

Start Right

Week 7:

**Student Recruitment and Lottery,
Project Management**

February 2011

Overview

- Student Recruitment/ Community Outreach
- Student Applications/ Application Processing
- The Lottery
- Pre Lottery Admissions Decisions
- Project/Event Management

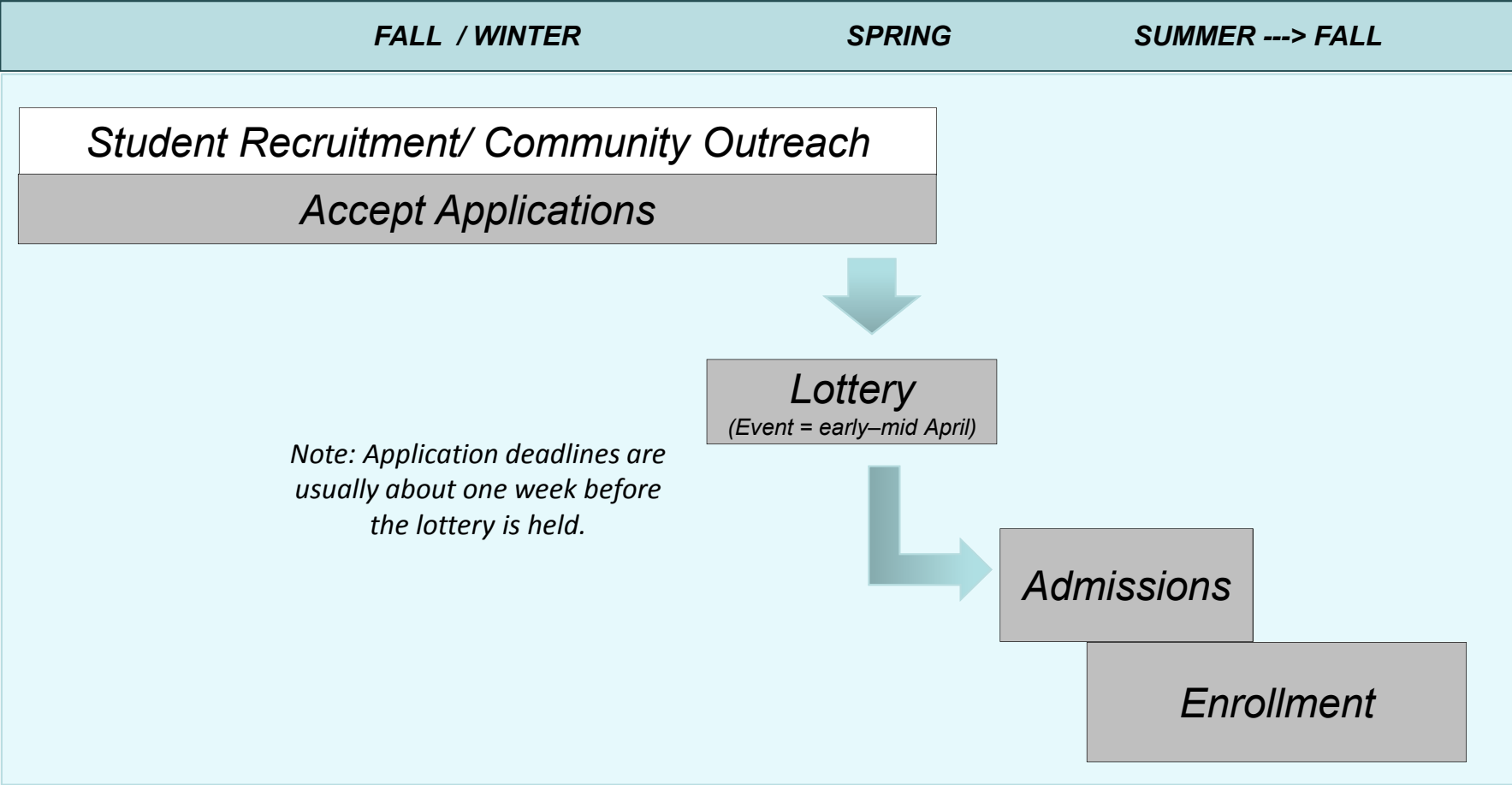


STUDENT RECRUITMENT/ COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Student Recruitment and Community Outreach are the first part of the larger Student Enrollment process. They start in the fall and continue until your Application deadline.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT PROCESS



Successful recruitment depends on a clear branding strategy and a multi-channel marketing approach.

Sample Student Recruitment/ Community Outreach Options

- Visit feeder schools/ Meet with guidance counselors
- Conduct Family Nights
- Attend community events
- Advertise in local publications that focus on your target population
- Mail campaigns
- Distributing marketing flyers, brochures
- Meet local advocates, politicians, etc
- Conduct school tours

Branding - It is very important to know how you will differentiate your school, and your key, consistent talking points.

Feeder school staff can be your biggest advocates and marketing aides. Consider/Research the following:

- Whom to connect with
 - Principal, guidance counselors, parent advocates, PTO, daycare centers?
 - What is their current experience with charter schools?
 - What is their perception/attitude towards charter schools?
- Your marketing strategy
 - Articulating your philosophy and program (curriculum, etc)
 - How to differentiate yourself from other charter schools (in your district)
 - Having a meeting/giving a tour to multiple schools at once – becomes a networking opportunity for them
- What you want them to do, for example:
 - Talk to parents about your school
 - Distribute/Help parents complete applications
 - Walk them through the application to be sure they can answer questions
 - Consider giving them self addressed stamped envelopes to send you completed applications
 - Post marketing material (brochures, family nights, etc)

Family Nights are also extremely important, so plan them carefully. Translators are critical.

Sample Family Night Agenda

(estimated 60-90 minutes)

- Welcome/ Thank for attending
- Introduction
 - People in attendance (role, backgrounds)
 - School – Mission, Academic philosophy, School culture, student and parent expectations, location, number of students (year 1 through full growth)
 - What differentiates your school?
- Application process and timeline
- Show website
- Q&A
- Closing

Consider

- Scheduling: How many to have and when
 - Many schools have 3-5 sessions
 - Have them on varying days and times of day
- Presentation
 - First impressions are lasting – be organized and clear
 - How to ‘grab your audience’
 - Address students separately from parents
 - Have existing students/parents speak
 - Do you need translators? How many?
- Materials
 - What will you give them as they arrive/ leave
- Logistics
 - See sample Family Night Event plan

Your first steps are to know who you want to target, and how you will connect with them.

Defining Who You Want to Target

- What does your charter say?
- Overall, charter schools need to focus on special education, ELL, low income and homeless populations (see Charter Act slides to follow)
- *Note: You CANNOT add a lottery preference without amending your charter*

Charter law stipulates that schools must make specific efforts to enroll ‘special populations’.

2007 Charter Act amendment

“the charter school shall demonstrate good faith efforts to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment of students with disabilities or English language learners; and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program when compared to the enrollment figures for such students in the school district in which the charter school is located.”

Updated Charter law indicates the potential to lose a charter if due attention is not paid to maintaining special populations. You need proof of your efforts.

2010 Charter Act amendment: *Reasons for revoking charter*

“Repeated failure to comply with the requirement to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets for students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program pursuant to targets established by the board of regents or the board of trustees of the state university of New York...

If no grounds for terminating a charter are established pursuant to this section other than pursuant to this paragraph, and the charter school demonstrates that it has made extensive efforts to recruit and retain such students including outreach to parents and families... widely publicizing the lottery, and efforts to academically support such students... then the charter entity or board of regents may retain such charter.”

As a starting point you want to know your special population landscape.

What to Know	Your School's Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the district's percentage of ELL, special education, free and reduced, homeless students?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the most common languages for ELL students in your district?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are your current Year 1 projections for the percentage of ELL and special education students?	

Having and communicating defined, well resourced programs for special populations are key recruiting tools.

- Define your programs *(Examples below)*
 - Special Education
 - Reach beyond related services and resource room/SETTS.
 - How would your school handle a child who has an IEP for CTT or a self-contained class (12-1, 8-1)?
 - English Language Learners (ELLs)
 - Hire bilingual teachers/ aides
 - Have extra support built in to your curriculum
- Resource your programs
 - Ensure programs have appropriately dedicated and trained/certified staff. (E.g., special education training does not prepare a teacher to instruct ELL students)
- Communicate about your programs
 - Describe your ELL and special education programs in your marketing materials
 - Describe programs at all recruiting/outreach events and on your website

As your lottery is random, to get high percentages of special populations, you need to intentionally target sources of these students. Sample strategies include:

Special Population	Recruiting Strategies
Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach pre-schools providing special education services; Head Start pre-schools, district borough enrollment offices
English Language Learners (ELLs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translate all materials into the predominantly spoken languages of your district and community • Use non-English media, approach community- and faith-based organizations serving the language group, recent immigrant support services
Free and Reduced Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target Head Start; nearby projects
Homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know and approach local homeless shelters

Exercise

- Create project plan for outreach and/or event plan for next event
- Discuss outreach ideas

STUDENT APPLICATIONS/ APPLICATION PROCESSING



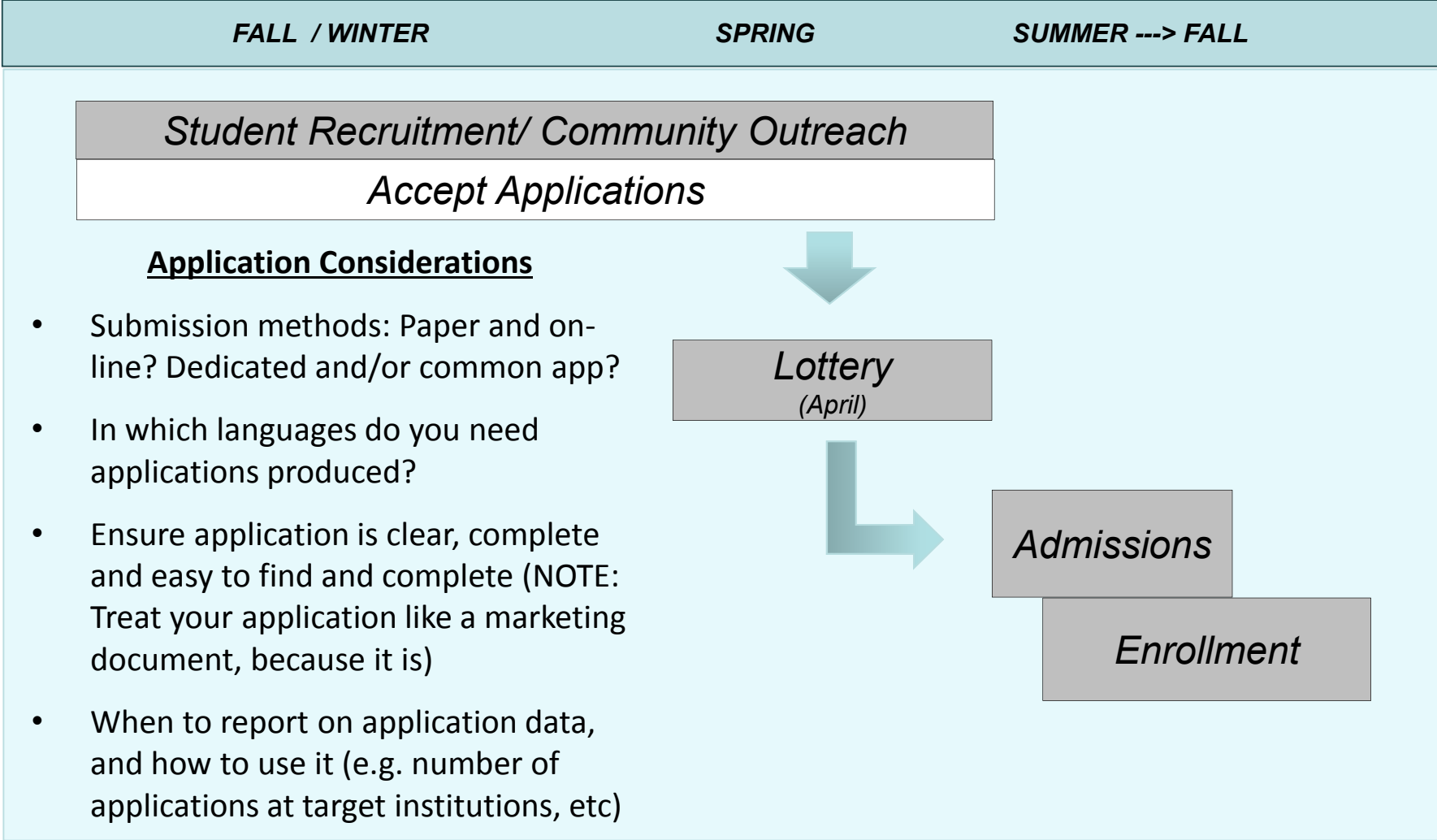
What the Charter Act says about applications, and what it means for you:

- **“Any child who is qualified under the laws of this state for admission to a public school is qualified for admission to a charter school”**
 - Illegal immigrants can attend charter schools. Never ask for proof that a student is in the United States legally.
 - Children living outside NYC can attend a NYC charter school; the school would bill the sending district.
- **“Applications for admission to a charter school shall be submitted on a uniform application form created by the department and shall be made available by a charter school in languages predominately spoken in the community in which such charter school is located”**
 - All signs point to SED creating the uniform application for next year’s applications
 - Translate, translate, translate

The Charter Act (cont.), and related application and CSD guidance:

- **“The school shall enroll each eligible student who submits a timely application by the first day of April ”**
 - DO NOT have an application deadline earlier than April 1; April 1st or any date later than April 1st is fine
- Do not use your application to gather data on your applicants such as ethnicity, home language, IEP, etc. unless you need it for lottery preference
 - You will capture this data during enrollment
- What CSD do homeless students get?
 - According to SED guidance, students who are homeless or in temporary housing CAN CHOOSE either the CSD of their last regular housing or the CSD of their current temporary housing

Think through all aspects of your application and application processing in advance.



Also consider providing application access and lottery information on the main school phone greeting

Managing application data can be arduous. Consider:

- Who will 'own' the Application database/spreadsheet?
 - Distribute ownership or update ability with extreme caution
- How will you process 'common' applications?
- How you will separate in/out of district students?
- How you will identify siblings/ twins?
- How and when will you do data cleansing?
 - Cleanse/ verify data as soon as possible, including email addresses
 - If/ When/How you will verify Community School District (CSD)
 - Note: Elementary and middle school CSDs are not necessarily the same. Many families do not know this.
 - Website for verifying CSD: <http://gis.nyc.gov/dcp/at/f1.jsp>.

This database will likely be used for family mailings and become your formal enrollment data source. Accuracy and professionalism are critical.

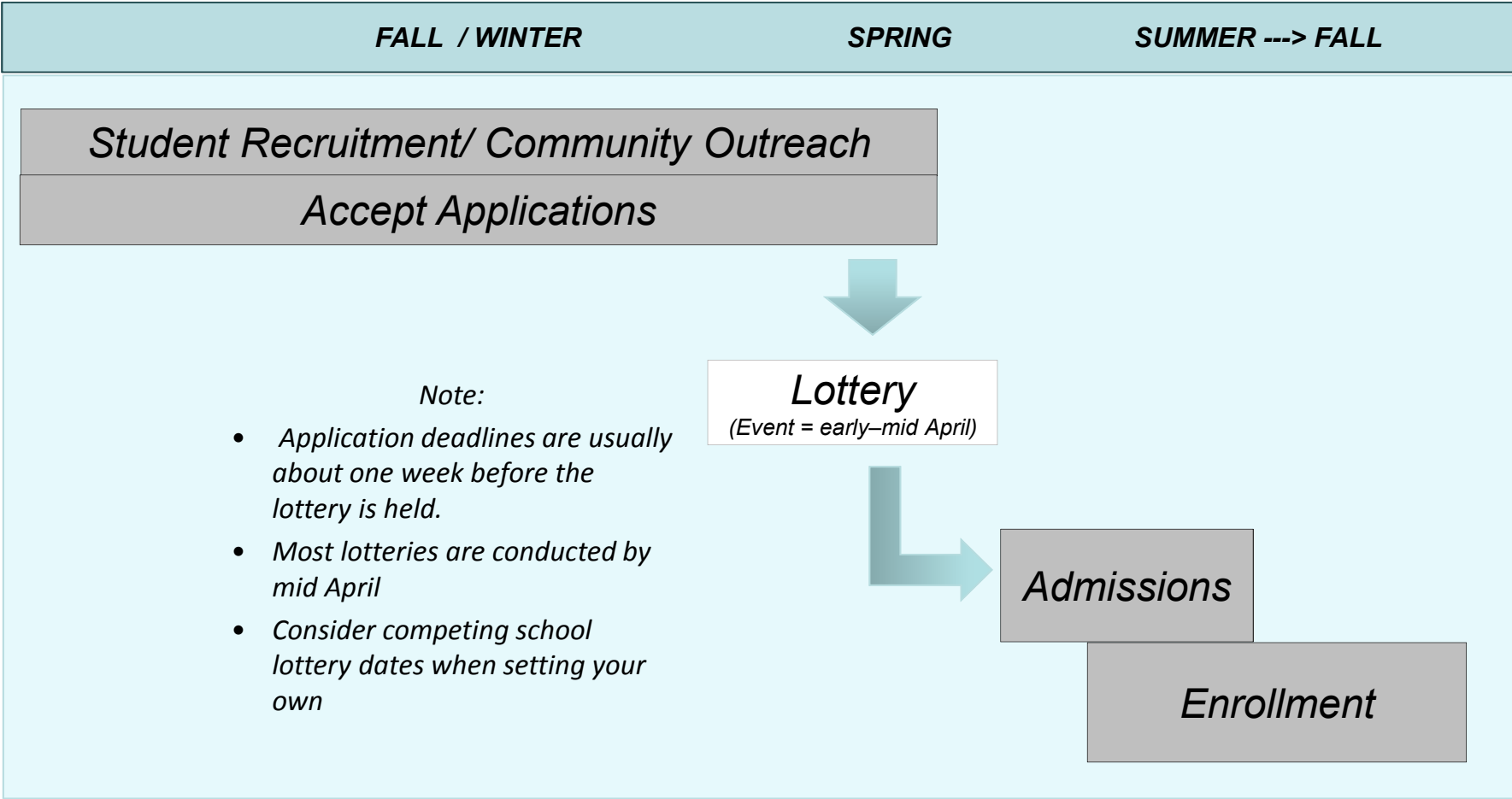
THE LOTTERY



What does the Charter Act say about lotteries?

- **Publicize your lottery to protect against revocation**
 - “Such school demonstrates that it has made extensive efforts ... including outreach to parents ... widely publicizing the lottery”
- **“The commissioner shall establish regulations to require that the random selection process conducted pursuant to this paragraph be performed in a transparent and equitable manner and to require that the time and place of the random selection process be publicized in a manner consistent with the requirements of section one hundred four of the public officers law and be open to the public”**
 - All signs point to SED producing these regulations for next year’s lottery
 - At this time, make sure that you follow the other requirements of the paragraph above

Preparation for your lottery needs to begin far in advance of the actual day. As always, do not reinvent the wheel.



Key lottery aspects to consider are:

- Your philosophy about who should attend your lottery. This will impact the 'Where' and 'When'.
- How will you announce lottery time and place?
- How many offers you will make? Wait list cut off points.
- Logistics
 - Lottery number selection method – manual vs. electronic
 - Where and when will you conduct your lottery?
 - How to record results?
 - What will you give families on the day?
 - Space, equipment and furniture requirements (space, seating, technology, etc)
 - If/Who will videotape?
 - Maintaining lottery audit records

Key lottery aspects to consider (continued)...

- Who from the Board and/or authorizer and/or external organization will be on hand to verify your lottery process and results?
- Who/how will you manage the Press?
- How to handle parents and students in attendance who will be upset
- Be prepared to send letters out that day/next day
 - What groupings will there be (offer, waitlist – probable, waitlist)
 - What will be your response process and deadlines
 - *Know how to mail merge and test the process!*

(See sample Lottery Project Plan)

You should document in advance your policies for common lottery situations. Your policies must be in line with your charter.

Common Lottery Situations to Consider/ Create Policies For

- Siblings
- Twins - How to enter one or both students into lottery to manage 'odds' (e.g. One entry for both? Both single entries?)
- Step-siblings
 - Living in same place/ Not living in same place
 - Blood relatives/ Not blood relative
- Cousins living in same domicile
- Families given an allowance to be in different district for elementary school
- Divorce situations (Be clear that in an dispute between parents, legal guardian is who the school has to follow)

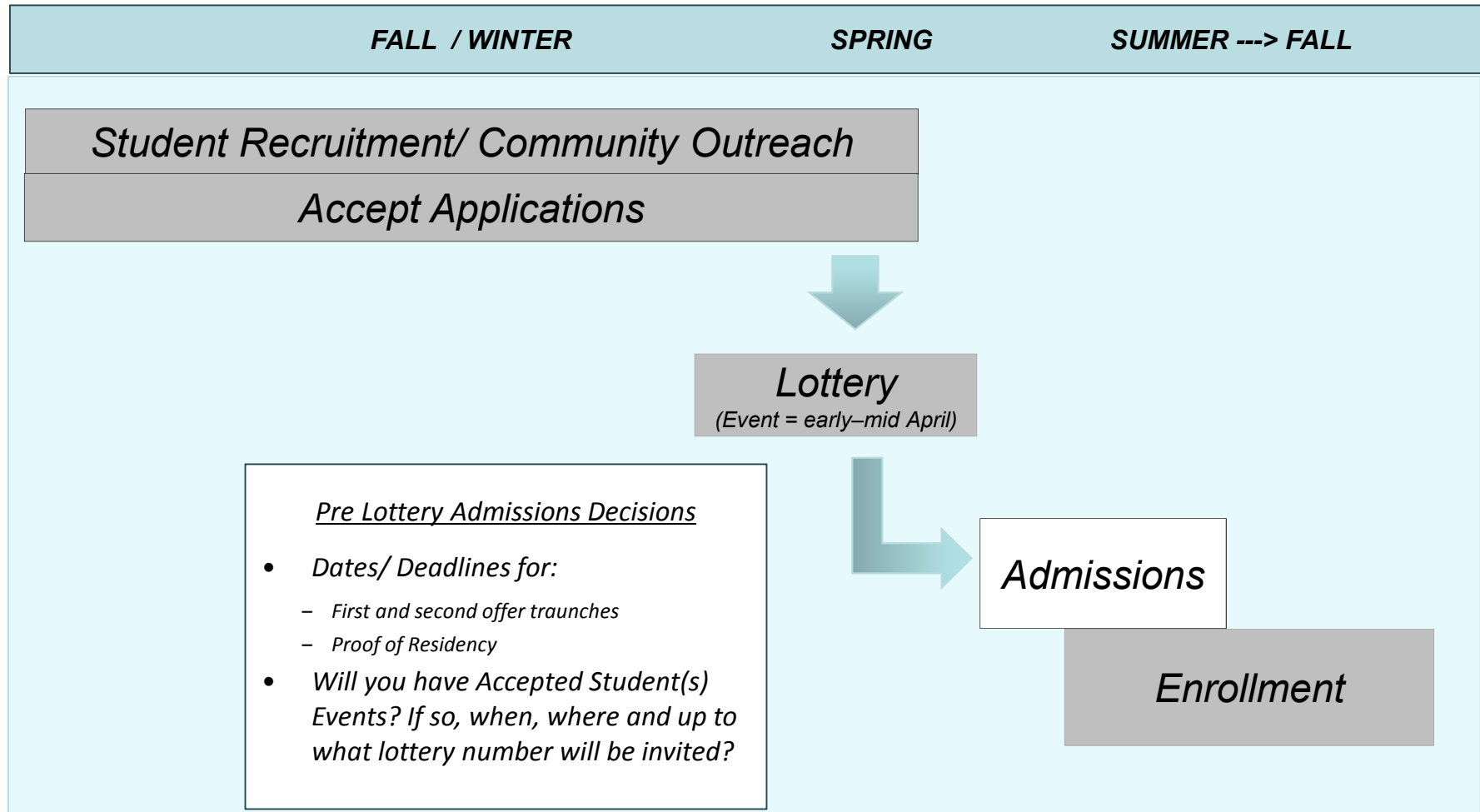
Exercise

- Discuss/Share lottery logistics intentions
- Start your lottery project or event plan

PRE LOTTERY ADMISSIONS DECISIONS



The Admissions process begins the minute your lottery is over. Some Admissions decisions are needed before the lottery is held.



PROJECT/ EVENT MANAGEMENT



Proper project management will help your key processes and events go more smoothly.

WHAT?

WHO?

PROJECT PLAN

#	Phase	Action	Owner	Date	Done?	Comment

HOW?

WHEN?

WHERE?

ISSUES LIST

#	Phase	Issue	Owner	Date Due	Comment

WHAT DO WE NEED TO FIND OUT/ RESOLVE?

Benefits of Project Planning – ‘Failing to plan is like planning to fail’.

- Ensures everyone is literally on the same page
- Forces thinking through thoroughly/ do ‘walk throughs’
 - Consider options, what could go wrong, contingencies
 - Identify issues
- Clarifies responsibilities
- Adds control
- Highlight stress points/ busy dates
- Provides an organized, consistent way to review preparation

Project Planning Tools (See templates and samples)

- High Level Context Diagram (Process Flow)
- Project plan (varying levels of detail)
- Issues List
- Event Plan
- Script/ Talking Points



Project Planning Best Practices

- Creating a Plan
 - Start early
 - Assign planning document ownership
 - Do not reinvent the wheel
 - Begin with the end in mind
- Using a Plan
 - Conduct team meetings based on project plan and issues list
 - Maintain plan version control
 - Do a physical run through/ dress rehearsal
 - Conduct a post mortem
 - Keep records for next year

Summary

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- The Lottery
- Pre Lottery Admissions Decisions
- Project/Event Management

