



PPS-SF Enrollment Tips:

Top Ten Tips for applying to a San Francisco Public Elementary School

School Year 2012-2013

San Francisco is a choice district – you can apply for any school or program within San Francisco. Students are not automatically assigned to an elementary school in their neighborhood; although students will be given a preference to their attendance area school if they list it on their application.

Make the most of your choices by following our Top Ten Enrollment Tips:

1 Explore a variety of public school options in San Francisco

Learn more about your school options by reviewing the **SFUSD Enrollment Guide** or go to www.sfusd.edu. Your public school options include:

- **Your Attendance Area School** – Every family has an attendance area school based on their home address. Although it is not a guaranteed assignment you are given a preference for your attendance area school if you list it on your application. Go to www.sfusd.edu to locate your attendance area school.
- **City-wide schools and programs** include language-immersion programs, bi-lingual pathway programs, K-8 schools and the San Francisco Public Montessori School. These programs do not have attendance area boundaries.
- **Other attendance area schools** – You may list any school whether it's in your attendance area school or not. Many attendance area schools will have openings for families outside of the school boundaries.
- **Middle School Feeder assignment.** Beginning with students who entered K in 2011, assignments to middle school (Grade 6) will be determined by the elementary school the child attends. Go to www.sfusd.edu to see the elementary schools that will feed into a particular middle school.
- **Charter Schools** – are public schools that are outside of the SFUSD system. Do not list them on your SFUSD application. Contact Charter Schools directly for their application procedures.

2 Start your search by considering your family needs.

- Focus on what matters most to you when you are considering schools. Be flexible - sometimes your original idea of what was important to you changes after you've learned more about the schools.
- Consider variables such as location, start times, afterschool programs and transportation.
- A school should match your family's values for community and academics.

3 Be flexible and expand your options; there are 70 elementary schools and 110 options.

- Check out schools which are lower in demand but have great school assets.
- Don't assume that popular schools are "better." Define for yourself what a "good" school is. What appeals to you and your best friend may differ.
- Elementary and middle schools may change based on the school leadership, new programming and parent involvement.
- **Look beyond test scores.** Test Scores are just one, and often misleading, indicator of school quality. Test scores do not differentiate English Learners, Special Education students, or the changing demographics of a school.

4 Get to know the schools

- **Use online resources** such as GreatSchools.net and individual school websites to get started. For a list of online resources go to www.ppsf.org.
- **Tour schools or attend open houses.** School tours usually start in October. See the SFUSD Enrollment Guide or contact the school for school tour information.
- **Keep notes** about what you learn on tours, events and other research so you can compare schools.
- **Attend school events, such as fairs, festivals, PTA meetings and fundraisers.** For a calendar of public school events, go to www.ppsf.org.
- **Contact PPS-SF to speak with a PPS-SF School Ambassador.** Get to know the school from the perspective of a current parent. Send an email to info@ppsf.org or call 861-7077.
- **PPS website, www.ppsf.org,** has a dedicated Enrollment Page with parent testimonials, tips and other enrollment resources.

5 Attend Enrollment Events

- **Attend PPS-SF Enrollment Events** this fall to learn about the enrollment process and to get more tips from a parent perspective. Go to www.ppsf.org for dates and locations.
- **Attend the SFUSD Enrollment Fair on November 5** to see ALL San Francisco Public Schools in one location and to speak directly with the school principals, teachers and parents. Fair will be from 10am-3pm at the Concourse Exhibition Center: East Hall 635 8th St.

6 Enter ALL schools that you would consider.

- There is no limit to the number of schools you can rank on your application, and listing many different schools will increase your odds.
- Getting a school on your list in the first round will **NOT** hurt your chances of getting another school higher on your list in future rounds.

7 Rank your choices in order of preference.

Ranking your choices in your order of preference will give you the best odds of getting the school you most want. Whenever possible, the student assignment system will offer you the highest ranked school on your list.

8 Meet ALL deadlines!

- Submit your application **anytime before January 27, 2012**. Meeting the deadline gives you your best odds of getting a school you choose. (Note: submitting early does not increase your chances).
- Bring application, child's proof of birth date, and two proofs of residency to the Educational Placement Center (555 Franklin St.) or at one of their satellite locations. Go to www.sfusd.edu/enroll for a list of locations, dates, and times. Applications will be available on November 5th 2011.
- Register your child at your offered school by the published deadline to reserve your spot. You will lose your space if you do not register.

9 Stick with the process

The enrollment process goes through September of the following year. If you do not receive a school of choice in the first placement period, there are subsequent placement periods.

10 Let the PPS-SF Parent Network help you!

Join our parent network and share information and advice with other parents through our newsletter, events, website, and email discussion groups. Go to www.ppsf.org for more information.