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PITTSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Pittsfield, Massachusetts

CAREER VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION ADMISSIONS

POLICY

This admission policy has been written in accordance with the Massachusetts General Law Chapter 74 (MGL Ch. 74) and the Vocational Technical Education Regulations (603 CMR 400) and has been written to respond to State Admission policy Guidelines for Selective Public Vocational Technical High Schools in Massachusetts.

REGULATIONS

Career/Vocational Technical Education Admissions Procedures - Pittsfield Public Schools

INTRODUCTION

An admissions process is necessary in career vocational technical programs where the available number of openings is limited. For the purpose of safety, vocational technical shops and laboratories are designed and equipped to serve a specific maximum number of students. Therefore, a selection process is necessary and all applicants for Pittsfield Public Schools Career Vocational Technical Education programs will be evaluated using the criteria of this admission policy.

I. **ADMISSIONS**

If Taconic High School has more applications than it has available seats, Taconic High School will apply a lottery to determine which students it will admit. The lottery will admit resident students before admitting any non-residents seeking the same program. Pittsfield Public School's admission policy is on file at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

II. **EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY**

The Pittsfield Public Schools admits students and makes available to them its programs, privileges and courses of study without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, genetic information, disability or homelessness status.

If a student's primary home language is not English, Pittsfield Public Schools will provide them with an application form in their home language. A qualified staff member will assist the applicant in completing the necessary forms and assist in interpreting during the entire application and admission process upon request of the applicant.

Pittsfield Public Schools is committed to providing educational opportunities to students experiencing homelessness. A qualified staff member will assist the applicant in completing the necessary forms and assist the applicant during the entire application and admission process upon request of the applicant.

Students with disabilities may voluntarily self-identify for the purpose of requesting reasonable accommodations during the entire application and admission process.

A student's disability, primary language of their home, or housing status will not affect the applicant's admission to any career vocational technical education program.

III. ELIGIBILITY

- A. The Pittsfield Public Schools serves the residents of the City of Pittsfield and the high school students from the Town of Richmond. All students who are residents of these communities are given equal consideration for admission to the Pittsfield Career Vocational Technical Programs according to the criteria contained in this policy.
- B. Any student currently enrolled in 8th grade who is a resident of the City of Pittsfield or the Town of Richmond and expects to be promoted to 9th grade is eligible to apply for fall admission to the Career Exploratory program subject to the availability of openings. Admission to the Career Exploratory program is determined by the criteria contained in this policy. Applications must be submitted to the Pittsfield Public Schools by March 1.
- C. Non-resident 8th grade students that expect to be promoted to 9th grade are eligible to apply for admission to the Career Exploratory program. Admission to the Career Exploratory program is determined by the criteria contained in this policy and the availability of openings in the program. Resident students will be given consideration first. Students and families can find information on the Chapter 74 Non Resident Student Tuition (NRT) Program online. NRT applications must be received no later than March 15.
- D. Any resident 9th grade student who expects to be promoted to the 10th grade and has not enrolled in a vocational program can apply for admission to a Career Vocational Technical Education program subject to available openings in the program and the criteria contained in this policy.
- E. Any non-resident 9th grade student who expects to be promoted to the 10th grade and has not enrolled in a vocational program can apply for admission to a Career Vocational Technical Education program subject to available openings in the program and the criteria contained in this policy. Resident students will be given consideration first. Students and families can find information on the Chapter 74 Non Resident Student Tuition Program online. NRT applications must be received no later than March 15.
- F. Any transfer student in the 10th, 11th, or 12th grade who is coming from another Chapter 74 state approved vocational technical education program is eligible to apply for admission to the corresponding grade and trade in the Pittsfield Public Schools system. Transfer students will be evaluated according to the criteria contained in this admission policy. Admission is subject to the availability of openings.
- G. Residents of Pittsfield Homeschooled applicants may apply to attend any Career Vocational Technical Education program full time and will be subject to the same admission standards as other applicants.
- H. Each Spring the School Committee votes which of the district's schools, including Taconic High School, will participate in the inter-district school choice program. The inter-district school choice program, M.G.L. c. 76, & 12B, allows parents/guardians to send their children to school in communities other than the city or town in which they reside.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Career Vocational Technical Education programs offered in the Pittsfield Public Schools are housed at Taconic High School. Each program offers different or distinct career choices to the students. It is the

responsibility of the Assistant Superintendent for College and Career Readiness to supervise the administration of the policies and the procedures required to admit and enroll applicants for Career Vocational Technical Education programs as outlined in this admission policy, consistent with all applicable laws, regulations and guidance.

The district has an Admission Selection Committee appointed annually by the Assistant Superintendent for College and Career Readiness. The committee consists of the Assistant Superintendent for College and Career Readiness, the Taconic High School Principal, a School Counselor, a vocational technical teacher, a Special Education teacher, and an academic teacher. The responsibilities of the Admissions Selection Committee include:

- ◆ Assuring the standards of admission procedures
- ◆ The development and implementation of admission procedures
- ◆ Accepting students according to the procedure and criteria of the admission policy
- ◆ The establishment and maintenance of a waiting list of accepted candidates

The Assistant Superintendent for College and Career Readiness is responsible for disseminating information about the vocational technical programs through local school guidance offices to all eighth grade students and their parent(s) or guardian(s). The office of the Assistant Superintendent is responsible for collecting and maintaining applications from students.

V. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Pittsfield Public Schools will disseminate information pertaining to its vocational technical programs and opportunities through a variety of media that will include electronic as well as printed media. Administrators, teachers, and student representatives will hold informational sessions at the middle schools with students in 6th, 7th and 8th grade and 8th grade students will have the opportunity to visit the vocational programs at Taconic High School through tours arranged by the sending middle school and the high schools. Annually, open houses are scheduled at both high schools for informational purposes. An outreach letter will be sent home to all 7th and 8th grade parent(s)/guardian(s) of PPS students that informs them of the programs offered at Taconic High School and explains the admission criteria. An outreach video will be sent to each 8th grade family that summarizes the programs available as well as the admissions process will be sent to each 8th grade family.

VI. ADMISSION PROCESS

All students entering CTE must complete the admissions process. The enrollment process follows strict guidelines set by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and includes the elements detailed below.

- The Assistant Superintendent for College and Career Readiness and Taconic High School Principal will determine the number of vacant seats in CTE each year.
- 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 withdraws from CTE in Grades 9 or 10 for any reason the school will attempt to fill that vacant seat up until September 30 of that school year.
- Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) will publicize available openings at Taconic school via the district and school website, social media platforms and parent newsletters by February 1.
- PPS will publicize open enrollment periods during which families may submit enrollment applications for CTE enrollment. PPS will use a variety of media and community partners to let families know about the enrollment process and deadlines.

Pittsfield Public Schools will utilize an admissions online platform. Current resident 8th and 9th grade students may apply using the online CTE Application via an online platform. Instructions can be obtained from the local school counselor, or from the office of the Assistant Superintendent for College and Career Readiness located in the Mercer building at 269 First St., Pittsfield, MA.

The platform will be available via the district website, school website and via social media platforms managed by the Pittsfield Public Schools. Online applications will be made available in the languages of our student population and by request. Students may request assistance with the online application from the school counseling office or the CTE Office.

One online application is sufficient to cover all vocational technical programs offered by the Pittsfield Public School system.

Applications from resident students must be completed with the required information by March 1.

Applications from non-resident students must be completed with the required information and received by Pittsfield Public Schools by March 15 and by the District of Residence by April 1.

Applications that are not complete are considered void and the student no longer eligible for a vocational technical program after a 30 day period.

LATE APPLICATIONS

Applications from resident students received after March 1 will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this admission policy. Applications from students residing outside of the Pittsfield Public School district submitted after April 1, will not be approved by their town of residence.

Applications from Pittsfield resident students who wish to enroll in a vocational technical education program in another district who submit nonresident tuition forms after April 1 will not receive approval for such a placement.

VII. SELECTION PROCESS

A selection process will only be necessary if there are more applicants than allotted seats available. If there are more applicants than allotted seats, a lottery will occur.

Shortly after March 1, the Admissions Committee will examine and discuss the CTE applications for Career/Vocational Technical Education program admission. The membership of the committee is determined by Paragraph 3 of Section IV of this document.

If there are more applicants than allotted seats, a lottery will be held with the applicants. The school will follow the lottery and waitlist procedures as noted below. These deadlines will be publicized and available at www.pittsfield.net and by contacting the School's Counseling Department. The district will not hold any enrollment lotteries until after March 1, and shall conclude its CTE enrollment process no later than March 30 of each year.

In the event a lottery is required, the PPS online admissions system will implement a random selection process using the students LLASID numbers as identifiers and every applicant will be entered to establish the initial random lottery order. If a lottery is to be held, that fact will be publicized at least one week prior to the lottery date.

WAITLIST PROCEDURES

All students not accepted in the enrollment lottery are placed on a waiting list in the order the names were selected.

If a student previously admitted through the enrollment process declines enrollment or stops attending Taconic High School, the next available student on the waitlist for that grade will be offered admission until the vacant seat is filled.

The school shall maintain waitlists only for the school year for which the students applied. Should a student not be accepted into CTE for the school year, that student will need to reapply for the subsequent school year if they remain interested in CTE. It is the responsibility of the family to update the school should contact information change while a student remains on the waiting list.

VIII. ENROLLMENT

In order to enroll in the Pittsfield Public Schools for the fall, applicants must have been promoted to the grade they seek to enter by their local school district.

IX. CAREER VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL PROGRAM PLACEMENT

All freshmen students who enroll in the Pittsfield Public Schools Career Vocational Technical Education program in their school, will participate in a Career Exploratory program which is designed to help them learn about their talents and interests relative to a variety of career vocational technical programs. During the time spent in the Career Exploratory program, the student will be instructed in safety, professionalism, work ethic, and aspects of industry and the world of work.

The Career Exploratory students will partake in each shop offered at the school on a rotating basis. The time the student spends in a shop is referred to as a rotation and the work the student does in a rotation is graded by the instructor. The grade is scored by a rubric and the categories used to arrive at the grade are set as follows: 25% for safety, 25% for daily work, 40% for projects, and 10% for attendance. 100 is the maximum grade per rotation.

At the end of the cycle of rotations, each student is asked to apply for their top three choices of the Career Vocational Technical Education programs. They will receive a composite score for placement that is arrived at by adding the number grade from all rotations together and then adding the number grade of the three programs the student chose. The larger the number the more likely a student will get his or her choice. The roster for each program for the fall of the following year is primarily comprised of students whose first choice was that program. When the number of openings available for the program are filled a student is placed on a waiting list. If a student who had been accepted into a program should opt not to take the program, the next student on the list is offered that spot.

The student who did not get their first choice has the option of taking their second or third choice if space is available.

Students who did not take part in the Career Exploratory program but would like to apply for a Career Technical Vocational Education in their sophomore year can apply for available openings as freshmen for their sophomore year.

X. REVIEW AND APPEALS

The applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s), upon receipt of a letter from the Pittsfield Public Schools indicating that the applicant was placed on a wait list, may request a review of the decision. To do so, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must send a letter requesting a review of the decision to the Office of the Deputy Superintendent. The letter to the Deputy Superintendent must be sent within 30 days of receipt of the aforementioned letter from Pittsfield Public Schools. The Deputy Superintendent will respond in writing to the letter with the findings of the review within 15 days. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) do not agree with the Deputy Superintendent's review they can appeal to the School Committee by sending a letter to the School Committee requesting a date be scheduled where they can appear before the School Committee to appeal the Deputy Superintendent's findings. The School Committee will respond to the parent(s)/guardian(s) within 15 days of receiving the request for a hearing and within 30 days after the hearing with their findings.

XI. MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

Pittsfield Public Schools' Office for College and Career Readiness maintains records of all students who apply, enroll, or are waitlisted, as well as their disposition on admission criteria, to facilitate analysis of its admissions system and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Pittsfield Public Schools will provide this information to the Department upon request.

REFERENCES

603 CMR 4.03(6)(A) CAREER/VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION ADMISSIONS REGULATIONS

INTER-DISTRICT SCHOOL CHOICE PURSUANT TO G.L. C. 76, §12B

M.G.L., CH. 74, S. 37B, APPROVAL OF POSTSECONDARY PROGRAMS BY COMMISSIONER; TUITION

The commissioner under the direction of the state board may approve non-degree granting vocational education programs at the postsecondary level. In making his decision, the commissioner shall take into consideration the availability of similar training opportunities at the secondary and public regional community college levels.

Upon the vote of the school committee or board of trustees of any industrial, technical, or vocational school, tuition and other related fees may be charged to students residing in its city, town, or regional school district admitted to approved postsecondary vocational education programs in an amount not to exceed fifty percent of the average per pupil cost of such programs.

M.G.L., CH. 74, S. 37C., ADMINISTRATION OF NON-RESIDENT; TUITION

A student who resides in a city or town which does not offer approved vocational education programs at the postsecondary level may, upon the approval of the commissioner under the direction of the state board be admitted to such program in another city, town or regional school district. In making his determination the commissioner shall take into consideration the opportunities for free vocational training where the applicant resides, the preparation, age, aptitude, and previous records of the applicant, and other relevant circumstances, including the level of state assistance to such program. A student admitted under this provision shall be charged tuition and fees for the full amount of the average pupil cost of such program, as approved by the commissioner under the direction of the state board. Such students shall be eligible to apply for state scholarship aid pursuant to section seven of Chapter 15A.