect of discouraging, parents/guardians of students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, or any other protected group of students from submitting an application to the school. See M.G.L.c.71 89(1).

OUTREACH

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School provides information about the school to those who are interested throughout the year. Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School provides applications at the Information Sessions, which are held sometime between November - January of each year for interested

applicants and additional information at Orientation Sessions for incoming students in the spring and summer before the school year begins.

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School will develop and implement a student recruitment and retention plan to follow for the coming enrollment cycle. The recruitment and enrollment process is an extensive, valley-wide outreach effort that includes advertisement and formal, public information sessions. Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, creed or religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in English language or foreign language, or prior academic achievement. Attendance at Orientation Sessions is recommended for students and their families. PVPA Charter Public School will strive to make accommodations for families with individual hardships.

There is no application fee associated with applying for enrollment at Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School. It is not required for applicants or their families to attend informational meetings as a condition of enrollment. However, families and students are encouraged to attend an open house, take a tour, and/or meet with the Enrollment Coordinator before submitting an application. Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School does not administer tests to potential applicants or predicate acceptance for admission on results from any test of ability or achievement.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

1. Beginning in November, for the following school year, PVPA Charter Public School will accept applications forms from all new applicants. Returning students do not have to reapply. Electronic application form are available and can be submitted via PVPA's webpage: www.pvpa.org/admissions. Paper applications or applications in a language other than Spanish or English may be made available upon request.
 - a. The application requires the signature of only one parent/guardian, unless a court order indicates otherwise for an individual student.
 - b. The application will not require the submission of a Social Security number.
2. The school will provide reasonable public notice of at least one month of application deadlines. Information can be found at www.pvpa.org/admissions.
3. The school will not set any principal deadlines or hold any enrollment lotteries for student admission for the upcoming school year until after January 1 and shall conclude the principal enrollment process no later than March 15 of each year.
4. If there are more eligible applicants than there are spaces available, Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School must hold a lottery to determine which applicants will receive an offer of admission. 603 CMR 1.06(3)(a). Parents and students who completed the application and submitted it before the application deadline will be entered into the lottery. Annually, the school will determine the number of spaces available each year, by grade level.
5. PVPA Charter Public School will publicize the application deadline with reasonable public notice of at least one month. There will be a lottery if there are more eligible applicants than there are available spaces within a given application process, and if a lottery is necessary there will be notification of the date with reasonable public notice of at least one week. Publication of these deadlines can be found at www.pvpa.org/admissions.

After the application deadline passes, Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School will process all applications in a single lottery, by grade. The lottery is run, creating an initial random rank order. After the

initial random rank order is created, preferences for admission are applied under 603 CMR 1.06(4). See the preferences below.

- *Siblings* – Students who share a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption under 603 CMR 1.02. Whether the children reside in the same household has no bearing on determining if the children are siblings for purposes of a sibling preference.
- *Residents* - Students who live in a city or town from the following districts: **Agawam, Amherst-Pelham** (*Amherst, Leverett, Pelham, and Shutesbury*), **Belchertown, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Erving, Frontier** (*Conway, Deerfield, Sunderland, and Whately*), **Gateway**(*Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, and Russell*), **Gill-Montague** (*Gill and Montague*), **Granby, Greenfield, Hadley, Hampden-Wilbraham** (*Hampden and Wilbraham*), **Hampshire**(*Chesterfield, Goshen, Southampton, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington*), **Hatfield, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Mohawk Trail** (*Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Hawley, Heath, Plainfield, and Shelburne*), **Monroe, Monson, Northampton, Palmer, Pioneer Valley** (*Bernardston, Leyden, Northfield, and Warwick*), **Ralph C. Mahar** (*New Salem, Orange, Petersham, and Wendell*), **Rowe, South Hadley, Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional** (*Granville, Southwick, and Tolland*), **Springfield,Tantasqua** (*Brimfield, Brookfield, Holland, Sturbridge, and Wales*), **Ware, West Springfield, and Westfield**.
- Reasonable proof of residence differs for homeless students, whose unique needs will be discussed with the Director of Student Services.
- *Non-Residents* - Students who live outside the three counties that comprise our catchment area. Non-Residents enrolled in district, charter, private or parochial schools or enrolling in schools in the district get equal preference.

Preference for admission is given first to applicants in the "Siblings" category, regardless of residency, followed by applicants in the "Residents" category and then by applicants in the "Non-Residents" category without regard to when their application was submitted as long as it was prior to the application deadline. Siblings, residents or non-residents, of students who attend the school at the time an offer of admission is made receive a preference for admission over non-siblings. 603 CMR 1.05(6)(b). Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School will not offer admission to applicants on a first come first serve basis.

The enrollment preference shall also apply to siblings of students who are scheduled to exit Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School at the end of the school year in which the lottery is held. However, the enrollment preference shall not apply to siblings of students who have applied, but not yet enrolled and began an academic year at Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School.

Preferences for admission only applies for when making an offer of admission. Preferences for admission are not static and may change over time. For example, if a sibling graduates before their younger sibling gets an offer while on the waitlist, then the waitlisted student will move down in accordance with their original random lottery rank order and their new preference (resident or non-resident). While twins might get waitlisted, as soon as one begins attending, the other one gains sibling status and will move up on the waitlist in accordance with their original random lottery rank order and their new sibling preference.

PVPA reserves the right to terminate a student's enrollment, to retract or rescind any offers of admission, or to unenroll a student, if it is found that the student and/or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) submitted false statements or documents during the application process or during any portion of the student's enrollment for the following academic year, or if the student is unable to provide proof of prior grade completion. Students who do not meet this eligibility requirement will have their offer of admission rescinded and they will be unenrolled. They must reapply in a future application cycle if they wish to seek enrollment again.

LOTTERY

If there are more eligible applicants than there are spaces available, Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School must hold a lottery to determine which applicants will receive an offer of admission. 603 CMR 1.06(3)(a). The school will determine the number of spaces available each year in each grade. As previously mentioned, the school must give reasonable public notice of the lottery at least one week before the lottery date. The lottery is conducted publicly at PVPA. Charter schools must have an individual, without any connection to the school, randomly draw the names of all students who submitted applications before the deadline. They draw the lottery or whether the lottery will be conducted electronically and, if so, will certify that the process is fair and that the selection is random. 603 CMR 1.05(9). After the available slots are filled, the individual shall keep drawing the names of the remaining applicants and place them on a waiting list in the order they are drawn, while also taking into consideration the applicants' preference for admission.

WAITING LIST

The names of students not offered admission following the lottery will be placed on a waitlist in the order the names are selected. 603 CMR 1.05(10). The waitlist will only apply for the school year for which the students sought admission. Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School will take into account sibling and resident preference, both of which may change over time. Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School will maintain accurate waiting lists and will include at minimum students' names (first, middle, and last), dates of birth, residence, grade levels, and telephone numbers. PVPA Charter Public School must always accept "Resident" students before accepting "Non-Resident" students unless the "Non-Resident" student is also a "Sibling"; "Siblings" receive a preference of admission over "non-siblings", regardless of residency. A record of the student's original random rank lottery order will be kept so that students can move up or down on the waitlist as their status changes over time (for example, moving into the region, out of the region, gaining sibling status or losing sibling status).

In cases where offering admission to a student, who is not a sibling of another student who is currently attending Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School, from the waitlist would exceed the district charter tuition cap, the student should be skipped but kept on the waitlist. In cases where the enrollment of a student who is a sibling of a student already attending Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School would exceed the district charter school tuition cap, and the school 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. G.L. c. 71, § 89(i); 603 CMR 1.05(10)(b).

If a student stops attending Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School or declines admission, the next available student on the waitlist for that grade, subject to preferences at the time of admission, will be offered admission until the vacant seat is filled. G.L. Chapter 71, 89(n). No student may be admitted ahead of other eligible students who were previously placed on a waitlist during a prior enrollment process, except in cases where enrollment preferences change or as described in 603 CMR 1.05(10)(b). 603 CMR 1.05(8).

A vacancy not filled after February 15th moves into the subsequent grade, to be filled the following September provided such grade is not in grade 12. Seats for students who have accepted an offer of admission at Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School but have never attended are exempt. 603 CMR 1.05(10)(c).

SECONDARY LOTTERY

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School may hold a second lottery under the following conditions:

1. If by the application deadline set by the Board of Trustees the school has received fewer application forms than it has spaces available; or

2. If the principal enrollment process fails to fill available admissions spaces, Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School may repeat the process more than once providing such process is fair and open and the school gives reasonable public notice at least one month prior to the application date.
3. As spaces become available during the school year, Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School may repeat the enrollment process to fill these openings and to meet the requirements of G.L. c. 70, § 89(n); 603 CMR 1.05(8).

ENROLLMENT CONFIRMATION

Families will be notified of their admission status (accepted or placement on the waiting list) via the contact information provided on their application. Offers of admission will be made based on the results of the lottery. Reasonable proof of residency or sibling status may be required at the time an offer of admission is made. All families of students who are offered admission and accept will receive enrollment materials with all of the forms necessary to enroll in PVPA Charter Public School prior to the start of the school year (Proof of Residency, Student Information, and Records Release Form). Proof of residency includes: a utility bill (not water or cell phone) dated within the past 60 days; a deed, mortgage payment dated within the past 60 days, or property tax bill dated within the last year; a current lease, Section 8 agreement, or landlord affidavit, dated within a year; a W2 form dated within the year or a payroll stub dated within the past 60 days; a bank or credit card statement dated within the past 60 days; 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.). In order for homeless applicants, who may currently or temporarily reside within the charter region, to receive preference of admission, proof current or temporary residence must be provided. The charter school's homeless liaison will work with each homeless student on a case-by-case basis to support their application process and verify their residential status. If a student is accepted in the lottery, that family must confirm that the student will attend the school and supply proof of residency by **March 14th**. If a student is selected from the waiting list and if the family is notified after March 14th but before August 15th, the family has 7 calendar days (they are first offered an open slot) to confirm enrollment. If the family is notified after August 15th, the family will have 3 calendar days to confirm enrollment. Failure to confirm enrollment by the response deadline will be considered as a student's decline of an offer of admission and will result in the slot being offered to another student on the waitlist.

PVPA Charter Public School will contact students and families to update them on their enrollment status using the contact information (email address, mailing address, and/or phone number(s)) listed on the student's application. If any of this information changes during the admissions process, it is the responsibility of the student/guardian to inform PVPA of the change. Contact is defined by communication sent from PVPA and consists primarily of phone calls and email. If no response is received by the response deadline, be it from lack of interest or a change of contact information of which PVPA was not made aware, PVPA Charter Public School will assume that the student is declining an offer of admission and reserves the right to offer the open slot to the next available student.

Students who are set to enter PVPA Charter Public School who are homeschooled must provide proof of promotion to the next grade. This proof comes in the form of: the academic plan submitted to the student's district superintendent, the letter of approval of the academic plan, and/or a letter or statement of completion granted to the student by their school district. The homeschool proof of promotion must be received by PVPA no later than **August 1st**. If not received, the student does not meet the eligibility criteria and would not be able to gain admission to your school Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School.

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School requires proof that students have successfully completed the grade prior to the grade for which they seek admission. Students entering PVPA Charter Public School must be promoted to the next grade no later than **two weeks prior to the first day of school**. PVPA must be able to obtain a student records release signed by the parent/guardian before the start of the new school year. Admitted students with IEPs are to contact the Director of Student Services.

OTHER LIMITATIONS

While PVPA Charter Public School primarily accepts students in 7th grade, PVPA Charter Public School may accept students for upper grades (grades 8-11) when there are vacancies in the class. For an upper grade student, they must have successfully completed (or is expected to complete) the grade preceding the grade to which the student seeks admission.

Transportation is not guaranteed to all residents of the charter region. Limited transportation is provided with a fee to students with one route serving Greenfield, Deerfield, Northampton and Amherst areas, and one route serving Westfield, West Springfield, Springfield, Holyoke, and Chicopee areas. No student eligible for free or reduced lunch, per the federal school lunch program, shall be required to pay the fee. More information regarding transportation can be found at www.pvpa.org/parents/transportation.

Students who withdraw or decline their offer of admission but reconsider will not be placed back on the waitlist. These students must reapply for admission.

All commonwealth charter schools must ensure that they do not enroll a number of students from a sending district that would cause the district to exceed the 9% cap on net school spending. M.G.L. c. 71 (89)(i). PVPA Charter Public School will not admit students in excess of the school's approved maximum enrollment and, if applicable, growth plan specified as a material term of the school's initial or amended charter. Upon request, the school will provide the names and addresses of students to a third party mail house for mailings unless the parent or legal guardian requests that the school withhold their child's information. G.L. c. 71, § 89(g); 603 CMR 1.05(6)(e).

Students must begin attending, in accordance with PVPA's attendance policy, within 10 days of their anticipated start date (e.g., the first day of school). Students who fail to attend will be considered to have declined their offer of admissions and unenrolled. Their seat will be offered to the next person on the waitlist and they must reapply for admission.