CENTRALIZED ENROLLMENT & LOTTERY OPERATIONS

Centralize the Process. Localize the Welcome.

Audience field guide • frameworks, formulas, checklists, diagnostics, and 30-day implementation plan

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Texas Public Charter Schools Conference • September 28, 2026 • 2:30–3:30 PM • Cortez B

1 | The Operating Philosophy

CENTRALIZE THE PROCESS. LOCALIZE THE WELCOME.

Central enrollment should operate as a control tower: it coordinates rules, timing, data, capacity, quality and exceptions while campuses retain the human relationship with families.

CENTRALIZE — consistency & control	LOCALIZE — relationship & belonging
Application processing & completeness	Tours & campus storytelling
Status/data definitions	Welcome calls
System administration & permissions	Parent nights & orientation
Duplicate/data-quality control	Campus-specific questions
Capacity monitoring	Leader/teacher introductions
Lottery configuration, testing & audit	Culture & community building
Offers, waitlists & standard communications	Arrival readiness
Dashboards, QA, registrar training & escalations	First-day experience & belonging

The Five Ones

- ONE accountable owner
- ONE status language
- ONE source of truth
- ONE visible service standard
- ONE closed loop for unresolved work

Centralization should remove administrative burden from campuses — not remove campuses from enrollment.

2 | The Enrollment Engine & Leakage Map

ATTRACT → QUALIFY → PRIORITIZE → CONVERT → ACTIVATE → MEASURE

ATTRACT — Generate qualified family interest.

QUALIFY — Move applications to complete/ready status using consistent rules.

PRIORITIZE — Apply approved capacity, preference and lottery rules.

CONVERT — Turn offers into accepted offers and completed registrations.

ACTIVATE — Connect registered families to orientation, campus and first-day attendance.

MEASURE — Find leakage, slow velocity and risk early enough to intervene.

Funnel diagnostic

Stage	Count	Conversion	Question
Application started			Where do families abandon?
Submitted		Submitted ÷ Started	Is the application experience creating friction?
Offer			Are seats aligned to demand/capacity?
Accepted		Accepted ÷ Offered	Why are families declining/expiring?
Registration complete		Completed ÷ Accepted	Where is documentation/process friction?
First-day attendance		First-day ÷ Accepted	Are registered families actually activating?

Applications measure demand. Movement measures operations.

3 | Enrollment Command Center

Metric	Formula
Application completion	Submitted ÷ Started
Offer acceptance	Accepted ÷ Offered
Registration completion	Completed ÷ Accepted
Enrollment yield	Enrolled ÷ Offered
First-day yield	First-day attendance ÷ Accepted
Waitlist conversion	Enrolled from waitlist ÷ waitlist offers
Contact rate	Families reached ÷ families attempted
SLA compliance	Items completed within standard ÷ items due

Add the metrics that reveal friction

- Median days: application → decision
- Median days: offer → registration completion
- Registrations stalled >3 days
- Families requiring 2+ contact attempts
- Offer expiration rate
- Capacity utilization by campus/grade
- Applications per available seat
- Yield by campus/grade/source/month
- Exception rate and duplicate-record rate
- No-show / first-day attrition rate

Volume vs. Velocity

Volume = how many families are in the pipeline. Velocity = how quickly they move between meaningful stages. Track both. A large pipeline with slow movement can conceal an enrollment problem.

A dashboard should not merely tell you what happened. It should tell you where to intervene.

4 | Lottery Governance Blueprint

POLICY → RULE → CONFIGURATION → VALIDATION → LOTTERY → AUDIT → COMMUNICATION

1. GOVERN Confirm approved policy, priorities/preferences, eligibility, capacity authority and tie-breaking method.

2. PREPARE Clean the applicant population; resolve duplicates; verify grade/eligibility; validate priorities; document exceptions.

3. CAPACITY Freeze seats by campus/grade/program and document who can change them.

4. CONFIGURE + TEST Test edge cases, priority interactions, sibling/multiple rules where applicable, capacity limits and waitlist ordering.

5. EXECUTE + VALIDATE Lock inputs; record configuration; run; independently validate material outputs; retain audit artifacts.

6. RELEASE + SUPPORT Explain result, next action, deadline and support path in plain language.

7. WAITLIST + AUDIT Manage declines, expirations, new capacity, waitlist movement, documented exceptions and reconciliation.

Technology should execute policy. It should never invent policy.

T-24 Lottery Readiness Check

☐ Applicant population frozen

☐ Capacity signed off

☐ Eligibility reviewed

☐ Priorities validated

☐ Duplicates resolved

☐ Edge cases tested

☐ Material configuration independently reviewed

☐ Audit artifacts ready

☐ Communication templates approved

☐ Family-support team prepared

Governance question: If your lottery were challenged tomorrow, could you reconstruct exactly what happened?

5 | From Reporting to Prediction

Leading vs. lagging indicators

LAGGING — what already happened	LEADING — what may happen next
Enrollment count	Incomplete applications
Final registrations	Unaccepted offers
Withdrawals	Registration inactivity/aging
First-day attendance	Contact attempts / no contact
	Waitlist movement
	Offer expiration risk

Enrollment Health Score — internal management framework

Pipeline health 20%

Conversion health 25%

Velocity 20%

Capacity 15%

Family response 10%

Data quality 10%

Use Green / Yellow / Red thresholds defined by your organization. This is a management framework, not a regulatory score.

Enrollment Debt

Unresolved operational work pushed downstream: duplicates, incorrect grades, unresolved priorities, incomplete registrations, unanswered inquiries, manual exceptions, unreconciled capacity, and families nobody successfully contacted.

Enrollment debt compounds.

Contact center = sensor

Tag contact reasons and trend them. Repeated family questions are process data. If 80 families call about the same field, investigate the field before blaming 80 families.

6 | International Lessons — Translate, Don’t Copy

England

Families generally apply through their local council and list schools in preference order, including schools outside the council area.

Operational translation: Design one navigable family journey. Families should not need to understand your org chart.

Chile

Published implementation research describes a nationwide centralized choice system serving 274,000+ applicants across 6,400+ schools.

Operational translation: Scale requires common rules, clean data, transparent matching logic and governance.

Chile + New Haven research

Among high-risk applicants who received warnings, 22% added schools; measured nonplacement risk fell 58% for the studied group.

Operational translation: Communicate risk before failure — not only status after failure.

OECD cross-national evidence

School choice involves tradeoffs among access, information, quality, coherence and equity; governance and family information matter.

Operational translation: Centralization is infrastructure, not a guarantee of equitable outcomes.

7 | 30-Day Enrollment Transformation

DAYS 1–7 | MAP

Map the real family journey — not only the written SOP. Identify handoffs, spreadsheets, duplicate work and silent queues.

DAYS 8–14 | DEFINE

Define owners, statuses, SLAs, exceptions, escalation paths and data definitions.

DAYS 15–21 | MEASURE

Build the minimum viable funnel dashboard: applications, offers, acceptances, registration, aging, capacity, waitlist and withdrawals.

DAYS 22–30 | INTERVENE

Select the single largest measurable leak. Fix it. Measure again.

Do not redesign everything. Fix one measurable bottleneck. Measure again.

Enrollment Emergency — 8% below target

Before buying more advertising, inspect: application volume, offer inventory, acceptance, incomplete registration, aging, waitlist, capacity, withdrawals, no-contact families and campus/grade distribution.

Low enrollment does not automatically mean low demand. It can mean conversion failure.

8 | Monday Morning Questions

1. Where is our largest enrollment leak?
2. Which stage has the slowest velocity?
3. Which campus/grade has the greatest capacity risk?
4. How many accepted families have not completed registration?
5. How old are those registrations?
6. Which families have not been successfully contacted?
7. What are parents contacting us about most?
8. Which decisions currently depend on spreadsheets?
9. Where can two employees interpret the same rule differently?
10. What can we centralize without removing the campus relationship?

Texas 2026 reminder

TEA's 2026 Charter School Waitlist snapshot date is September 25, 2026, with the CSW reporting window open through October 30, 2026. Confirm current TEA guidance and your charter/policies before operational changes.

Sources & further reading

- Texas Education Agency, Charter School Resources for Parents and Students — CSAA requirements and admission/enrollment distinction: https://tea.texas.gov/school-and-district-information/texas-schools-charter-schools/charter-school-resources-parents-and-students
- Texas Education Agency, Charter School Waitlist — 2026 snapshot September 25; reporting through October 30: https://tea.texas.gov/school-and-district-information/texas-schools-charter-schools/charter-school-waitlist
- Texas Education Agency, Charter School Admission and Enrollment Guidance FAQ — oversubscription, lotteries/waitlists, CSAA: https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/texas-schools-charter-schools/charter-school-admission-and-enrollment-guidance-faq.pdf
- GOV.UK, School admissions: How to apply — local-council application and preference ranking: https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/how-to-apply
- Bucarey et al., "School Choice in Chile," Operations Research (2021) — 274,000+ students, 6,400+ schools: https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/10.1287/opre.2021.2184
- Artemov et al., "Smart Matching Platforms and Heterogeneous Beliefs in Centralized School Choice," Quarterly Journal of Economics (2022) — warning intervention results: https://academic.oup.com/qje/article/137/3/1791/6544686
- OECD, Balancing School Choice and Equity (2019) — choice, information, governance and equity: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/balancing-school-choice-and-equity_2592c974-en.html

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