

## MS 447 Admissions FAQs 2016-17

### **Q: How many kids do you admit?**

**A:** We have approximately 180 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **Q: How do you evaluate students for admission?**

**A:** We use the academic grades and the academic/personal behavior marks from the fourth grade report card. In addition, we administer our own, in-house assessment to all applicants. We are looking for students across all performance levels.

### **Q: How many students with disabilities (SWDs) do you admit?**

**A:** Each year, we admit a percentage of SWDs that matches the percent of SWD in the district as a whole. This year, it is about 23%. In general, we have both ICT classes and ASD Nest classes. We also serve students with SETSS and other related services. Our total number of SWDs per grade aligns with the district target for that year.

### **Q: Do you interview the applicants?**

**A:** No. We no longer interview applicants. District 15 uses a blind ranking method, which means we don't know where our applicants ranked us. Because of the large number of applicants, we consider everyone who applies, using the 4<sup>th</sup> grade report card and a written assessment that we give here at school in January.

### **Q: Will all applicants be invited to do the assessment?**

**A:** Anyone who puts MS 447 anywhere on their application has an opportunity to take our admissions assessment and be considered for admission.

### **Q: What do you mean by ELA and Math entrance exams? Are these the same as the state test scores? What is the assessment like?**

**A:** The assessment is a home-made (by us) task. It is not the NY State exams. It is a written assessment that includes a math/problem solving component and a written response to a prompt. There are no multiple choice questions. The assessment takes most students under an hour, and is administered in the school cafeteria. Students may take as much or little time as they want. All testing accommodations from an IEP or 504 plan will be honored, including separate location.

### **Q: You say you are seeking a diverse range of learners. What does that mean?**

**A:** We believe students learn best in an academically diverse environment, and hope to have a mix of academic performers in our student body. Based on the academic criteria we use (4<sup>th</sup> grade report cards and in-house assessment), we are able to rank across all academic levels, rather than simply focus on the highest performers.

### **Q: What are the guidelines for your ranking of applicants? How many students will be above grade level, at grade level, and below grade level?**

**A:** We are looking for a range of academic performance. To determine our rankings, we evaluate applicants based on the fourth grade report card grades and the in-house assessment. Once we have sorted students into high, medium, and low groups (based on our applicant pool for that year), we use the academic and personal behavior marks from the fourth grade report card to determine student rankings within their academic category.

**Q: Do you have sibling preference?**

A: This year, there is sibling preference only for siblings of current 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders. We expect to discontinue sibling preference beginning in the 2017-18 admissions process (for students entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade in the fall of 2018).

**Q: Do you look at the state test scores? What do you do with them?**

A: We do not use state test scores as part of our admissions criteria.

**Q: What if my child did really well on the state tests and I want his/her scores to count?**

A: We do not use state test scores as part of our admissions criteria.

**Q: Will all kids who put down MS 447 on their middle school application be ranked?**

A: We ranked every student who applied and took our assessment. Applicants who did not complete the assessment were not ranked for admission.

**Q: After MS 447 does its ranking, what happens?**

A: We send our rankings to the Office of Student Enrollment. They use a matching system to make a placement for every student in the district.

**Q: What does it mean to give priority to Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) students for 30% of the seats?**

A: At the school level, we do not see the FRL status of applicants. The Office of Student Enrollment fills the first 30% of the seats from the highest applicants we ranked who are FRL students (who did not match to a choice they put higher on their application). After the 30% priority is reached, the Office of Student Enrollment fills the seats from the highest applicants we ranked regardless of their FRL status.

**Q: How will you meet the 30% priority for students eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)? What if not enough FRL kids apply?**

A: Assuming that enough students who are FRL-eligible apply, they will fill at least 30% of seats. Meeting our 30% target relies on having enough applicants who are FRL-eligible.

**Q: Do you take kids during the appeal process? How many? Do you take kids over the summer?**

A: We generally have a small number of seats available in the appeals round. This varies year-to-year. After the appeals round is complete, we do not admit students who have another offer.

**Q: Do you have a wait list?**

A: No. Students may enter the appeals round in the spring of 5<sup>th</sup> grade, once the main round is complete. After the appeals round is complete, we don't maintain a waitlist.