

School for Advanced Studies - Northwest Arkansas 2024-2025 Enrollment Policy

Arkansas Schools for Advanced Studies, Inc. operates an open-enrollment public charter school that does not charge tuition and does not administer entrance examinations. Any student who resides within the geographic boundaries of the state of Arkansas is eligible to apply and enroll if there is space available, provided the student is eligible to attend an Arkansas public school in the grades offered by Arkansas Schools for Advanced Studies, Inc. ("the School"). For the 2024-2025 School Year, the Arkansas Schools for Advanced Studies, Inc. will serve students in grades 5-10. Enrollment is based on a fair and equitable system that provides for:

- 1) an Open Enrollment period;
- 2) a lottery, if necessary; and
- 3) a waitlist.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

1. Who Should Apply

- a. Students seeking to enroll in the School for the first time.
- b. Waitlisted applicants who were not offered admission during the initial application year. Waitlisted applications do not roll over to the next year.
- c. Students eligible for enrollment in Arkansas public schools for grades 5-10.

2. When to Apply

The Open Enrollment period is the period prior to the start of each school year, when a parent/guardian can complete an application for each child to the School. Open Enrollment dates for the upcoming school year will be posted on the enrollment page of the School's website.

Applications received after the Open Enrollment period has ended will not be eligible for inclusion in the Open Enrollment lottery. Instead, these applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis, behind applications received during the Open Enrollment period that have been placed on a waitlist.

3. How to Apply

During the Open Enrollment period, a parent/guardian completes an application for each student for the School. Parent/Guardian(s) are required to submit the applications through the online application portal.

However, if a parent needs assistance, our enrollment department can submit their application from the administrative side--upon parent request. Applications submitted through the online application portal will be signed electronically to be entered in the lottery or considered for an offer of enrollment.

Applicants who receive an offer of enrollment will be given instructions on how to accept the offered seat and complete the online registration packet.

4. Grade Level Enrollment

Once the School has accepted a student, the School will enroll the student in the appropriate grade level based on level of preparation and content knowledge. Students coming to the School from a School that is accredited by the Arkansas Department of Education shall be placed in the same grade the student would have been in had the student remained at the former school. Students transferring into the district from an unaccredited school or from home-school shall be evaluated by the staff of the school to determine that student's proper placement.

As a public charter school, the School enrolls students in accordance with state and federal law; we do not restrict admission on the basis of academic achievement or any protected class.

ENROLLMENT AND LOTTERY PROCEDURES

1. Procedures When Applications Do Not Exceed Capacity

At the close of the Open Enrollment period, the total number of students with completed applications is determined for each grade at each school. If the total number of applicants is less than or equal to the total capacity designated for a particular grade level at a particular school, all applicants for that grade level at that school will be offered enrollment on a first-come, first-served basis.

2. Procedures When Applications Exceed Capacity

If, for any grade level, the number of applicants exceeds the number of openings, there will be a lottery to determine enrollment and waitlist numbers.

3. Open Enrollment Lottery

If an Open Enrollment lottery is required, only the applications submitted during the Open Enrollment period will be included in the lottery. Any application received after the Open Enrollment period has ended will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis, behind any students placed on the waitlist.

The lottery is an electronic system that randomly identifies students for enrollment. All applicants who apply during Open Enrollment, will participate in the lottery.

4. Lottery Preferences

In accordance with the enrollment preferences outlined in Ark. Code Ann. § 6-23-306(14)(C), the School will give preference to the following applicants from the lottery process if a class or grade is oversubscribed:

- a. Children of the School's founders, full-time teachers and staff of the School, so long as the total number of students allowed under this preference constitute only a small percentage of the School's total enrollment—up to 10%. **Children of founders and staff are exempt from the lottery, per federal guidance as outlined in the Charter School Program.**
- b. Siblings of students already enrolled at the district campus for which enrollment is sought, who apply by the published open-enrollment application deadline.
 - A sibling is defined as an individual having one or both parents in common or a stepsister or stepbrother that resides under the same roof as the applicant, a legally

adopted brother or sister residing in the same household as the applicant, or a child residing in the same household through foster placement or legal guardianship.

- Cousins, nieces, nephews, and unrelated children sharing an address with the applicant are not considered siblings. Documentation may be requested to confirm sibling status. To be considered for enrollment in the lottery, siblings of applying students must submit a completed application before the closing of the Open-Enrollment period.

Sibling Preference Guidelines

All current students who timely elect to re-enroll at the same school campus for the subsequent school year are deemed as “enrolled” for purposes of the lottery process. If an enrolled student withdraws from the School before a sibling of the student is offered enrollment, the sibling will not be eligible for lottery preference. If one sibling of a student in attendance is randomly selected by lottery for enrollment, any other siblings of the enrolled student will be given preference in the lottery process. Sibling enrollment is not guaranteed, however, and is dependent on the available space in the requested grade or class. If there is no available slot, a sibling will be placed at the top of the waiting list of the requested grade or class.

ACCEPTING/DECLINING OFFERED ENROLLMENT

1. How to Accept an Offer of Enrollment

When an applicant is offered enrollment, the parent/guardian will receive instructions on how to accept the enrollment offer and complete the student registration online. Please note, more documentation may be required to be submitted in person and at the School if needed. The parent/guardian will be asked to log in to their online enrollment account to:

- a. Accept/Decline the offer of enrollment.
- b. Answer all registration questions and submit the registration online. Once an applicant has accepted an offer of enrollment and submitted their registration packet online, the seat is then secured. The School will provide specific drop-off dates and times for any additional post-registration requirements needed for your student.

Parental Rights and Educational Decision-Making

The School will comply with all applicable court orders. If a court order gives one parent sole authority to make educational decisions, that parent’s decision will control. For parents who share educational decision-making authority, The School may rely and act upon the decision of either parent. If parents with joint educational decision-making authority disagree about an educational decision for their child, including a decision about enrollment, The School will maintain the status quo and require the mutual agreement of the parents or an updated court order from the family court system before acting.

2. Registration Packet

The registration packet consists of; but are not limited to, the Student Registration Form, Student Record Transmittal Request, Emergency Contact and Medical Information form, Media Release form, and copies of the student’s proof of identification and age and immunization records. Parents will also be asked to provide proof of residency and any applicable custody information, medical alerts, and legal alerts. All forms must be filled out in full, signed, and submitted on your online

enrollment dashboard to the School.

3. Date Registration Complete

The registration completion date is the date the parent/guardian completes the online registration packet.

4. First day Attendance

Students are expected to attend school on the first day. Failure to do so without proper notification, and in accordance with the School's applicable attendance policies and procedures, may result in disenrollment. Any student who fails to attend school by the tenth regular school day of the semester shall be retroactively dropped from the attendance records from the first day of the School semester.

WAITLIST PROCEDURES

Applicants who are not randomly selected for enrollment in the lottery process will be placed on a grade-specific waitlist, based on lottery results.

Students who submit completed applications after the Open Enrollment period has ended will be offered enrollment if there is space available in the grade level of interest. If space is not available, the student will be placed on the waitlist, behind those students added to the waitlist through the lottery process, based on the date the application is submitted.

Each time an opening becomes available in a particular grade, the School will contact the parent of the next student on the waitlist for that grade and offer the open spot for that child. If the parent declines the spot, it will then be offered to the next student in line on the waitlist for that grade, and so on, until the enrollment cap for the School is met. The School will enroll students after July 31 of the summer preceding the academic year for which enrollment is sought; however, offers of enrollment will not continue past such point that the Head of School determines that enrollment would hinder a student's ability to engage with the curriculum.

Parents with children on the waitlist are encouraged to advise the School of any change in their contact information, so that they may be reached if an opening develops for which their child is eligible. Parents are also asked to notify the School if they no longer wish to have their child included on the waitlist, so that the waitlist can be updated accordingly.

Our waitlists do not roll over from year to year; parents with students on a waitlist for the current school year must complete the application process for the next school year, in order to be eligible for enrollment for that school year.

It is not possible to determine an applicant's chances of being offered a spot if they are on a waitlist. Once classes are full, any spots that open up are the result of student withdrawals. Although a number of seats open up before the start of school, there is no way to determine the likelihood of seats opening in a given grade.

MILITARY STUDENTS

The School will take steps to facilitate the timely enrollment of children of military families and to ensure they are not placed at a disadvantage due to difficulty in the transfer of education records from previous schools or variations in entrance or age requirements.

“Military Students” means students who reside in the household of a person who is on active duty in or serving in the reserve component of a branch of the United States armed forces. It also refers to the children of members or veterans of the uniformed services who are severely injured and medically discharged or retired or for one year after medical discharge or retirement and members who die on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty for a period of one year after death.

A student whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted additional excused absences at the discretion of the Superintendent to visit with his/her parent or legal guardian relative to such leave or deployment of the parent/guardian.

The School shall accept official or unofficial education records from military students. Upon receipt of unofficial education records, the School shall enroll and appropriately place the student based on the information provided in the unofficial records pending validation by the official records as quickly as possible. Such placement shall include special education placement, if indicated, as well as any other placement continuing the student’s academic program from the previous school. The School may perform subsequent evaluations to ensure appropriate placement and continued enrollment of the student in the courses and may exercise flexibility in waiving course prerequisites or conditions for placement in courses offered under the School’s jurisdiction.

- To facilitate the on-time graduation of a student of a military family during his/her senior year, the School shall:
- Waive specific courses required for graduation if similar course work has been satisfactorily completed at a sending school or shall provide reasonable justification for denial;
- Should a waiver not be granted to a student who would qualify to graduate from the sending school, the School shall provide an alternative means of acquiring required coursework so that graduation may occur on time; and
- Accept exit exams or end-of-course exams required for graduation from the sending state, or national norm-referenced achievement tests or alternative testing in lieu of testing requirements for graduation in the receiving school.

Military Student: Transfers During Senior Year

Should a military student transferring at the beginning or during his or her Senior year be ineligible to graduate from the School after all alternatives have been considered, the sending and receiving schools shall ensure the receipt of a diploma from the sending school if the student meets the graduation requirements of the sending school. The School shall use best efforts to facilitate the on-time graduation of the student.

EXCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISCIPLINE HISTORIES

Subject to and in accordance with Title 6 of the Arkansas Code, students with a documented history of a criminal offense, a juvenile court adjudication, or other discipline problem under will not be eligible to enroll in the School until such time as the student's expulsion in the previous district has expired.¹

Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-510, a parent may appeal this determination to the Board of Trustees if there are extenuating circumstances concerning an applicant's prior criminal or disciplinary history in accordance with the grievance policy adopted by the Board of Trustees.

A student who has been expelled from another school district or charter school will not be eligible for admission. Prior to the student's admission to the School, the parent, guardian, or other responsible person shall indicate on School registration forms whether the child has been expelled from school in any other school district or is a party to an expulsion proceeding.

MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT AND STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures that students experiencing homelessness have access to the same educational opportunities provided to other children and youths. The term "homeless" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.

The School For Advanced Studies NW Arkansas understand that homelessness should not result in separation of students from the mainstream school environment and may provide students experiencing homelessness access to appropriate resources and services. Parents/guardians of students experiencing homelessness may request assistance to complete an enrollment application. If, during the registration process, a student is identified as experiencing homelessness or as an unaccompanied homeless youth the School will take steps to remove barriers to the student's enrollment at the School where the seat has been offered and accepted. For assistance in these areas or for more information about the McKinney-Vento Act, please contact the School's Registrar/McKinney-Vento Liaison.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act and applicable state law, Arkansas Schools for Advanced Studies, Inc. Studies does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, gender identity or expression, or any other classification protected by law in any of its business activities, including its educational programs and activities which comply fully with the requirements of state and federal law and Title IX. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies of The School For Advanced Studies NW Arkansas: Beverly Traver, Director of Equity in Compliance (Beverly.Traver@polymathedco.com).

¹ 6.07.1.6.3 Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Rules Governing Public Charter Schools.

