Enrollment Eligibility

- Any child who is eligible for attendance in public schools in the state may be eligible to attend a public charter school in Alabama.
- A public charter school is open to any student residing in Alabama.
- The residence of a student is the domicile of the student’s custodial parent who may be the parent, guardian, or other person or entity having legal custody of the child.
- A public charter school cannot limit student admission based on ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, income level, disability, proficiency in the English language, or academic or athletic ability.
- Student admission may be limited to students within a given age group or grade level.

Enrollment Preferences

- A public charter school must first enroll students who reside within the local school system in which the public charter school is located.
- Enrollment preference is given to students enrolled in the public charter school the previous school year and to siblings of students already enrolled in the public charter school.
- Children of the public charter school’s founders, governing board members, and full-time employees may be given enrollment preferences not to exceed ten percent of the school’s total student population.
- A public charter school may not deny enrollment preferences or admission to students (e.g., students with disabilities; students with severe disciplinary issues; students at risk of academic failure; and/or same-gender students) that do not meet the mission or academic specialty (e.g., visual and performing arts; liberal arts and classical education; career and technical education; and/or math, science, and technology).

Facility Capacity

- The student capacity of public charter schools is determined annually by the governing board of the public charter school in conjunction with the authorizer.
- In determining student capacity, the governing board would include factors such as facilities, personnel, financial, and legal considerations that affect the public charter school’s ability to facilitate the academic success of its students and achieve the other objectives specified in the charter contract.
- If the number of students that seek enrollment in the public charter school exceeds student capacity, the school will select students through a random selection process for the students who reside within the local school system in which the public charter school is located.
- If the public charter school has additional capacity remaining after admitting students from the local school system, the school will select students through a random selection process to select students who reside outside the local school system’s jurisdiction.
- The selection process will take place in a public meeting held in compliance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act.

NOTE: This working document “highlights” some key components of the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act (Act 2015-3) but does not attempt to address all content specific to public charter school students. Information included in this working document will be updated as the Alabama State Department of Education develops specific guidance regarding students served in Alabama public charter schools. Please send questions to pcs@alsde.edu.