

November 6, 2017

To: All Prospective Orcutt Academy Parents
From: Joe Dana, Director of Charter Programs
Re: Frequently Asked Questions on Orcutt Academy Enrollment, Lottery, and Admissions

We on the Orcutt Academy staff receive many questions throughout the year about enrollment, the enrollment lottery, and admissions. Following are answers to the most frequently asked questions.

Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions on Enrollment

When and where can I obtain an Orcutt Academy enrollment application for 2018-2019?

Parents need to fill out a separate enrollment application for all those seeking enrollment as new students at the Orcutt Academy in 2018-2019. Again this year, we are requesting that enrollment applications (also known as Intent to Enroll forms) be submitted online. All enrollment information submitted online will be accessible to only a limited number of Orcutt Academy staff and will be kept confidential.

For those who do not have access to a computer with Internet access, office staff at Orcutt Academy High School, 610 Pinal Street in Old Orcutt, can assist applicants in getting onto a computer with Internet access.

When will you begin accepting applications? What is the deadline?

We will begin accepting applications on Monday, November 6, 2017. All applications must be submitted online by 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 31, 2018.

Is any advantage given for returning an application early?

No. All applications received by the application deadline receive equal treatment.

Should we attend an Orcutt Academy information night?

We request that all prospective parents attend one of the five information nights or meetings we have scheduled. At these events, Orcutt Academy staff provide information on their programs and outline the process for the lottery and admissions. In addition, prospective students and parents are invited to attend a campus tour at each of our sites. A full listing of information nights and campus tours can be accessed online at the Orcutt Union School District website, www.orcutt-schools.net, or at the Orcutt Academy website, www.orcuttacademycharter.net.

You are doing enrollment online. How do parents know that their enrollment application has been received?

Within two work days after we receive an online application, Orcutt Academy staff will send a confirmation e-mail to the e-mail address that has been supplied to us. Please look for that confirmation e-mail. We also recommend that applicants print out the confirmation screen of their enrollment application as proof that they have submitted it.

If you do not receive a confirmation e-mail within two work days of submitting an application, please contact Joe Dana, director of charter programs, at 938-8934 or jdana@orcutt-schools.net to make sure it has been received.

Do siblings of current students need to have an enrollment application submitted?

Yes. All prospective students, including those who are siblings of current Orcutt Academy students, need to have an enrollment application on file.

How many students will be admitted into the Orcutt Academy for the 2018-2019 school year?

The Orcutt Academy's K-8 campus (OAK-8) will have six seats open for Transitional Kindergarten, eight seats open in kindergarten, and possibly one or two seats open in other grade levels. These seats are filled first by students with lottery exemptions and then by students who are participating in the enrollment lottery.

Orcutt Academy High School (OAHS) typically has 150 seats open in ninth grade and a handful of seats open in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. The ninth grade seats are filled first by matriculants from OAK-8 and OA Independent Study, then those students who have exemptions from the lottery, and then all other applicants via the enrollment lottery. For a more complete description of the lottery event and subsequent admissions process, please attend an Orcutt Academy information night and/or see questions on lottery below.

How and when do district residents prove residency as part of the enrollment process?

Again this year, all applicants who claim district residency will need to submit proof of residency. This is done by submitting proof of residency by email (PDF format only) to residency@orcutt-schools.net or by visiting the Orcutt Union School District Enrollment Office (Building "1" of the district office complex at 500 Dyer Street in Old Orcutt) from 2:00-4:00 p.m. on one of the following Thursdays: November 9, 16, and 30; December 7 and 14; January 11, 18, and 25; and February 1. Orcutt Academy staff will be present at these times to greet district resident applicants. Proof of residency is done by submitting (1) two utility bills showing the applicant resides in a home within the boundaries of the Orcutt Union School District or (2) a notarized residency affidavit and two utility bills showing residency. If submitted by email, utility bills and/or residency affidavits should be converted into PDF format. Photographs or screen shots of documents will not be accepted via email.

Applicants claiming district residency who do not submit proof of residency by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 1, will be considered a non-resident for purposes of the enrollment lottery. Any questions on residency or residency verification should be addressed to Joe Dana, director of charter programs, at 938-8934.

Which students are eligible for Transitional Kindergarten at the Orcutt Academy?

Students with birthdates between September 1, 2013, and December 2, 2013, are eligible for Transitional Kindergarten. As mentioned above, the Orcutt Academy has six seats in Transitional Kindergarten.

What happens to enrollment applications submitted after the January 31 deadline for the lottery?

Enrollment applications submitted after the enrollment deadline are added to the wait list following all applications that are part of the enrollment lottery.

What happens when parents/guardians make mistakes on the enrollment application?

The burden is on parents/guardians to provide correct information on the enrollment application. The best advice is to put care and diligence into its completion. If parents/guardians realize before the enrollment deadline that they have submitted incorrect information, they need only contact Joe Dana, director of charter programs, by email at jdana@orcutt-schools.net to correct it.

If incorrect information is submitted and not corrected, we will proceed through the lottery and admissions process utilizing the information we have available. Unfortunately, if critical information such as a child's grade level is incorrect on the enrollment application, there is no way to rectify the mistake following the lottery.

Questions on Enrollment Lottery

When and where will the Orcutt Academy's enrollment lottery for 2018-2019 take place?

The lottery will occur at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 7, 2018, in the Multi-Use Room of Orcutt Academy High School, 610 Pinal Street in Old Orcutt.

What is the procedure for the enrollment lottery?

Lottery procedures differ for the K-8 and high school campuses. Descriptions follow:

Description of lottery for Orcutt Academy K-8 campus (OAK-8):

After preferential exemptions (children of founders, children of staff, and siblings of current Orcutt Academy students) are accounted for, all available TK-8 vacancies are filled and the wait list established via public enrollment lottery. In this lottery, district residents will have a 3-to-2 lottery weighting

advantage over non-district residents. (Note: If there are more applicants in any preferential exemption category than capacity in any particular grade level, applicants in that category will be put in a separate, equally-weighted random drawing to fill the grade level and begin the wait list.)

Following the lottery, applicants selected in the lottery will be required to complete registration documents and submit proof of meeting age requirements (i.e., minimum age for public school admissions) by a published deadline. Once the requirements are verified, and registration and the necessary paperwork completed, candidates are officially admitted to OAK-8.

Description of lottery for Orcutt Academy High School (OAHS):

Admission to OAHS features several steps:

- Graduates of the K-8 campus qualified graduates of the K-8 independent study program will matriculate to OAHS provided they meet the OAHS admissions requirements.
- Immediately prior to the enrollment lottery on February 7, preferential lottery exemptions will be applied. First, children of founders, children of staff, and siblings of current Orcutt Academy students will become candidates for admission. The district resident preference will come next; however, since the number of district resident applicants likely will exceed the number of vacant seats, a separate, single-weighted drawing for district residents only will determine who become candidates for admission and the sequenced order of the wait list.
- After the drawing for district residents, an equally-weighted lottery for all other applicants to the high school will be held. This lottery will determine the order of the remainder of the wait list.
- Following the lottery, OAHS Principal Rhett Carter and his staff will hold registration events at which candidates will submit proof of meeting admissions requirements. Once the requirements are verified, and online registration completed, candidates are officially admitted to OAHS.

This is a complex process, and procedures for admissions and the lottery will be specifically explained at all information nights and immediately prior to the enrollment lottery.

How is the lottery conducted?

For the eighth year, the lottery will be conducted using a lottery software program. The program randomizes selection of students and makes possible differential weighting for residents and non-residents (for the K-8 lottery).

Who should attend the lottery?

The lottery is a public event, and anyone may attend. That being said, we recommend that children not attend. Based on past experience, we feel it is best that parents/guardians be the ones to communicate the outcome of the lottery to their children.

If we do not attend the lottery, how will we know the results?

The evening of the lottery, we will send an email to each parent/guardian with the result for their student. The email will be sent to the email address provided in the enrollment application.

The morning following the lottery, we will post print copies of the lottery results at Orcutt Academy High School (610 Pinal Street in Old Orcutt).

Once again this year, we will not be putting the results of the lottery online.

For purposes of a lottery exemption, how do you define “resident”?

Our definition of residency is aligned with the California Government Code Section 244 definition of residency, which essentially states that residents are those who live within the school district boundaries. It is important to note that under this definition those who are employed, but who do not live, within Orcutt Union School District boundaries are not considered residents.

All applicants who claim residency are required to submit proof of residency through the methods described in the “Enrollment” section.

For purposes of the lottery, are students currently attending schools in the Orcutt Union School District under an interdistrict agreement with a neighboring school district considered “residents”?

No, they are not. As mentioned above, a student must be living within district boundaries in order to be considered a “resident”.

We are district residents, and we would like our child to attend Orcutt Academy High School. All district residents will be admitted, right?

Not necessarily. District residents have a preferential exemption in the lottery. However, as mentioned in the description of the lottery, OAK-8 and OA Independent Study matriculants will become candidates for admission and other students with preferential exemptions (children of founders, children of staff, and siblings of current students) will become candidates before children of district residents who do not fall into one of the above categories are considered. Accordingly, it is likely that there will be more district resident applicants than there are seats available for them. Thus, a drawing of district resident applicants will need to be held to determine which applicants become candidates for admission and which go onto the wait list.

For purposes of a lottery exemption, how do you define “sibling”?

The definition of sibling we are using is “each of two or more children having one or both parents in common through birth or legal adoption.”

For purposes of a lottery exemption, how are “children of founders” and “children of staff” defined?

Children of founders are defined as children of the persons who were members of the original Orcutt Academy Steering/Advisory Committee. Children of staff are defined as the children of all teaching, Classified, and administrative staff who work at the Orcutt Academy on a daily and/or regularly scheduled basis and are considered part of the school staff. Staff of other school sites in the Orcutt Union School District are not considered Orcutt Academy “school staff”.

How many children of founders and children of staff are admitted?

For the current (2017-2018) school year, the Academy admitted no children of founders and nine children of staff. The current Orcutt Academy Charter allows no more than 3 percent of the school’s total enrollment to come from the category of children of founders.

Do students in the Orcutt Academy Independent Study Program automatically gain admission into the Academy’s K-8 and high school campuses?

Students in OA Independent Study gain automatic admission to Orcutt Academy High School if and only if they have completed all of fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades with OA Independent Study.

Questions on the Wait List

Describe the wait list. Do students on the wait list have a chance to be admitted?

The wait list is an ordered list by grade level, with the order established by a drawing at the enrollment lottery event on February 7. In other words, the student who is No. 1 on the wait list will be the first person contacted if/when there is an available seat at his/her grade level.

OAHS typically does go onto its wait list to admit students. Once the lottery confers them status as applicants for admission, students need to show evidence of meeting the school’s entrance requirements. If they do not produce this evidence, they lose their seat and the next person on the wait list becomes a candidate for admission. In addition, students admitted to OAHS sometimes opt to enroll at other high schools, in which case OAHS staff contact students on the wait list. Also, if vacancies emerge during the school year, OAHS will go onto its wait list to fill them.

OAK-8 typically goes onto its wait list a handful of times during the school year. Because the school is relatively small (total enrollment of 132), there is not as much student movement in and out of the school.

How far onto its ninth grade wait list does OAHS typically go?

To fill its ninth-grade class for the start of the current (2017-2018) school year, OAHS went approximately 50 students deep on its post-lottery wait list in the weeks and months following the

enrollment lottery. The previous year, OAHS went through its entire post-lottery wait list. For 2018-2019, there is no way to know how many students on the wait list will be admitted.

How long does a student preserve his/her position on the wait list?

Students retain their position on the wait list for the entirety of the following school year. In other words, a student who is drawn onto the wait list on February 7 will hold his/her position for the entire 2018-2019 school year.

Questions on Admissions Requirements for OAHS

What are the admissions requirements for OAHS?

For ninth grade, admissions requirements include a 2.0 grade point average or higher in core subjects (English, Mathematics, Science, and History/Social Science) in eighth grade. Once they become candidates for admission, applicants will need to provide proof of meeting these requirements. This proof is done by presenting a current eighth-grade report card. They must show an actual quarter or semester report card and not a progress report grade. For schools in the Orcutt Union School District (Lakeview and Orcutt junior high schools, Olga Reed School, the Orcutt Academy's K-8 campus, and the Orcutt Academy's K-8 Independent Study Program), this would be the second quarter report card that goes home in late January or early February.

Additionally, a student may not exceed the maximum age requirements set by law. If an applicant is 19 years of age at the time of application, his/her parents should contact Director of Charter Programs Joe Dana at 938-8934 to discuss whether the student will exceed the maximum age limitation.

What if admissions requirements are not met?

Following the lottery, OAHS will hold a registration day for all of those who are candidates for admission. Candidates who are not able to show proof of meeting the admissions requirements will lose their seats.

We have heard that OAHS may remove its admissions requirements. Will that happen?

The Orcutt Union School District Board of Trustees periodically reviews the lottery and admissions policies it has in place for OAHS. As of this writing, the Board has not enacted any changes in the OAHS admissions requirements.

Other Questions

We have heard that the Orcutt Academy's K-8 campus has moved. Where is it located now?

The Orcutt Academy's K-8 campus now shares a school site with Olga Reed School at 480 Centennial Street in Los Alamos. In May 2014, the Orcutt Union School District Board of Trustees decided to

relocate OAK-8 from Casmalia to Los Alamos. To see the K-8 campus, please come to the campus tour scheduled for Monday, January 22, at 9:15 a.m.

Will the Board of Trustees expand the Orcutt Academy in the future so more seats are available?

There is no plan currently under consideration to expand TK-8 programs at the Orcutt Academy. Meanwhile, the Board is firm on its imposed school size limit of 600 for Orcutt Academy High School. The Board ideally would like to serve all students who would like to attend the Academy, but it also believes that a large reason for the Academy's success is its small school size.

Can special provisions for enrollment be made for children who are suffering hardship, children of military families, or children facing other special circumstances?

With regard to enrollment, the Orcutt Academy is legally and ethically bound to adhere to the lottery and admissions guidelines established by Element Eight of the Orcutt Academy Charter. The Academy is not able to supercede these guidelines in order to admit a child facing special circumstances.

Can special provisions for enrollment be made for children who are outstanding students?

As mentioned earlier, the Academy is legally and ethically bound to follow its lottery and admissions guidelines. It is not able to bypass these guidelines for any student.

We are interested in the Orcutt Academy Independent Study Program. How do we enroll our child?

Enrollment in the Orcutt Academy Independent Study Program for grades K-8 is ongoing, and may be done at any time as space is available. Now based in Casmalia, the program offers both home study and a "blended" option that blends home study with three days of classroom instruction. As of this writing, the program does have openings in the current (2017-2018) school year. For information, please phone Joe Dana, director of charter programs, at 938-8934.

Who can we contact if we would like to talk to someone about enrollment?

The person to contact is Joe Dana, director of charter programs. Mr. Dana can be reached by phone at 938-8934 or by e-mail at jdana@orcutt-schools.net.