



## Admissions and Enrollment Policy

MESA Charter High School shall not discriminate against any student based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or on any other basis that would be unlawful for a public school. MESA shall be open to any child who is eligible under the laws of New York State for admission to a public school, and the school shall ensure compliance with all applicable anti-discrimination laws governing public schools, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and § 2854(2) of the New York Education Law, governing admission to a charter school. New students will be admitted each year without regard to prior measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, or any above-mentioned basis that would be unlawful for a public school.

In its first year of operation, MESA will accept applications for admission to 9<sup>th</sup> grade of which approximately 125 will be accepted. MESA will add one grade each year, until it reaches 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In subsequent years, MESA will accept 125 new 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. MESA may over- or under-enroll students each year, within the bounds of the School's charter agreement with the Board of Regents. MESA will replace 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders lost to attrition, but generally will not replace 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> graders. However, if MESA determines its programs and design will properly serve additional 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> graders, and admitting those students is otherwise consistent with achieving the school's mission, MESA may elect to admit new students to grades 11 or 12. Such admission would be on a non-discriminatory basis, in accordance with the other provisions of this Policy and in compliance with applicable laws, and would be subject to space availability. In this event, such information will be included in the application and lottery materials and the Charter Office at the NYSED will be notified. Considering the attrition assumption in *I.C.* and the graduation targets described in *II.A.*, MESA will reach capacity of approximately 463 students by the fifth year of operation. Should the school experience higher attrition than anticipated, MESA may enroll additional students to the extent supported by the school's maximum capacity.

**Application Process, Publicity, and Outreach:** Each year MESA will hold tours and voluntary information sessions to inform the families of prospective students and community members about its program. Information sessions may be held at the school itself, at local middle schools, or at local organizations that serve middle school aged children and/or their parents. MESA will schedule information sessions beginning during the autumn prior to the first day of the subject school year and will hold as many of them throughout the autumn, winter and spring as the Board considers appropriate to meet MESA's target enrollment). While MESA will give first preference to students in CSD 32, MESA will also conduct outreach in neighboring school districts. MESA will also implement these measures with consideration to parents of children with special needs and ELLs.

Outreach sessions for students will be publicized using flyers, signage at the school and contact with community organizations. For school years after the first, families will be encouraged to visit the school, talk to instructional, executive and other staff, visit classes and meet currently enrolled students.

MESA will undertake all measures to recruit student applicants and will provide translation services, if necessary, for all promotional materials and any person-to-person interaction requiring an English translation. Given the proposed location of MESA and the surrounding demographics, the application will be available in English and Spanish, as well as other languages if the demographics of the neighborhood change. For any parent that requests assistance in completing the application, multi-lingual staff may assist. If translation services are required and multi-lingual staff is unavailable, we will hire translators during the admission period.

Families interested in enrolling a child at MESA will be required to submit an application. Applications will be made available at parent information sessions and for pick up at the school and



on MESA's website and may be made available by other means, provided application availability will be non-discriminatory. There will be no fee for making an application nor will there be any tuition charged for attending the school beyond fees permitted to be charged by public schools.

During or before each January of the upcoming academic year, MESA will advertise open registration. Families, if they choose to, may meet with staff and review the expectations of MESA. MESA will have an application deadline no earlier than April 1 and no later than April 10.

### **Public Lottery**

*Target "At Risk" Student Population and Lottery Process:* MESA is committed to serving CSD 32. MESA will exercise a lottery preference for all siblings of current students and for students residing in CSD 32. Prior to the lottery, MESA will confirm each student's address as being located in or outside of CSD 32. MESA will hold two lotteries—one for students residing in CSD 32 and another for students residing outside of the district.. The first lottery will be for students who reside in CSD 32. If there are fewer applicants than open seats, all applicants will be accepted. If there are more applicants than seats, the seats will be filled with students from CSD 32, and the students from CSD 32 who do not gain admission will then be selected one-by-one for the waitlist. Once all applicants from CSD 32 have either been awarded a seat at the school or a spot on the waitlist, a second lottery will take place for students outside the district.

Admission preference shall be granted to applicants in the following manner:

1. Returning pupils (applicable in Year 2 and beyond, only)
2. The children of MESA staff with a limit of no more than 15% of the total number of students enrolled at the school.
3. The siblings of enrolled pupils (applicable in Year 2 and beyond, only), unless siblings are both applying in the same year. In this case, if one sibling is selected in the lottery, the other sibling will also automatically be accepted into MESA. If the last student selected in the lottery has a sibling that has not been selected, MESA will increase its enrollment by one student to allow for both siblings to attend.
4. Students who live within CSD 32
5. Students who live outside of CSD 32

*Lottery Process:* In the event that the number of student applicants to MESA exceeds capacity, a random selection lottery will be conducted by an entity unaffiliated with the school. This lottery will be held between April 2 and April 15, subject to circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the school, and all applications received on or before the deadline will be entered into the drawing. Letters announcing the date and location of the lottery will be mailed to all applicant families in both English and Spanish. The date of the lottery will also be listed on the student application.

After a name is drawn from the lottery it will be posted immediately to the school's lottery board, where seats will be reserved for families who qualify for the at risk preference. Following the lottery, letters will be mailed to inform parents/guardians of acceptance or of their number on the waiting list. MESA will also place phone calls to the parent/guardian of each accepted student, notifying them of their acceptance. Parent/guardians of accepted students will be asked to return a letter or postcard stating that they accept their placement. Parent/guardians may also accept their space at MESA by filling out the acceptance form on MESA's website. Acceptance letters must be postmarked no more than ten calendar days after the lottery, and online acceptances must be submitted within ten calendar days of the lottery. Students who fail to respond by this deadline will forfeit their spot at MESA.



A waiting list will be maintained of applications that were not selected from the lottery as well as applications submitted throughout the school year. The lottery waitlist will be subject to the same preferences as the lottery itself—for example, all applications from within CSD 32 will be ahead of all non-CSD 32 applications on the waitlist. However, applications submitted after the application

deadline will not be subject to any preferences. These applications will be placed on the waiting list by the date and time the application is received behind applications placed on the waitlist from the lottery.

When space becomes available at the school, applications will be pulled from the waiting list in order and calls made to parents offering admission. Based on the number of initial offers of admission that are accepted, MESA will make offers of admission on a rolling basis. MESA will track when offers of admission are sent out to students from the waitlist. Students accepted off the waitlist will have 24 hours to verbally respond to the offer of acceptance, and then five calendar days from the date the offer is sent out to confirm acceptance of their spot either online, in person, or by mail. Confirmations sent by mail must be postmarked within the aforementioned five-day period. Students who fail to respond by this deadline will forfeit their spot at MESA.

This waiting list will be the only official, legal document identifying the names of grade eligible students with applications to MESA pending acceptance for the subsequent school year, or when vacancies arise, based upon the order of random selection from the lottery following a recruitment period. The waiting list shall expire annually at the lottery drawing following the next year's enrollment period. However, MESA may send an application or other information directly to families who have previously applied.

**Enrollment:** All admitted students will receive a MESA enrollment packet within three weeks of the admission lottery. MESA will encourage parents/guardians and students to sit with a school staff member to review the required enrollment papers. Parents whose first language is not English may be provided with a translator upon request. MESA will expect all enrollment packets to be returned to the DOO within four weeks of notification of admission. Students who fail to return completed enrollment packets to the DOO within four weeks of admission will forfeit their place in the school and MESA will replace the seat in accordance with the appropriate wait-list procedures.

All students admitted or waitlisted as provided above will be required to submit completed enrollment forms and information by the date specified in the notice of admission or wait listing to convert admission to enrollment. An admitted student will be subject to the forfeiture of his/her right to enroll or remain on the waiting list if such submission is incomplete. A student who withdraws or is removed from admission or enrollment will not be entitled to reinstatement of a prior situation, but withdrawal or removal will not affect such student's right to re-apply for a later school year, subject to MESA's Admissions Policy and the procedures thereunder, or to be placed on the waitlist in the same manner as a late application. MESA may request that families confirm the enrollment of children enrolled in the school for the upcoming academic year from time to time (whether a new enrollment or the enrollment of a student promoted from an earlier grade at MESA) in order to promote and ensure contemplated enrollment in each grade at the school. The intentional provision of untruthful information at application, admission or enrollment will entitle MESA to permanently exclude the child from the school, even if the student was admitted, enrolled, or permitted to attend.

MESA's school year begins significantly earlier than that of the DOE. This is to allow new MESA students to acculturate to the school. If a student does not attend the first day of school, MESA will call the student's home. MESA will continue this practice for three days. If, after three days, MESA receives no response from the parent or guardian, the student will lose their spot at MESA and a formal letter will be sent to their home discharging them. If the parent or guardian does



respond, MESA will inform the parent or guardian that the student must be in attendance on the fourth day of school in order to retain the student's seat.

Notwithstanding the above, MESA understands that in some cases, parents, not knowing their child has been accepted to MESA, may have purchased tickets for vacations or made other plans

that cannot be altered. In this case, the parent/guardian and either the Principal or Executive Director may create, in writing, an individualized enrollment plan for the student, allowing him/her to attend MESA. In the event the student does not follow the plan, MESA reserves the right to revoke his or her offer of admission within five (5) business days of the violation of the plan. MESA may communicate this revocation through phone call, letter, email, and/or text message.

Once the school year has begun and MESA's enrollment is complete, MESA may send a letter to students on the waitlist notifying them of their waitlist status and asking them to confirm whether they want to remain on the waitlist. Students who either indicate that they do not wish to remain on the waitlist or do not respond within the given time period will be taken off the waitlist.

**Student transfer and/or withdrawal procedures:** MESA will be a public school of choice, both for application and withdrawal. At any time, a parent or guardian may wish to transfer their child to a different school. A parent or guardian wishing to withdraw his/her child from MESA will be asked to complete a request for student withdrawal form. MESA personnel will offer to meet with the family and discuss their reasons for withdrawing from MESA, as well as to seek solutions to any problems that arise from these discussions. Upon request from the new school, MESA will ensure the timely transfer of any necessary school records to the student's new school.

MESA will not impose any arbitrary requirements for application beyond completion of the one-page MESA application. Practices such as requiring parents or guardians to attend an open house, submit to an interview or tour of the school will not be a condition for accepting an application.