

BERKSHIRE ARTS & TECHNOLOGY CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Berkshire Arts & Technology Charter Public School (BArT) is a free public school serving students in grades 6-12. Our mission is to integrate the study of arts and technology with core subjects to promote mastery of academic skills and content, prepare students for college, and graduate independent thinkers, dynamic workers and active citizens. The school provides middle and high school students in Northern Berkshire County with an intellectual community that regards everyone, including teachers and parents, as perpetual learners.

Eligibility:

Demographics: Any student who is eligible to attend a Massachusetts district school at the time of application is eligible to enroll at BArT. BArT does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, ancestry, athletic performance, special needs, proficiency in the English language or another language, or prior academic achievement.

Geography: BArT is designed to serve students in Northern Berkshire County—Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, Hancock, Lanesborough, New Ashford, North Adams, Savoy, and Williamstown. If BArT does not fill its seats with students from Northern Berkshire County it may enroll students from other Massachusetts communities using a random lottery.

Attainment: Students must have completed the grade prior to the one in which they are to enroll. For example, a student who wishes to enroll in the 6th grade must have completed 5th grade by the time he or she enters BArT.

Enrollment:

All students entering BArT must complete an enrollment process. The enrollment process follows strict guidelines set by the Massachusetts State Legislature and includes the following steps:

1. BArT publicizes available openings at school (required)
2. Student / family attends information session (optional)
3. Student and parent complete application form (required)
4. Application form mailed, faxed or hand-delivered to BArT offices by application deadline (required)
5. If necessary, student / family attends admissions lottery (optional)
6. Student offered admission
7. Student / family accepts offer of admission (required)
8. Student and family complete enrollment forms (required)

1. BArT publicizes available openings at school

Each year BArT will publicize open enrollment periods during which families may submit enrollment forms. The school will use a variety of media to let families know about the enrollment process and deadlines, and make an effort to reach families who might most need an alternative public school. Publicity for the enrollment process will be made at least one month prior to the day enrollment forms are due. If a lottery is necessary, that fact will be publicized at least one week prior to the lottery date.

2. Student/ family attends information sessions

BArT holds information sessions periodically throughout the calendar year. These information sessions are advertised at least one week in advance through the town papers and on our website. Details about information sessions are also available at the school. Families can also set up an appointment with the Principal or Executive Director to learn more about the school.

3. Student and parent complete application form

Applications can be obtained by calling or visiting the BArT offices or by downloading one from BArT's website. Applications are also available at all information sessions. All applications need to be signed and dated by both the student and a parent/guardian.

4. Application form mailed, faxed or hand-delivered to BArT offices by application deadline

Applications need to be mailed, faxed or hand-delivered to BArT offices by the application deadline (listed below). No applications will be accepted via e-mail. A letter of receipt will be mailed to the family of each student who turns in an application form. Applications received after each deadline will be included in the following application period.

If the number of enrollment forms received is less than the number of students allowed by the charter, the deadline may be extended to allow more families time to enroll their child.

All applications submitted for future academic years will be considered for admission in the winter application prior to that academic year.

5. Student / family attends admissions lottery

BArT is non-selective, and does not require students to have a certain grade point average or ask students to pass any kind of entrance exam or audition. If the number of enrollment forms submitted by the deadline is equal to or less than the number of students we are chartered to serve, all of those students will be enrolled for the following school year. If the number of enrollment forms submitted is greater than the number of students BArT is chartered to serve, a random lottery will be held within one week of the deadline to determine which students will be enrolled and which will be placed on the waiting list.

In the event a lottery is required, a neutral party will draw names. Every name will be drawn and placed on either the enrollment list or the waiting list.

Sending District Tuition Cap: For each district there is an enrollment cap determined by the state in accordance with state law that limits the percentage of net school spending from each district that may be transferred to a charter school. The Massachusetts Department of Education provides this data to charter schools by February 15. As each name is drawn the student's residence will be identified in order to determine if that student is eligible for enrollment under the cap. If that particular town has reached its enrollment cap, that student will be placed on the waiting list. This may result in some subsequently drawn students from other towns being enrolled after some students are placed on the waiting list.

The only exception to this rule is if a sibling of a student who is already attending BArT is drawn in the lottery and is above his or her district cap, that student may still be enrolled and his or her tuition will be paid by the State of Massachusetts rather than his or her sending district.

Regional Priority: Students who reside within the region specified in the BArT charter application (Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, Hancock, Lanesborough, New Ashford, North Adams, Savoy, and Williamstown) have enrollment preference. If the number of enrollment forms submitted from within the region is equal to or less than the number of students we are chartered to serve, all of those students will be enrolled for the following school year. Students eligible to enroll in Massachusetts districts outside the designated region may then be enrolled. If the number of students outside the region is equal to or less than the difference between the students enrolled from the within the region and the number BArT is charter to serve, all of those students may be enrolled. If the number of students outside the region is greater than the difference between the students enrolled from the within the region and the number BArT is charter to serve, a random lottery must be used to determine which of those students will be enrolled and which will be placed on the waiting list.

6. Student offered admission to BArT

Families will be notified by mail within one week of the enrollment deadline or the lottery date, whichever is later, regarding the status of the student.

If a student was placed on a waitlist at a lottery, and subsequently a space becomes available, students will be drawn from the waiting list in the order they were placed on it. (With two notable exceptions listed below, under “Waitlist Procedures.”)

7. Student / family accepts offer of admission

In order to accept their offer of admission, students must sign a contract of shared responsibilities, complete a student information survey and provide proof of residency. These three documents will be available at the time of the lottery, and will be mailed home with each offer of admission.

Any student or family who fails to return these three documents within 2 weeks of receipt may lose their offer of admission.

8. Student and family complete enrollment forms

Once a student has accepted their offer of admission, BArT will send additional forms to be completed prior to entering BArT. These forms will have specified deadlines for completion. Failure to complete these forms in the time permitted may result in a student losing their offer of admission.

Throughout the enrollment process it is the responsibility of the student and the student’s family to ensure that BArT has up to date contact information on file for the student and the student’s family. BArT employees will make all reasonable attempts to contact families with the contact information provided. However, if BArT employees cannot contact the families of enrolled students or students on the waitlist within a reasonable time period, BArT reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of that student and offer admission to the next student on the waitlist.

If a student is chosen in the lottery and completes all necessary enrollment forms but fails to meet eligibility criteria (such as completion of prior grade), that student will be removed from the student roster of BArT and the next student on the waiting list will be offered admission.

Waitlist Procedures

A waitlist is generated at the time of the lottery. Students are placed on the waitlist in the order in which their name was drawn. In general, if a student previously admitted through the enrollment process outlined above chooses not to attend BArT, the next student on the waitlist will be offered admission. There are two notable exceptions:

Sending District Tuition Cap

Students who reside in districts that have reached their tuition cap (9% of their budget) will not be admitted to BArT. In the event that a student whose district has reached their tuition cap is the next student to be drawn from the waiting list, BArT will skip over that student and offer admission to the next student on the waiting list. The student who was skipped will maintain their position on the waitlist, in the event that they become eligible for the next open seat at the school.

The exception to this rule is that if a sibling of a student who is already attending BArT is enrolled from the waiting list and is above his or her district cap, that student will be offered admission to BArT and the tuition of that student will be paid by the state rather than the sending district.

Siblings

Siblings of students already attending BArT who are on the waiting list will move to the top of the waiting list in the order they were placed on the waiting list.

Waiting lists will roll over to subsequent years. This means if a space becomes available in 7th grade, a student who was first on the waiting list from the previous year's 6th grade may enroll in the 7th grade.

Declining Admission

Students who, after receiving an offer of admission to BArT, decide to decline their offer must notify BArT in writing of their decision.

It is the policy of BArT to contact each family who has declined admission to learn their reasoning.