

Lowell High School Admissions Policy

This Board Policy applies to the San Francisco Unified School District and the County Office of Education.

History

In 2001 a Taskforce on Admissions to Lowell High School and School of the Arts developed the Lowell High School new student admissions methodology, offering three pathways of "bands" through which students may receive an offer of admission to Lowell.

The admissions methodology was 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 believed 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.

Lowell Recruitment

The District and Lowell High School 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 District and Lowell High School will 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 District and Lowell High School will recruit through groups and committees that serve our underrepresented students with the goal of increasing Lowell's African American, Latin(x) and Pacific Islander students.

Prerequisites for Application to Lowell

1. Students must be in the eighth grade;
2. Student must reside in San Francisco.

Verification of residency will be required and staff 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).

Personal Statement

All students are required to complete a "personal statement" 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.

District Lowell Admissions Committee

The District Lowell Admissions Committee will be selected by the Superintendent or designated representative to provide diverse representation from the Central Office, Lowell, and middle schools. The District Lowell Admissions Committee, working with the Educational Placement Center, will identify students who are to receive admission offers in Band One (approximately 70% of seats) and review nominations made by middle school committees and principals in Bands Two and Three (approximately 15% of seats per Band). All individuals from SFUSD and private schools involved in the Lowell selection process are required to comply with relevant SFUSD Conflict of Interest policies, including signing a Conflict of Interest statement.

Offers of Admission

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 Educational Placement Center using identical language. No differentiation will be made at Lowell among students' admissions methodology.

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.

Admission offers to Lowell be extended based upon the following three "bands."

Band One –Academic Criteria - Maximum 89 points

Admission offers yielding approximately 70% of available seats will be extended based on applicants descending scores on the following scale. The District Lowell Admissions Committee will identify the final Band One cut off score, yielding the list of Band One eligible students.

A. Grade Point Average - 64 points maximum

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 points are as follows:

- For the first semester of seventh grade, a maximum of 4 points per each of four subjects = 16 points maximum
- 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

B. California State Standardized Test OR the Lowell Admissions Test - 25 points maximum

Students who have taken the CA State standardized test in Spring of their 7 grade year will use those scores for Lowell Admissions. Students who have not taken the CA State standardized test in the Spring of their 7th grade year will take the Lowell Admissions Test and use those scores for Lowell Admissions.

Each student applicant will receive points based upon their CA State standardized test) 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 an English Language Arts score in the 97-99 percentile)

Band Two – School-Based Committee Criteria - Maximum 109 points

Admission offers yielding approximately 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.
- The Educational Placement Center will identify applicants meeting minimum criteria (grade point average and Lowell Admission Test) for consideration under Band Two and send the list to school principal.
- The School-Based Committee on Lowell Admissions will score the students according to the following Band Two criteria and provide those scores to the Educational Placement Center for review by the District Lowell Admissions Committee.

A. Grade Point Average - 64 points maximum

See the Band One GPA point allocation.

B. Committee Assessment - 45 points maximum

The School-Based Committee on Lowell Admissions will award up to 45 points and provide justification for the nomination of students to the District Lowell Admissions Committee based on the criteria below:

- Extenuating circumstances
- Socioeconomic status (self-disclosed)
- School leadership/service
- Demonstrated ability to overcome hardship

- Extracurricular activities
- Community Service
- Creative abilities in performing and visual arts
- Athletics
- Participation in peer support/mentoring activities

The District Lowell Admissions Committee will identify the Band Two cut off score. The grade point average points and the School-Based Committee Assessment points will be totaled and Band Two eligible applicants will be offered available seats based on descending scores. The deliberations of the School-Based and District Lowell Admissions Committee are confidential and final and cannot be appealed.

Band Three – Criteria for Principals of Underrepresented Schools

Underrepresented schools are identified each year by analyzing data including the number of 8 grade students enrolled in each school, the number of 8 grade students living in San Francisco, and the number of applicants and assignments to Lowell over a three-year period.

Underrepresented public and private schools are allocated a number of Lowell admissions seats proportionate to their percentage of the 8th grade population. All students with a minimum of 64 points as calculated under Band One can be recommended by their principal for admission to Lowell under Band Three.

All students from Willie Brown Middle School having a minimum of 64 points will qualify for admission to Lowell under Band Three regardless of under or over representation in Lowell.

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

- The Educational Placement Center will identify applicants meeting the 64 points minimum criteria (grade point average and Lowell Admission Test) and send the list to school principals.
- Principals will rank all student applicants based on the student’s personal statement and the Band Two criteria described above, and they will provide a brief written statement for each student to highlight why they believe the student will thrive at Lowell.
- The District Lowell Admissions Committee will review all Band 3 recommendations and reserves the right to disagree with recommendations. The District Lowell Admissions Committee deliberations are confidential and final and cannot be appealed.

The Educational Placement Center will combine admission offer lists from all three bands and simultaneously send out all Lowell offer letters.

Cross References

Second Reading: October 9, 2018

Rules Committee: September 6, 2018

First Reading: August 28, 2018

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First Adopted: 1966