



## **Lottery Policy & Process 2026-27**

### **LOTTERY RATIONALE**

Great Lakes Academy is open to all students who live in the city of Chicago regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, or disability. Under charter school agreement with Chicago Public Schools and under mandate by Illinois Charter School law, Great Lakes Academy ("GLA") will be enrolling new students via public, virtual lottery. Members of the public, including parents and representatives from CPS, may be present. Parents/Guardians will be notified of results via email following the lottery.

### Lottery Applications

The application deadline for the 2026-27 school year is Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 11:59 PM CT. In 2026-27, Great Lakes Academy will hold lotteries for Kindergarten through 8th grade students. Applications can be submitted via our website ([www.glaChicago.org](http://www.glaChicago.org)) or by completing a paper copy in the front office.

Before the lottery takes place, GLA staff will check all applications to make sure:

- All Kindergarten applicants will be 5 years old by 12/31/2026\*.
- All sibling applicants are flagged.

Applications can be submitted after the lottery deadline however these applicants will not be eligible for the lottery and will be added to the bottom of our waitlist in the order the applications were submitted.

### **\* EARLY ADMISSION**

#### Eligibility

- Student birth date falls between September 2, 2021 and December 31, 2021 as displayed on birth certificate.
- Pre-K certification required as evidenced by written letter from program. Note: grades, student attendance, or letter of recommendation are not considered written evidence.
- Homeschooling and online learning does not qualify as Pre-K certified programming, and it will be recommended that these students apply for Kindergarten the following year.
- Must meet all Great Lakes Academy application requirements, including entry assessments.

### Early Admission Process

- Families interested in Early Admission consideration at Great Lakes Academy can apply online at [www.glaChicago.org](http://www.glaChicago.org) or by paper copy via our front office.
- Parent/Guardian must submit the following as part of the application process by email to GLA at [info@glaChicago.org](mailto:info@glaChicago.org):
  - Written evidence of student attending current school year of preschool
  - A copy of student's birth certificate
- Only applications with students whose birth date falls between September 2, 2021 and December 31, 2021 will be considered for Early Admission. GLA will review the documents submitted.
- If both the written evidence and birth certificate are not on file with the front office when a seat becomes available, the student's application may be withdrawn.
- For lottery consideration, the parent/guardian must submit application with required documents by March 18, 2026
- Applications received after the deadline will be added to the waitlist in the order they are received.
- If a seat becomes available, a GLA school representative will contact the parent/guardian via email and at least one phone call. An in-person assessment must be scheduled and take place within five (5) business days of the pending offer made.
- If the student meets all Early Admission requirements, parents/guardians will receive an email with an official offer for acceptance. The parent/guardian will have a five (5) business day window to both accept and complete enrollment paperwork for the accepted child from the date the official offer is made.
- The parent/guardian may decide to accept or decline upon receipt of the official offer of admission.
- If the student does not meet the Early Admission process requirements, it will be recommended to apply for Kindergarten for the following school year. This will come via email and the student's application for the school year will be withdrawn.

### **FAMILY PREFERENCE**

GLA's preference is to keep families together; therefore, per Illinois charter law, we allow for a sibling preference policy in our lottery. For definition purposes, "siblings" applies only to natural siblings, step siblings, foster siblings, and adoptive siblings.

Siblings of existing (current) Great Lakes Academy scholars will be given priority in the lottery the following year. Any siblings of current students will be put in a "family lottery" to be drawn from before the broader lottery pool. If there are more siblings applying than there are open seats, then any not drawn in the family lottery will be given first priority on the waitlist.

In an effort to keep families together that have students in more than one grade that are applying to Great Lakes Academy for the first time, applicant siblings will be given priority in the lottery, or wait list priority if not drawn for an open seat, in respective grade level lotteries if a sibling is accepted. For siblings in different grades applying together where a lottery is not required for one or more of the grades to which the siblings are applying, the siblings of students in the grades where a lottery is held will be given priority in the lottery if the sibling is already accepted, or moved to the top of their waitlist if they are not drawn for an open seat in their grade or if the sibling is accepted after their lottery has already run.

For example, if a lottery is required for both Kindergarten and First Grade and there is a family with students applying to each of the grades, if the Kindergartener receives a spot on the waitlist during the Kindergarten lottery and the First Grader receives an open seat during the First Grade lottery, the Kindergarten sibling will move up to the top of the Kindergarten waitlist after the First Grade student is accepted.

For multiple births (e.g. twins, triplets), each applicant within a set of multiples will receive the same lottery position during the lottery draw. While the lottery number is the same, each individual student will have a waitlist number that is sequential.

In the instance where siblings apply, are accepted, and then withdraw from the school, if the siblings were to apply again in the same school year, sibling preference would not be granted.

For example, say siblings in First and Third Grade apply, are accepted, and then withdraw. If the family decides to reapply in the same school year, both siblings would be added to the end of the waitlist. If the First Grade student was later accepted again, the Third Grade student would not advance to the top of the waitlist.

## **LOTTERY PROCEDURE**

The lottery will take place on Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 8:30 am CT virtually, recorded at Great Lakes Academy (8401 S Saginaw Ave, Chicago, IL 60617), and run from Kindergarten to Eighth grade. All applicants will be entered into the lottery system

PowerSchool Enrollment. To ensure compliance, our lotteries will be documented for public record via video screen recording and school administrators will attend the lottery. All lottery-related compliance paperwork and video recording will be submitted to CPS within 10 business days following the execution of the lottery. In the case where there are any technical difficulties and a video cannot be provided, a timestamped audit report of the lottery can be provided by PowerSchool Enrollment.

## **LOTTERY NOTIFICATION**

All parents/guardians will be notified of lottery results via email by 5:00 pm Friday, March 20, 2026, providing there are no technical difficulties. An email will go out to parents/guardians of all students (both accepted and waitlisted).

- For parents/guardians of accepted students, the email will direct them to accept or decline the student's seat in PowerSchool Enrollment. It will also contain information on how to begin filling out registration paperwork.
- For parents/guardians of waitlisted students, the email will inform them of their student's waitlist position. Anytime the student moves on the waitlist, the parent/guardian will be notified directly from PowerSchool Enrollment.

GLA will begin enrolling students for the 2026-27 school year on Friday, March 20, 2026, after the lottery notifications have been sent. Families who are accepting their seat must complete their enrollment paperwork by April 16, 2026. Starting April 17, GLA may release the seats from any families who have not yet enrolled their child who were contacted after the original lottery.

In addition, if we are unable to reach families and do not get an affirmative response that the family is accepting the seat by April 3, 2026 at 4:00 pm (after at least: one phone call and one email) we will consider that seat released.

## **WAITLIST PROCESSING PROCEDURE**

The waitlist is generated by PowerSchool Enrollment based on the sibling priority described above. As seats become available, we will offer open seats to waitlisted students in the order they are available. Parents/guardians of waitlisted students who are offered an open seat will have a three-business day window to both accept and complete enrollment paperwork for the accepted child. GLA staff will make at least one phone call to families of students being offered a seat off of the waitlist and will send an email. If a family does not accept and complete required paperwork within the three business day window, that seat may be released to the next person on the waitlist. The waitlist will be updated and submitted to the authorizer quarterly. If a student's name is removed from the waitlist for any reason, the reason will be documented on the waitlist that is sent to the authorizer. It will be maintained for the duration of the school year. A

student not selected from the waitlist for a particular school year will need to re-apply for the next year's lottery.

#### **LOTTERY/ENROLLMENT TIMELINE**

• Application Deadline	March 18, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CT
• Lottery	March 19, 2026 @ 8:30 AM CT
• First Registration Window	March 20, 2026 – April 17, 2026
• Deadline to accept seat from lottery	April 3, 2026 @ 4:00 PM CT
• Rolling Enrollment Begins	April 6, 2026
• Deadline to Complete Enrollment ( <i>if offered a seat in the lottery</i> )	April 17, 2026 @ 4:00 PM CT