

STUDENT ADMISSIONS TO LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL

The Taskforce on Admissions to Lowell High School and School of the Arts recommends adoption of a new student admissions methodology that will offer three pathways of “bands” – detailed below – through which students may receive an offer of admission to Lowell. The proposal is based on the recognition that students with initiative and promise who can be successful at Lowell may complete their middle school education with differing histories of academic, extracurricular, community, and personal involvement, and with differing arrays of strengths and interests. The Taskforce believes that the multiple admissions pathways described below will ensure that SFUSD identifies students who have demonstrated a pattern of achievement and who will benefit from the unique and challenging program at Lowell, while providing welcoming, equal access to all students with the potential for success at Lowell.

The Taskforce recommends that SFUSD establish an ongoing “Lowell Recruitment Committee” that will undertake vigorous and extended recruitment activities so that students throughout San Francisco will be made aware of the challenging educational opportunity presented by Lowell and feel encouraged to apply. The Lowell Recruitment Committee should include broad representation from Lowell, the District’s Educational Placement Center, the District’s Instructional Support and Operations division, the Office of Parent Relations, and the Office of Public Engagement. The Taskforce also recommends that the newly formed Lowell Recruitment Committee widely disseminate information to fifth through eighth graders throughout San Francisco regarding Lowell’s programs and admissions standards, so that students in the middle school years will be aware of the required courses, academic performance, and other criteria for admissions.

The Taskforce recommends that two prerequisites for applying to Lowell remain in place – that students must be in the eighth grade and reside in San Francisco. Verification of residency will be required. As an administrative matter, SFUSD will identify the number of Lowell admission offers that will be made in a particular year to incoming ninth grade students (more offers are extended than anticipated enrollment to allow for students who elect to enroll elsewhere).

The Taskforce recommends that a “personal statement” be added to the Lowell application, which all students would be required to complete at the middle school in order to have their application considered. This personal statement will be used to expand the scope of information available to the school-based committee and school principal in making determinations under Bands Two and Three and will not be given point value as a writing sample.

An important part of the Taskforce recommendations is that – while the three “bands” of admissions offers to Lowell will entail somewhat different criteria and decision makers (and an individual student could be identified for an offer through multiple bands) – all admissions offers will be simultaneously issued by the SFUSD Educational Placement Center using identical language. No differentiation will be made at Lowell among students’ admissions methodology.

The District’s Lowell Admissions Committee will be selected by the Superintendent to provide diverse representation from central office, Lowell, and middle schools. The Lowell admissions committee, working with the Educational Placement Center, will identify students who are to receive admission offers in Band One (70% of seats) and review nominations made by middle school committees and principals in Bands Two and Three (each 15% of seats).

All qualifying students will be offered an assignment to Lowell High School taking into consideration the capacity of the school and the acceptance and attrition rate. There is no waiting pool as the admission process is completed during the Round 1 assignment process.

It is the recommendation of the Taskforce that all individuals from SFUSD and private schools involved in the Lowell selection process be required to comply with relevant SFUSD *Conflict of Interest* policies, including signing a *Conflict of Interest* statement.

The Taskforce recommends the admission offers to Lowell be extended based upon the following three “bands.”

Band One – Academic Criteria

Admission offers yielding to 70% of available seats will be extended based on applicants descending scores on the following scale. The District’s Lowell Admissions Committee will identify which student applicants should receive seats under Band One and provide that list to the SFUSD Educational Placement Center. The Educational Placement Center will combine admission offer lists from all three bands and simultaneously send out all Lowell offer letters.

A. Grade Point Average

Each student applicant will receive points based upon their GPA in four different subjects – English, math, social studies and science (with foreign language substituted if no science GPA is available) – in each of three semesters.

The proposed points are as follows:

- For the first semester of seventh grade, a maximum of 4 points per each of four subjects = 16 points maximum (To be implemented beginning F’03)
- For the second semester of seventh grade, a maximum of 4 points per each of four subjects = 16 points maximum
- For the first semester of eighth grade, a maximum of 8 points per each of four subjects = 32 points maximum

**GPA Points:
64 pts max**

B. CST(STAR) results

Each student applicant will receive points based upon their CST(STAR) scores in English language arts and math, with a maximum of 12.5 points for each subject (e.g. maximum of 12.5 points for CST English Language Arts score in the 97th-99th percentile)

**25 pts max
Total Maximum Points
89 pts**

Band Two – School-Based Committee Criteria

Admission offers yielding to 15% of available seats will be extended based on the following procedures:

- The principal of each participating school will establish a School-Based Committee on Lowell Admissions composed of administrators, teachers, and counselors.
- Upon receipt from the District's Educational Placement Center of the names of Lowell applicants from that school, the School-Based Committee on Lowell Admissions will forward all their nominations of students to EPC, according to the following criteria, to be considered under Band Two:

A. Grade Point Average

As under Band One

64 pts max (after F'03)

B. Committee Assessment

Using the District's Standardized Scoring Sheet for Band Two, the School-Based Committee on Lowell Admissions will award up to 45 points and provide justification based on the criteria below. Based on these criteria, the School-Based Committee will nominate to the District's Lowell Admissions Committee students to be considered under Band Two.

- Test scores (not a point value)
 - Extenuating circumstances
 - Socioeconomic status
 - School leadership/service
 - Demonstrated ability to overcome hardship
 - Extracurricular activities (school based)
 - Community service
 - ~~Drive and ambition~~
 - Creative abilities in performing and visual arts
 - Athletics (school based)
 - Participation in peer support/mentoring activities
 - Technological skills
- After reviewing the nominations, the District's Lowell Admissions Committee will select the students to be admitted under Band Two.
 - The deliberations of the Band Two committee are confidential and final and cannot be appealed.

Band Three – Criteria for Principals of Underrepresented Schools

Admission offers yielding to 15% of available seats will be extended based on the following procedures:

- Using the SFUSD developed formula for Band Three, a specific number of Lowell admission seats will be allocated to public and private schools that were underrepresented in the students admitted to Lowell the preceding year(s) and that have eighth grade students residing within San Francisco.

- Upon receipt from the District's Educational Placement Center of the names of Lowell applicants from that school, the principal will rank all student applicants from that school based on the personal statement and the criteria below. Principals will use the District's Standardized Scoring Sheet for Bands Two and Three when making these rankings.
 - GPA and test scores (not a point value)
 - Extenuating circumstances
 - Socioeconomic status
 - School leadership/service
 - Demonstrated ability to overcome hardship
 - Extracurricular activities (school based)
 - Community service
 - ~~Drive and ambition~~
 - Creative abilities in performing and visual arts
 - Athletics (school based)
 - Participation in peer support/mentoring activities
 - Technological skills

- The principal will send the SFUSD Educational Placement Center his or her ranked list of all Lowell applicants from that school, together with the District's standardized scoring sheets for Band Three for each applicant. The SFUSD Educational Placement Center will combine the principals' list with offers from the other bands and simultaneously send out all Lowell offer letters.

- Principals will only recommend students who will succeed academically at Lowell. The District's Lowell Admissions Committee will reserve the right to challenge the principal's recommendation