

BERKSHIRE ARTS & TECHNOLOGY CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL
ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
Updated by Board of Trustees on June 14, 2017

The Berkshire Arts & Technology Charter Public School (BART) is a free public school serving students in grades 6-12. Our mission is to prepare students for college by promoting mastery of academic skills and content with a strong foundation in arts and technology. The school provides middle and high school students in Berkshire County with an educational community that regards everyone, including teachers and parents, as lifelong 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, gender identity, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign 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 – and Pittsfield. If BART does not fill its seats with students from Northern Berkshire County and Pittsfield, it may enroll students from other Massachusetts communities using a random lottery. Applicants must be a resident of Massachusetts at the time of application.

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 grade 6 must have completed grade 5 by the time he or she enters BART. The school does not administer tests to potential applicants nor does the school base enrollment decisions on the results from any test or prior achievement.

Grade Level: BART enrolls new students into grades 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. While BART offers grades 11 through 12, only students continuously enrolled at BART since grade 10 are eligible to enter those grades. Students who have passed a grade at another school but whose parents would like them to repeat the grade may only repeat that grade upon entering BART if they are accepted into and enrolled at BART before starting the next grade at their other school.

Timing: The school will not set any principal application deadlines or hold any enrollment lotteries for student admission for the upcoming school year until after January 1, and shall conclude its principal enrollment process no later than March 15 of each year. BART enrolls new students using the same enrollment process throughout the school year up and until February 15, should a space be available or become available in grades 6 through 9. BART enrolls new students using the same enrollment process until September 30, should a space be available or become available in grade 10.

Enrollment:

All students entering BART must complete an enrollment process. (Students already enrolled at BART are automatically enrolled for the subsequent year.) The enrollment process follows strict guidelines set by the Massachusetts State Legislature and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and includes the following steps:

1. BART determines number of vacant seats in each grade (required)
2. BART publicizes available openings at school (required)
3. Student/family attends information session (optional)
4. Student and parent complete application form (required)
5. Application form mailed, e-mailed, faxed or hand-delivered to BART offices by application deadline (required)
6. If necessary, student/family attends admissions lottery (optional)
7. Student offered admission or placed on waitlist (required)
8. Student/family accepts offer of admission (required)
9. Student and family complete additional registration forms (required for attendance)

BART's enrollment process is independent of any enrollment processes conducted by the local sending districts. The school does not use financial incentives to recruit students.

1. BART determines number of vacant seats in each grade (required)

Each February, BART will determine the number of seats available in each of grades 6 through 10 for the following September. A vacancy not filled after February 15 in grades 6 through 9 (September 30 for grade 10) moves into the subsequent grade, to be filled the following September if such grade is not grades 11 or 12. Seats for students who have accepted an offer of admission in the charter school but have never attended are exempt from this provision.

Throughout the school year, the minimum number of seats in each grade level will be determined by the number of students present in that grade on the first day of school. If a student stops attending BART for any reason in grades 6 through 9, the school will attempt to fill that vacant seat up until February 15, and up until September 30 for grade 10.

The total number of students attending BART in a given school year cannot exceed the total number of students in the school's pre-enrollment report submitted to the Department in the previous spring in accordance with 603 CMR 1.08(5) and the total number of students specified in the growth plan in the school's charter.

2. BART publicizes available openings at school (required)

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 a different public school option. Publicity for the principal enrollment process will be made at least one month prior to the day enrollment forms are due. If a lottery is to be held, that fact will be publicized at least one week prior to the lottery date.

BART maintains and implements a student recruitment and retention plan as outlined in M.G.L., Section 89(m) and 603 CMR 1.05(1).

3. Student/family attends information sessions (optional)

BART holds information sessions periodically throughout the calendar year. These information sessions are advertised at least one week in advance through, at a minimum, press releases and on our website. Details about information sessions are also available at the school. Families can also set up an appointment with the Enrollment Counselor to learn more about the school and take a tour.

Attendance at an informational meeting is encouraged, but not required, as a condition of enrollment.

Additional information is always available to students and families on the school's website. Information shared on the school's website includes the services available to students who may have disabilities, require special education or are English language learners.

4. Student/family completes application (required)

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 a parent/guardian, but do not require dual parent/guardian signatures.

All applicants will be notified in writing that students with diverse learning needs have the right to attend the charter school and to receive accommodations and support services, including students who may have disabilities, require special education, or are English language learners. Information requested on the application form, including race, language spoken at home, special education status and income level, is not intended and will not be used to discriminate in the enrollment process.

Two items that prove Massachusetts residency must be included with the application. Documents that prove residency include a lease, mortgage statements, utility bills, driver's license, state ID card or other document that identifies the home address of the family. Homeless students are not required to provide proof of residency.

The application does not require submission of the student's social security number.

5. Application form mailed, e-mailed, faxed or hand-delivered to BART offices by application deadline (required)

Applications need to be mailed, e-mailed, faxed or hand-delivered to BART offices by the application deadline listed on the application form. There are multiple application periods prior to each school year; applications received after each deadline will be included in the following application period. Once the school year begins, the application deadlines for the current school year will occur every Friday at 12 noon, with a lottery to follow at 2pm if more students apply than space available. These deadlines will be publicized in accordance with section 2 above and posted on the school's website on the "Enrollment" page.

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

6. Student/family attends admissions lottery (optional)

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 seats available in each grade level, all of those students will be enrolled and the school will repeat the enrollment process providing such process is fair and open and that the school gives reasonable public notice at least one month prior to the application deadline. If the number of enrollment forms submitted is greater than the number of seats available in each grade level, a random lottery will be conducted in public at the school (for the subsequent school year) or at the Adams Town Hall (for the current school year) to determine which students will be enrolled and which will be placed on the waiting list. Families of applicants are encouraged but not required to attend the admissions lottery.

In the event a lottery is required, a neutral party will draw names from a hat. Families who wish to keep their children's names private in the lottery should indicate this on the enrollment application. Every name will be drawn and placed on either the enrollment list or the waiting list according to enrollment preference/priority.

Sibling Preference: Siblings of students who are already in attendance at BART in the year of application are given preference for admission over non-siblings. This applies to students both within and outside of the school's chartered region. However, siblings must also be residents of Massachusetts. Siblings are defined as students who have a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption.

Regional Priority: Students who reside within the region specified in the school's charter (Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Florida, Hancock, Lanesborough, North Adams, Pittsfield, Savoy, and Williamstown) have enrollment preference over students who reside in other Massachusetts towns or cities. BART provides transportation to all students who reside within the school's chartered region.

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, subject to appropriation.

If the principal enrollment process fails to produce an adequate number of enrolled students, enrollment and lottery process may be repeated, following the same public notification and deadline requirements.

7. Student offered admission or placed on waitlist (required)

Families will be notified by mail within one week of the lottery 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.") Students will be notified by both phone and mail if they have been admitted from the waiting list.

8. Student/family accepts offer of admission (required)

In order to accept their offer of admission, a parent must respond to the school within 2 weeks of notification of acceptance. Any student or family who fails to respond within 2 weeks may lose his/her offer of admission.

9. Student and family complete additional registration forms (required for attendance)

Once a student has accepted his/her offer of admission, BART will provide additional forms to be completed prior to entering BART, including request for documentation of current proof of MA residency and, if appropriate, sibling status. These forms will have specified deadlines for completion. Students will not be allowed to attend BART until these forms are completed.

Throughout the enrollment and registration 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 have tried all reasonable methods to communicate with a family to no avail, or if BART receives incontrovertible evidence that the enrolled child will not attend BART, 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 registration forms but fails to meet eligibility criteria (completion of prior grade or demonstration of Massachusetts residency), 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

All students not accepted in the enrollment lottery are placed on a waiting list in the order the names were selected while also taking into account sibling and resident preference, and sending district tuition cap limits as described above.

If a student previously admitted through the enrollment process declines enrollment or stops attending BART, the next available student on the waitlist for that grade will be offered admission until the vacant seat is filled. The school will take into account current sibling and resident preferences.

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).

The school will keep a record of students on the waiting list, including the students' names (first, middle, last), dates of birth, cities or towns of residence, telephone numbers, e-mail and grade levels of students who entered the lottery but did not gain admission. It is the responsibility of the family to update the school should contact information change while a student remains on the waiting list.

When a vacancy opens and a student is invited to enroll at BART from the waiting list, the school will call and/or e-mail the family to issue the invitation. If the school is unable to contact the family through these methods, the school will send a letter via USPS and with a delivery confirmation, notifying the family of an opening and setting a deadline of 1 week to accept or decline admission.

The school shall maintain waitlists only for the school year for which the students applied. Should a student not be accepted into BART for the school year, that student will need to reapply for the subsequent school year if s/he remains interested in attending BART.

Waiting lists will roll over to subsequent years. For example, if a space becomes available in grade 7, a student who was first on the waiting list for the previous year's grade 6 will be offered admission first.

Declining Admission

Students who, after receiving an offer of admission to BART, decide to decline their offer should notify BART as soon as possible of their decision, ideally in writing. If, after declining admission, a student desires to attend BART, that student will need to reapply for admission.

Withdrawn Students

Students who withdraw from the school, but subsequently desire to attend BART, must reapply for admission.

Disclosure of Student Information

BART will not release any information about a student to a third party without prior notice given to the eligible student or parent, including sufficient time for a parent to “opt out” of sharing their information. This “opt out” notice is provided with the student application and each subsequent fall. After notice is given to parents, directory information may be shared with third parties and may include: a student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, and post-high school plans.

Personally identifiable information from a student record shall only be released to a third party on the condition that s/he will not permit any other third party to have access to such information without the written consent of the eligible student or parent.

BART will release information to the following third parties or third party mailhouses for mailings, upon request, unless the eligible student or parent requests that the school withhold his/her child's information:

- BART Community and Family Advisory Council (CFAC)
- Contractors working for BART (e.g., Dufour Bus)
- Sending district schools (e.g., North Adams Public Schools for residents of North Adams)
- BART school volunteers
- School fundraising programs
- Massachusetts Charter Public School Association

To learn more about laws pertaining to student records, visit www.doe.mass.edu or you can obtain a copy of the “Education Laws and Regulations for Student Records” in our main office.