

Worcester Public Schools

Career Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) Admissions Policy

For Chapter 74 programs at Worcester Technical High School and the Comprehensive High Schools

December 2021

I. INTRODUCTION

An admission process is necessary for vocational-technical schools where space is a limiting factor. Vocational technical laboratories (shops) are designed and equipped to serve a specific maximum number of students safely. Consequently, a complex of such laboratories lacks both space and flexibility to accommodate all applicants' possible needs and interests. Therefore, when the number of applicants exceeds the student capacity in a given program, a selection process is required to determine which applicants will be offered admission and which applicants will be placed on a waiting list. All applicants to grades nine through twelve at Worcester Technical High School have been evaluated using the criteria contained in the Worcester Public School Committee approved policy since June 1, 2017.

On June 22, 2021, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted new regulations for admissions to vocational-technical schools and vocational programs at comprehensive high schools. This policy was thoughtfully developed for the 2022-2023 admissions process to ensure transparency for students, families, and sending districts. The Worcester Public School Committee approved this policy on **December 16, 2021**. The policy will be in effect for the students applying for admission to enroll from the 2022-2023 school year going forward. The School Committee will review this policy annually; the District will re-submit the policy (including any approved revisions) to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) by October 1.

II. EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Worcester Technical High School (WTHS) and the Chapter 74 programs at WPS comprehensive high schools admit students and make available to them their advantages, privileges, and courses of study without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

Students who lack proficiency in English (who are classified as “English Learners”) and parents of students who lack proficiency in English can request assistance from staff at WTHS or the appropriate comprehensive high school to complete the application process. Online application materials for WTHS and comprehensive programs will be accessible in at least the eight most commonly used languages within the district, a qualified representative from Worcester Technical High School will assist the applicant in completing the necessary forms and assist in interpreting/translating during the entire application and admission process upon the request of the applicant.

Students with disabilities may voluntarily self-identify to request reasonable accommodations during the entire application and admission process. Information on limited English proficiency and disability disclosed voluntarily by the applicant to receive assistance and accommodations during the application and admission process will not affect their admission to the school.

III. ELIGIBILITY

Any eighth-grade student who is a resident of the Worcester Public School district who expects to be promoted to the ninth grade can apply for fall admission subject to the availability of CVTE program openings at WTHS and the comprehensive high schools. Resident students will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admissions Policy. Students enrolled in other vocational-technical schools can apply for transfer admission during the school year to grades 9-12 in a comparable program at WTHS or a comprehensive high

school, provided they expect to be promoted by their current school to the grade they seek to enter. Transfer students will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admissions Policy.

Worcester Public Schools (WPS) is a school choice district. However, per the WPS Student Handbook, Chapter 74 programs at comprehensive high schools and Worcester Technical High School do not participate in the School Choice program. All applicants (whether current 8th graders or prospective transfer students) for WPS CVTE programs must reside within the boundaries of the District at the time their applications are submitted.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

WTHS is a WPS vocational-technical school governed by Chapter 74 of the Massachusetts General Laws. WTHS is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and is committed to providing quality academic and vocational-technical programs. WPS also administers Chapter 74 CVTE programs within several of its comprehensive high schools. It is the responsibility of the WPS Superintendent of Schools to supervise the administration of the policies and procedures required to admit and enroll applicants in conformity with this Admissions Policy.

WTHS has an Admissions Committee appointed by the Principal. The committee consists of the Administration, Guidance, Special Needs, Vocational-Technical, and Academic Departments. Responsibilities of the Admissions Committee include:

1. Implementation of admissions procedures
2. Processing of applications
3. Acceptance of students according to the procedure and criteria in the admission policy
4. Establishment and maintenance of waiting list(s)

Chapter 74 programs at WPS comprehensive high schools each have their respective admissions committees to carry out similar responsibilities for their admissions processes.

V. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

1. WTHS

- a. WTHS disseminates information about the school through various methods, including but not limited to an annual Open House, various online platforms, school-based marketing, social media, and middle school student tours.
- b. WTHS will offer tours to all WPS and charter school middle school students within the City of Worcester. Active links to a virtual school tour to the middle schools by WTHS for career awareness programs. A letter describing the admissions process will be sent via US mail to each Worcester Public School eighth-grade student in their family's home language. A yearly Open House will be scheduled to allow prospective students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to visit all of the school's vocational-technical programs and request to speak with teachers and view a presentation about all offerings. WPS provides a written translation in the district's eight most commonly spoken languages of all Open House materials. The most updated information will be available through the online platforms associated with WTHS and WPS.

2. Comprehensive High School Programs

- a. Each Chapter 74 program at the comprehensive high schools will offer tours for prospective students who attend WPS middle schools. Informational and recruitment materials will be disseminated through US mail, social media, messaging platforms, and school-based marketing efforts.
- b. Each comprehensive high school that houses Chapter 74 programs will host annual Open House opportunities for parents and guardians to learn about each program, meet instructors, and see its facilities and equipment, Open

House materials will be available in at least the eight most commonly spoken languages within WPS.

VI. ADMISSIONS PROCESS

1. Fall Admissions Process for Ninth Grade

Students interested in applying to WTHS or a program at a comprehensive high school for fall admission to the ninth grade must complete an online application. To be eligible to apply, applicants must be Worcester residents who provisionally meet WPS high school academic promotion requirements (and they must have earned greater than or equal to “65” for their 8th grade second quarter marks in English/ESL and mathematics).

- a. Proportional Allocation of Seats (WTHS only)
 - i. Seats at WTHS will be allocated to each feeder middle school in proportion to the share each has of the overall WPS 8th grade fall enrollment.
 - ii. Worcester residents who are not enrolled as WPS students in 8th grade will be counted within the allotment of seats for the district middle school that corresponds to their home address.
- b. Tiered Lottery (for all programs)
 - i. Criteria: All applicants are assigned to one of three tiers based on attendance and discipline/safety criteria (see Table 1 below). The actual lotteries will be conducted separately for WTHS and each program at a comprehensive high school (as described in the following sections).

Table 1: Criteria Admissions Lottery Tiers

Tier	Attendance	Discipline & Safety
1	No more than ten (10) total unexcused absences in seventh and eighth grades combined.	No more than one (1) long-term suspension (MGL 37H, 37H 1/2, 37H 3/4) from 7th and 8th grade combined.
2	No more than twenty-one (21) total unexcused absences in seventh and eighth grades combined.	No more than two (2) long-term suspensions (MGL 37H, 37H 1/2, 37H 3/4) from 7th and 8th grade combined.
3	Twenty-two or more (22+) unexcused absences in seventh and eighth grades combined.	Three or more (3+) long-term suspensions (MGL 37H, 37H 1/2, 37H 3/4) from 7th and 8th grade combined.

ii. WTHS Admissions Lottery:

1. Parents and caregivers will be notified of the lottery date, time, and location via electronic mail and automated phone announcement. This parental notice and a public announcement on the WPS website will be made at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the public admissions lottery.
2. A public lottery will be conducted for applicants from each tier and feeder school, beginning with Tier 1. Names from Tier 2 and then Tier 3 will then be drawn from each feeder school.
3. Applicants who are enrolled in a WPS middle school will be included in that feeder school's lottery regardless of their home school assignment. Applicants not enrolled in a WPS middle school will be included in the lottery for the feeder school that corresponds to their residential address.
4. Students will be accepted or placed on the waiting list for their

respective feeder schools in the random order their names are drawn for their respective tiers.

iii. Admissions Lottery for Comprehensive High School Programs

1. Parents and caregivers will be notified of the lottery date, time, and location via electronic mail and automated phone announcement. This parental notice and a public announcement on the WPS website will be made at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the public admissions lottery.
2. A public lottery is conducted for applicants from each tier for each Chapter 74 program, beginning with Tier 1. Names from Tier 2 and then Tier 3 will then be drawn. *Applicants will not be drawn separately by feeder school for the programs at the comprehensive high schools.*
3. Students will be accepted or placed on a waiting list in the random order their names are drawn for their respective tiers.

2. Admissions Process for Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Grades (WTHS Only)

- a. Eligibility: Prospective applicants must be currently enrolled in a Vocational/Technical program or school in order to be eligible, and there must also be open capacity in the relevant program and trade each student has studied at their previous school.
- b. Students interested in applying to WTHS for admission for the current school year must:
 - i. Complete an online application.
 - ii. It is the responsibility of the sending school Guidance Counselor to:
 - iii. Complete their portion of the application form. Sending schools will receive electronic notification of action items in the application.

- c. For applications to grades 9, 10, 11 & 12 (admission during the school year), the current school year to the date of the application marks in English language arts, social studies, math, and science from the sending school report card/transcript are required.
- d. For applications to grades 9,10,11 & 12 (admission during the school year) from the current school year to the date of the application, complete attendance records from the sending school report card/transcript are required.
- e. For applications to grades 9, 10, 11 & 12 (admission during the school year) the current school year to the date of the application.–The total number of suspensions under MGL Chapter 71 37H, 37H1/2, and 37H ¾ are required.

3. Incomplete Applications. If incomplete applications are received, the following procedures will be followed:

- a. The WTHS Admissions Office will notify the sending school Guidance Counselor responsible for submitting the application, that the application is incomplete and will request completion.
- b. The applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by the Worcester Technical High School Admission Office in the event the problem is not resolved by the sending school Guidance Counselor.
- c. If after notifying the sending school Guidance Counselor and parent(s)/guardian(s), the application remains incomplete for ten school days, the application will be voided.

4. Late Applications: Applications submitted by eligible students after April 1st will be placed on the appropriate waiting list (for WTHS, corresponding to their respective feeder school) in the order they are received, but below the applicants who applied by the deadline and were previously placed on the corresponding waiting list.

5. **Transfer Students:** Applications from students who are enrolled in a state-approved (Chapter 74) vocational-technical high school program in another school (transfer students) will be considered for admission (including admission during the school year) if they relocate away from their current school and wish to pursue the same program of study at WTHS or a program at a comprehensive high school.
6. **Home-Schooled Students:** Applications from resident students that are enrolled in an approved Home-School program who apply to WTHS and/or a CVTE program at a comprehensive high school will follow the procedures contained in this admission policy and will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy.

IX. ACCEPTANCE, ENROLLMENT, AND WAITING LIST PROCEDURES

1. **Admissions Offers and Acceptance:** WTHS and comprehensive high school programs will notify parents and caregivers of their students' acceptance via US Postal Service and electronic mail by no later than April 30. Parents and caregivers must notify WTHS and/or the comprehensive high school program of their decision to accept or decline the offer of admission within fourteen (14) calendar days from the date on the admissions offer letter. If no response is received after 14 days, WTHS or the comprehensive program will assume the offer has been declined and will proceed to offer that student's space to an applicant from the waiting list.
2. **Enrollment:** In order to enroll at WTHS or a comprehensive high school for the fall, applicants must meet WPS promotion requirements from their sending school for the grade level they wish to enter. Under no circumstances will students be allowed to matriculate without successfully passing their courses in English language arts or the ESL equivalent and mathematics for the school year immediately preceding their enrollment in the CVTE program. Upon receipt of final marks, WTHS and comprehensive programs may withdraw admissions offers for students who do not

meet WPS promotion requirements. WTHS or comprehensive program staff will notify admitted students' parents and caregivers of such withdrawal actions by telephone, US Postal Service, and electronic mail. When offers of admission are withdrawn for any reason, students' spaces will be offered to applicants from the appropriate waiting list.

3. Waiting Lists: Waiting lists will be established at WTHS and for each program at the comprehensive high schools following the procedures described above (see Section VI-1-b). Waiting lists will remain active until October 1st of the year following their being established, at which time they will expire.

- a. WTHS will maintain a separate waiting list for each of the six WPS feeder middle schools. When an opening arises for any reason (e.g., due to a declined or withdrawn offer of admission, or a withdrawal from the school), WTHS staff will offer admission to the next applicant on the waiting list corresponding to the student who created the vacancy. If at any time there are no more applicants on the waiting list for a particular feeder school, the next applicant from the next school's waiting list will be offered admission (based on alphabetical order of feeder school's name). If that student declines, then the next student from the next school will be offered admission, and so on until an applicant accepts admission.
- b. Each Chapter 74 program housed at one of the comprehensive high schools will maintain a waiting list for applicants from all feeder schools. When an opening arises for any reason (e.g., due to a declined or withdrawn offer of admission, or a withdrawal from the school), designated staff from the program offer admission to the next applicant on the waiting list. In the unlikely event that there are no other applicants on the waiting list, the program may recruit from the school's regular enrollment to fill any available seats.

X. VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL PROGRAM PLACEMENT (Only Applicable to WTHS)

All ninth-graders who enroll in WTHS participate in a vocational-technical exploratory program designed to help them learn about their talents and interests relative to a variety of different vocational-technical programs. Students initially explore each vocational program in the technical academy in a virtual setting. All accepted grade 9 students will complete a virtual *Explore* during their assigned summer work and jumpstart preparatory program. The students will have access to their career choice rankings from their application up until August 1 of their application year.

The student's top four (4) choices, taken from their original online application, together with four (4) choices taken from the total available shops are scheduled for the entire exploratory period which is composed of Quarter 1 and Quarter 2. Students are evaluated and scored (0-100 points) using the standardized Student Evaluation – Exploratory rubric by each shop & related teacher during each two-week shop exploratory rotation. At the end of this eight-shop exploratory, each student selects his/her program preferences on the shop selection form one through six from the eight programs they explored. Students are admitted into the shop of their choice based on the grade point total they received. For example, a student with a point total of 100 would be admitted before a student with a point total of 80. If a shop fills, based on the highest point total before a student gets his/her first choice, the Director of Career Vocational Technical Education then moves to the students' second through sixth choice depending upon whether there is an opening in the shop. Again, each student is admitted based upon their overall point total.

If a student's combined point total in all shops does not qualify them to be placed in their second- through sixth- choice shop because the shops were filled by students with higher point totals, the Director of Career Vocational Technical Education will meet with the student and present a list of the shops with openings which the student can explore and ask

the student to choose one of them. Again, students selecting shops from among the shops with openings, which the student explored, will be admitted based on their point totals. The process continues until all students are placed. In the event of a tie, a blind lottery will decide the assignment of students to the available seats in a particular shop.

Students who wish to transfer from one shop to another during the school year may request to transfer using a standardized form from their guidance counselor. Transfer requests will be considered subject to the availability of openings in the requested shops, and career plan. Each transfer applicant will be interviewed and counseled individually to determine the appropriateness of the transfer for the particular student.

XI. REVIEW AND APPEALS

The applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s), upon receipt of a letter from WTHS or a CVTE program at a comprehensive high school indicating that the applicant was not accepted or placed on a waiting list, may request a review of the decision by sending a letter requesting a review to the appropriate Principal within thirty days of the receipt of the letter. The Principal will respond in writing to the letter with the findings of the review within thirty days.

If after the review, the parent/guardian wishes to appeal the findings of the review they may do so by sending a written request to meet with the WPS Secondary Manager for Instruction and School Leadership to appeal the Principal's findings. The Secondary Manager for Instruction and School Leadership will respond in writing to the parent/guardian with a scheduled date for the appeal meeting within thirty days of the receipt of the letter. The Secondary Manager for Instruction and School Leadership will respond in writing to the letter with their decision on the appeal within fourteen days of the Secondary Manager for Instruction and School Leadership meeting when the appeal was presented.