



Dream Academy Charter School Enrollment, Lottery and Transfer Policy

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Board Approved: 9/22/2025

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Dream Academy Charter School was founded in 2025, as a partnership between Thomas Jefferson Elementary Middle School (TJEMS) #232, a Baltimore City Public School and Arts for Learning Maryland, a non-profit organization serving students from PreK through 8th grade.

A4L Charter, Inc is a Maryland Non-Profit organization that operates Dream Academy. A4L Charter and Dream Academy will be in compliance with all federal, state and local laws and regulations regarding charter school enrollment and lottery policy. Converted from an existing neighborhood school, Dream Academy serves students living in its attendance zone. All students living in Dream Academy's attendance zone are permitted admission to the school for the appropriate grade bands.

Enrollment

A) General Policies

1. Dream Academy operates under the neighborhood charter school enrollment and lottery policy as defined by Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools).
2. Dream Academy serves a specific geographic attendance zone. Students living within the approved attendance zone will be admitted to Dream Academy regardless of when during the school year they apply for admission and are exempted from the lottery.
3. According to Maryland Charter School Legislation (Statute § 9-102(1-13)), enrollment in public charter schools is open to all students on a space available basis and charter schools admit students on a lottery basis if more students apply than can be accommodated. During open enrollment, if there is space available after all zoned students are enrolled, Dream Academy will admit other Baltimore City (citywide) students.



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4. Eligibility for enrollment may be consistent with the school's grade levels (See B below).
5. The lottery is a system of random selection of pre-registration applications that identifies students for enrollment and generates the school's official waiting list. During the lottery process, all completed and accepted applications submitted during the enrollment period are publicly drawn in random order until capacity is reached in each grade.
6. Dream Academy shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, economic disadvantage, 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.
7. Dream Academy will not administer tests to potential applicants or predicate enrollment on results from any test of ability or achievement.
8. Dream Academy will determine the enrollment period and make public announcements of enrollment deadlines through the school newsletter, website, community bulletin and e-mail. Evidence of the school's public announcements will be documented and maintained at the school. City schools lotteries are typically held in early February.
9. Enrollment/Lottery application can be found on the school's website and interested families can complete and submit it electronically. The electronic application also allows for families to read and complete the application in their home language. The Dream Academy lottery will include all completed applications for enrollment received by the date of the public lottery.
10. Dream Academy will make available at the public lottery the projected number of vacancies at various grade levels.



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11. Dream Academy may exempt from the lottery only those students who are deemed to have been admitted to the charter school already and, therefore, do not need to reapply.
 - a. Specifically, the following categories of applicants may be exempted from the lottery on this basis:
 - i. Students living in the attendance zone.
 - ii. Students who are enrolled in Dream Academy at the time it is converted into a public charter school.
 - iii. Siblings of students admitted through the lottery.
 - iv. Children of employees of the school or its operator A4L Charter, Inc.) – so long as the total number of students allowed under this exemption constitutes only a small percentage of the school's total enrollment.
12. All lotteries shall be conducted open to the public with reasonable public notice given at least one week prior to the lottery. An alternate date in case of inclement weather will also be provided.
13. When recruiting students, Dream Academy will target all segments of the parent community.
 - a. Dream Academy will recruit in a manner that does not discriminate against students of a particular race, color, national origin, religion, or sex, or against students with disabilities.
 - b. Dream Academy may target additional recruitment efforts toward groups that might otherwise have limited opportunities to participate in the charter school's programs.

B) Age Requirements



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1. Children entering Dream Academy must abide by the same age restrictions as other Baltimore City Public Schools.
2. Children must be five years old on or before September 1 of the school year in which they apply for entrance to attend kindergarten. Waiver requests for early entry are addressed to and handled by the City Schools Office of Early Childhood at baltimorecityschools.org.

C) Documentation Required for Registration

1. Dream Academy applicants must meet all City Schools' Board approved residency requirements.
2. Non Baltimore City residents may enroll in Dream Academy on a space available basis after all Baltimore City residents have been enrolled. The City Schools non-resident tuition will be applied.

Enrollment Procedures

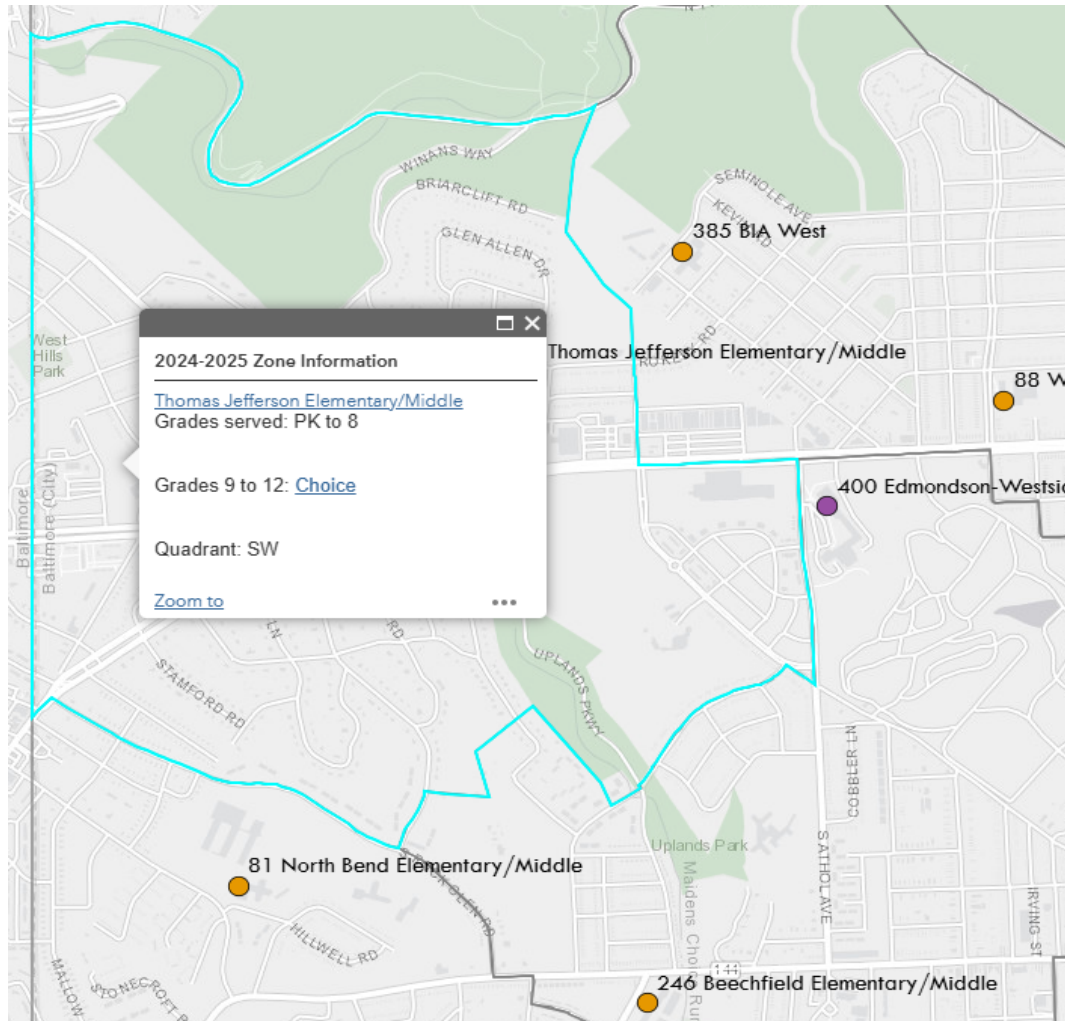
1. Dream Academy provides preference to students residing in the former TJEMS enrollment zone and has a specific geographic attendance zone. Students living within the approved attendance zone may be admitted to Dream Academy regardless of when during the school year they apply for admission. Dream Academy's attendance zone is outlined in the map below in blue and is consistent with the enrollment zone of the former Thomas Jefferson Elementary Middle School zone.

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2. If Dream Academy determines it has additional seats in a class or grade available, applications will be accepted from citywide students. Once demand exceeds capacity, the school will conduct a lottery (see Lottery Policy). Zoned students may not be turned away from Dream Academy on the basis of space availability.
3. When Dream Academy reaches its capacity (as defined in the charter agreement) the operator may apply for an enrollment moratorium in the manner prescribed by the Office of Student Placement. Moratoriums must be approved by the Chief Academic Officer of Baltimore City Public Schools.



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4. If a student is chosen for a grade or multi-grade slot and is then retained at their current school or if the information provided on the enrollment form about the student's grade level is found to be inaccurate, the offer of admissions will be rescinded and the student will go to the end of the waiting list for the newly identified grade level

PreK/Kindergarten Simultaneous Lottery Protocol

Dream Academy enrolls approximately 40 preK students annually. The Pre-k program at all schools (including Charter Schools) is administered by Baltimore City Public Schools and funding and enrollment for Pre-K seats is managed by the district.

For students entering preK:

1. For the school's 40 preK eligible funded seats, children are enrolled based on priority eligibility criteria following a general lottery.
2. The school holds a lottery for preK at the same time as the K-8 lottery. Offers are not made until eligibility data is collected.
3. The preK lottery serves as the following years' K lottery to determine enrollment for K. There is not a waiting list for the early Kindergarten. Those students would enter the lottery for Kindergarten the following year.
4. Families are notified if the type of seat they are allotted will require them to reenter the lottery for Kindergarten.

For students enrolled in the school's preK program who wish to continue their enrollment for Kindergarten :

5. Students who gained access to the school via the preK and early K random lottery process are eligible to continue their enrollment without reentering the lottery for Kindergarten.
6. Students in district seats who received an offer based on eligibility criteria instead of early K lottery results must reenter the lottery for Kindergarten and participate in the lottery like all other applicants with the following exception:



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Students that are siblings of enrolled students and children of staff or founders as well as students residing in the enrollment zone, are removed from the lottery as they are eligible to be offered a Kindergarten slot regardless of if their preK enrollment was based on meeting preK eligibility criteria vs general lottery.

Re-enrolling Students

1. Dream Academy may request that currently enrolled families who were admitted through the lottery submit an "intent to return" form, expressing their desire to continue their enrollment at the charter school.
2. The re-enrollment notice may also request that the parent or guardian indicate whether a sibling(s) seeks to enroll for the upcoming academic year.
3. Although this information may be useful for planning, there is no requirement for families within the attendance zone to "re-enroll" and city-wide families may not be asked to transfer from the school for failure to submit an "intent to return" form.
4. After collecting the parent or guardian responses, Dream Academy determines the following:
 - a. The number of students who have re-enrolled per grade or grouping level.
 - b. The number of siblings seeking admission for the upcoming academic year per grade.
 - c. If space is unavailable, Dream Academy will develop a waiting list for siblings of re-enrolled students.
 - d. The number of spaces remaining, after enrollment of current students and siblings, per grade.
 - e. If space remains after in-zone and re-enrolled students are accounted for in each grade, a lottery will be held for all remaining seats.



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Special Education

Dream Academy will provide appropriate special education services as needed by students with disabilities. Once a lottery is conducted and enrollment is known, Dream Academy may ask families for information about special education. Once children to be enrolled in the school are identified as having an IEP, Dream Academy will review the current IEP and determine whether a Child Study Team meeting must be held.

Dream Academy may not be responsible for serving students who need to attend specialized programs (such as a citywide program for the blind) that cannot be delivered on site at the school. However, Dream Academy is responsible for serving the full spectrum of students with disabilities.

Transfers

A) Voluntary Transfers

Parents or legal guardians can request a voluntary transfer. Every effort should be made to make decisions that are the least disruptive to the student. The process of seeking a voluntary transfer is the same for all City Schools schools.

B) Involuntary Administrative Transfers

Dream Academy will follow the City Schools policy and procedures on involuntary administrative transfers.



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