



August 22, 2011

Dear ASD Prospective Families,

This letter is an explanation, an apology, and an offer to all students who applied for admission to the Academy for Science and Design for the 2011 – 2012 academic year.

Very recently, it was brought to the attention of ASD's Board of Trustees that an error may have occurred in the execution of the admission procedures. No complaints were received until we heard last week from a parent who had been contacted by a reporter who implied that the process had been unfair. The parent accepted the invitation to attend ASD's Board of Trustees meeting that same week. On Wednesday night, in presenting to the Board the communications the parent received from ASD throughout the admissions process, an error did come to light. Some families involved in the process did not receive adequate communication from the school as to their right to request to have their child included in the admissions lottery regardless of the student's placement test results.

We are committed to being a leader in the charter school community and a positive contributor to the larger community outside our doors. This lack of communication and the confusion or frustration it may have caused is something we regret and wish to apologize for.

As it states in our charter, ASD is an open-enrollment public school for all students, grades 6 – 12 in the state of New Hampshire. All students in those grades are eligible to apply to the lottery should they so choose. The admissions process is designed to give both the school and the student a stronger sense of one another. The rigorous program at ASD requires a high level of commitment and effort that is not the best fit for every student, so the admissions process helps students make an informed choice about the decision to attend ASD. Likewise, the information provided during admissions gives the school a sense of the student's particular strengths and challenges in order to help them have a positive experience should the student ultimately attend. ASD's charter requires mastery at 80% or above in all required courses in order to graduate. We have encountered many students in our first four years who thrive on this particular challenge and many who do not. All students deserve to learn in an environment appropriate to their needs and learning styles, and students who scored below 70% on the placement test were to have been offered counsel about the best course of action to take; participation in the lottery to remain an option.

As many of you know, this is to be the first year that ASD opens its doors to 6th graders as well as 7th – 12th. This was also the first year in which applications for admission exceeded our physical capacity. For the first time, we were not able to admit all of the students who wished to attend, and we looked for guidance on our lottery procedures from the NH Department of Education and other charter schools. The procedure that was put in place was correct, and approved by the state as meeting both state and federal statutes, however there was a glitch in the execution of the policy. The glitch was an omission of communication, it was caused by inadvertent human error, it will not happen again – the state has offered guidance in

the handling of the procedure next year – and we wish to make it right.

To that end, we are offering guaranteed admission to ASD for the 2012 – 2013 academic year to every student who completed the admissions process for the 2011 – 2012 academic year, regardless of lottery or placement test results. Each student who chooses to attend will be placed in the appropriate grade level for that academic year. The student will not need to be placed into a lottery; however we do request a response about the intention to enroll by September 30, 2011. After that date, the placement cannot be guaranteed, although the opportunity to re-apply will still be an option. A link has been set up on the ASD website for you to inform us of your decision, alternatively you may reply to this email, or submit your intention in writing to the attention of David Chauvette, Director, Academy for Science and Design, 316 Daniel Webster Highway, Merrimack, NH 03054.

We realize that some students will remain disappointed about not attending ASD this year, and we apologize for causing that disappointment. Acceptance was not guaranteed to any applicant due to the lottery and our space constraints, and disappointment will always part of that; however, anyone receiving this letter who completed the full admissions process and who responds by September 30th will be exempted from the possibility of lottery disappointment for next year.

You will receive more specific information about enrolling your child in the upcoming week, should he or she still maintain interest in attending the school. In the meantime, we encourage all questions. Please address them to us via phone or email and we will answer them personally. Alternatively, you are welcome to bring your questions to the ASD Board of Trustees meeting on Wednesday, September 14th, 2011 at 6:30pm at ASD.

We ask for your understanding and willingness to allow us to rectify the situation as best we can. We appreciate your interest in ASD and your ongoing support. We hope to welcome you and your child to ASD soon.

Thank you.

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