



NATIONAL  
CHARTER SCHOOL  
RESOURCE CENTER  
AT SAFAL PARTNERS



## **SEA Webinar Series: Weighted Lotteries**

# About the National Charter School Resource Center

[www.charterschoolcenter.ed.gov](http://www.charterschoolcenter.ed.gov)

The screenshot shows the homepage of the National Charter School Resource Center. At the top left is the logo with the text 'NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTER AT SAFAL PARTNERS'. To the right is a search bar and social media icons for YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. Below this is a teal navigation bar with links for 'FOCUS AREAS', 'AUDIENCE', 'PUBLICATIONS', 'VIDEOS', 'FUNDING', 'EVENTS', and 'FAQS'. On the right side of this bar are links for 'LOGIN', 'CMO', 'CSO', and 'SEA'. Below the navigation bar is a search prompt: 'What would you like to know about Charter Schools?' followed by a dropdown menu labeled 'Select Your Topic' and a yellow 'BEGIN YOUR SEARCH' button. The main content area features a large image of diverse children with a semi-transparent overlay box containing the text: 'Report: Charter School Discipline: Examples of Policies and School Climate Efforts from the Field'. Below this text is a button that says 'Click here to access this report' with a right-pointing arrow. At the bottom of the page, there are three circular icons in teal. The first icon is a house, with the text 'What Are Charter Schools?' below it. The second icon is a folder, with the text 'State Resources for Charters' below it. The third icon is a briefcase, with the text 'Most Popular Charter Resources' below it. Each icon and text block has a short paragraph of descriptive text underneath.

- Funded through the U.S. Department of Education
- Makes accessible high-quality resources to support the charter school sector

Please visit:

<http://www.charterschoolcenter.ed.gov> for news, resources, and information on charter schools.

# Agenda

- Welcome
- Introductions & Learning Objectives
- U.S. Department of Education, Charter Schools Program, Erin Pfeltz: [Background Information](#)
- Colorado Department of Education, Gina Schlieman: [Developing and Implementing Weighted Lotteries](#)
- Achievement First, Scot Kerr: [Using Weighted Lotteries — Determining Weights & Administering](#)
- Q & A
- Closing

# Presenters

**U.S. Department of Education:** Erin Pfeltz, *Charter Schools Program*

**National Charter School Resource Center:** Mary Ann Spracher,  
*Technical Support Lead at Safal Partners*

**Colorado Department of Education:** Gina Schlieman, *Charter School Program & Grant Manager*

**Achievement First Public Charter Schools:** Scot Kerr, Associate  
*Director of Systems & Operations, External Relations*

# Webinar Objectives

Gain insight and perspective about this new opportunity by:

1. Hearing from an SEA that has amended its Charter School Program grant to provide for weighted lotteries.
2. Hearing from a charter management organization that is implementing a weighted lottery policy across its schools.
3. Asking questions and communicating with other SEA's that are interested in developing, implementing and using weighted lotteries.

*Find more on the SEA Exchange:*

<https://ncsrcseacop.groupsites.com/login>

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# CSP Nonregulatory Guidance (1 of 3)

- Guidance updated in January 2014 to clarify circumstances in which charter schools receiving CSP funds may use weighted lotteries in admissions, specifically for educationally disadvantaged students.

<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html>

## CSP Nonregulatory Guidance (2 of 3)

- Weighted lotteries (lotteries that give additional weight to individual students who are identified as part of a specified set of students, but do not reserve or set-aside seats for students) are permitted only in certain circumstances.

<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html>

# CSP Nonregulatory Guidance (3 of 3)

- Existing grantees may request approval to allow weighted lotteries as described in the Guidance by amending their grant applications. An applicant for future CSP competitions that wishes to use a weighted lottery should provide the same information in its grant application.

Section E-3a of the Guidance describes the information that must be included in the request.

<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html>

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# Implementing Weighted Lotteries

Colorado Department of Education

*Gina Schlieman, Charter School Program and Grant Manager*



# Colorado Department of Education (1 of 3)

## Colorado Context

- 214 Charter Schools in 2014-15
- Roughly 12% of statewide public school students
- Charter sector outperforms non-charter public schools in proficiency and growth

## Role of SEA with Colorado Charter Schools

- We are not an authorizer
- Geographic School Districts and one statewide authorizer
- Local control of statute interpretation and implementation
- SEA provides Technical Assistance and oversees compliance
- Charters fall under our “Schools of Choice Office” where we have a team of approximately three full time employees, with some additional administrative and consultant support available as needed

# Colorado Department of Education (2 of 3)

## CDE Charter School Supports

- [www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart)

## CDE's Colorado Charter Schools Program

- [www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/grantprograms](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/grantprograms)

## CDE Schools of Choice Office

- 201 E. Colfax Ave. Room 302, Denver, CO 80203  
[soc@cde.state.co.us](mailto:soc@cde.state.co.us)
- Gina Schlieman, Charter Schools Program & Grant Manager  
[schlieman\\_g@cde.state.co.us](mailto:schlieman_g@cde.state.co.us)  
303-866-6790
- Kelly Rosensweet, Charter & Innovation Schools Support Coordinator  
[rosensweet@cde.state.co.us](mailto:rosensweet@cde.state.co.us)

# Colorado Department of Education (3 of 3)

## Role as Charter School Program & Grant Manager

- Oversee day-to-day management of Colorado's Charter Schools Program SEA Grant
- Plan and facilitate Technical Assistance for subgrantees, Governing Board Members, Business/Finance Managers, LEA Fiscal Agents, and Authorizers
- Oversee & run Colorado CSP Start-up and Implementation Grant competitions
- Draft policies and procedures related to CSP grant oversight

# CDE Weighted Lottery Policy

## Role in Weighted Lottery Policy

- Developed and drafted policy and submission to U.S. Department of Education's CSP office
- Liaised with U.S. Department of Education over questions and concerns
- Finalized published policy and implementation document
- Handle approval and monitoring of CSP subgrantees utilizing a weighted lottery

# CDE Weighted Lottery – Policy Context (1 of 3)

## Colorado’s state statutes require only a non-discriminatory enrollment process

- “Must be open to any child who resides within the school district....Enrollment decisions shall be made in a nondiscriminatory manner....”

### [C.R.S. 22-30.5-104 \(3\)](#)

## Colorado State Board of Education Rules

- Section 2.02 governs charter school enrollment
  - 2.02 (D) “...does not engage in or adopt discriminatory recruiting, marketing, or enrollment policies or practices....”
  - 2.02 (E) “...does not establish undue barriers to students applying for enrollment...that have the effect of excluding students based on socioeconomic, family, or language background, prior academic performance, special education status, or parental involvement.”
  - 2.02 (F) “...selection process that is either random in nature or first-come-first-served....”

### [1 CCR 301-88](#)

# CDE Weighted Lottery – Policy Context (2 of 3)

## Colorado State Board of Education Rules cont.

- Section 3.04(B)(1)(f) also speaks to non-discrimination
  - “...responsibility and commitment of the school to adhere to essential public education obligations, including admitting and serving all eligible students so long as space is available, and not expelling or counseling out students except as pursuant to a legal discipline policy approved by the authorizer”
- Section 3.05(C) outlines protections for student rights
  - “Ensuring that schools provide access and services to students with disabilities as required by federal and state law”
  - “Ensuring that schools provide access to and appropriately serve other special populations of students, including English learners, homeless students, and gifted students, as required by federal and state law”

## [1 CCR 301-88](#)

# CDE Weighted Lottery – Policy Context (3 of 3)

Colorado has a policy preference to ensure nondiscrimination in enrollment practices of charter schools, and also to ensure that educationally disadvantaged students are ensured an opportunity to access quality charter programs.

## Additional Context

- The majority of Colorado's charter schools utilize a lottery due to precedence set by previous participation in the CSP grant.
- While not explicitly allowed, some emerging charter schools in recent years have been approved by their authorizer to utilize weighted lotteries, which not only set a precedence for their acceptance but increased demand for them.

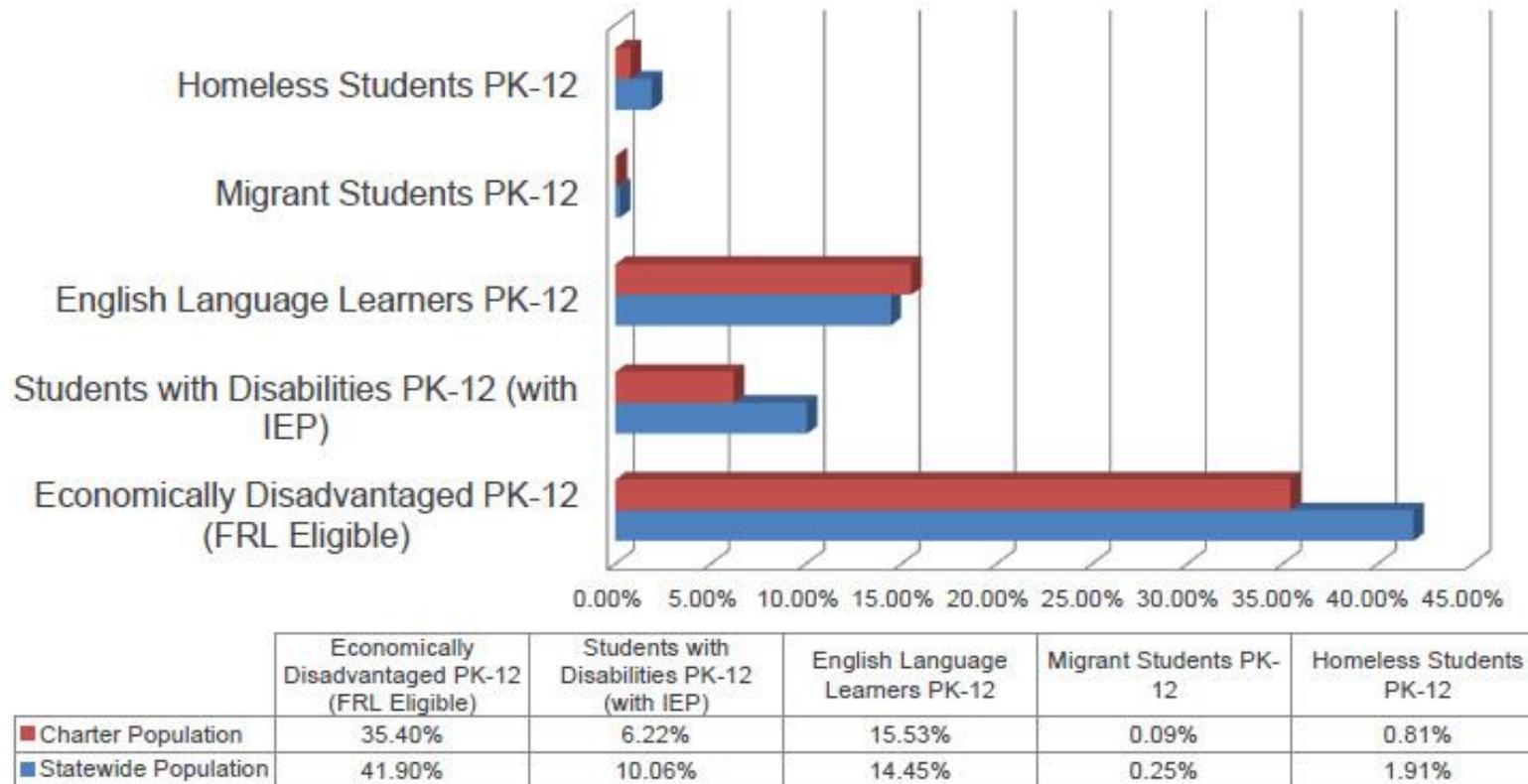
# CDE Weighted Lottery — Pursuing CSP Application Amendment

## Reasons for pursuing the amendment

- Resonated with our Colorado CSP objectives.
  - “Objective 1: Increase the number of new, high-quality charter schools that enable all students to achieve state content standards, graduate from high school, and enter college or a career with the requisite knowledge and skills to succeed.”
- 2 pending 2013-14 Colorado CSP applicants requested weighted lottery use after hearing of the federal guidance change in January 2014.
- Statistics of Educationally Disadvantaged students in charter schools justified creation of a mechanism to serve more of these students in high quality charter schools.

# CDE Weighted Lottery – Statistics

## CO Educationally Disadvantaged Student Subsets (2013-14)



# CDE Weighted Lottery – Developing CSP Application Amendment (1 of 2)

- Tight turnaround to ensure policy proposal was approved in time for Spring 2014 subgrantees to utilize.
- Key Stakeholders consulted:
  - Colorado League of Charter Schools (CO's CSO)
  - Denver Schools of Science and Technology
  - Children's Kiva Montessori Charter School
  - Prominent individuals providing Charter Legal Counsel
  - Authorizers that were already allowing weighted lotteries, as well as those considering allowance
- No opposition presented itself.

# CDE Weighted Lottery – Developing CSP Application Amendment (2 of 2)

## Key Priorities in Developing the Policy Terms

- Ensure we met the federal guidance requirements
- Ensure only applied to “Educationally Disadvantaged”
- Ensure amount of weights proposed was well justified
  - To meet or exceed state, district or local representation for that student group.
  - Tied to court orders issued to geographic school district where the school resides, where appropriate
  - Tied to vision & mission of the school
- No cap on amount of weights, to allow for accommodation of emergent circumstances
  - For example, Colorado recently had massive fires and mass flooding dramatically increasing homeless populations in areas of the state. We wanted to allow enough scope for charters to choose to be responsive to these students.
- Weighted lotteries could not be used to create schools exclusively to serve a particular subset of students

# CDE Weighted Lottery – Contents of CSP Application Amendment Submission

**Part 1:** Proposed policy

**Part 2:** Evidence of state's allowance for weighted lotteries

- Colorado Attorney General's letter

**Part 3:** Review, oversight & monitoring mechanisms (current & proposed)

**Part 4:** Colorado CSP project objectives relevant to weighted lotteries

- Colorado educationally disadvantaged statistics

**Part 5:** Amount & circumstances of weights to be allowed

- Sample rationale to present examples based on real scenarios we expected to see requested

# CDE Weighted Lottery – Review Timeline

- Jan. 2014:** Weighted Lottery guidance announced
- 2/24/2014:** Further technical assistance received at annual federal CSP SEA meeting in Washington, DC
- 2/27/2014:** Amendment to CSP Grant submitted
- 4/2/2014:** Additional info requested by U.S. Dept. of Ed.
- 4/3/2014:** Additional info emailed to U.S. Dept. of Ed.
- 4/24/2014:** Follow-up conversation with U.S. Dept. of Ed. to check on approval status
- 4/28/2014:** Weighted Lottery Policy approved
- 5/12/2014:** CDE Weighted Lottery Policy document & instructions published/circulated
- June 2014:** 2014-15 Colorado CSP Grant RFP release –included weighted lottery info/instructions

# CDE Weighted Lottery – Implementation (1 of 6)

## Communication to Field

- Formal policy document developed/published (5/2014)
- Policy document circulated to:
  - Existing subgrantees
  - Via CDE Charter Schools ListServ (charters & authorizers)
  - Announcement at quarterly authorizers meeting
  - Communicated through CSO
  - Included in 2014-15 CSP Grant RFP (6/2014)

# CDE Weighted Lottery – Implementation (2 of 6)

## Review, Oversight & Monitoring

- Authorizer review/approval of charter application/contract
- Eligibility form prior to Colorado CSP application
  - CDE staff review & initially approve/critique:
    - Categories & subset(s) of students to receive weights
    - Amount of weights for each category/subset
    - Rationale for amount of weight to be applied
    - Description of mechanisms or processes to be utilized to carry out weighted lottery, including district oversight of process
    - Sign-off from district and school certifying description provided is accurate

# CDE Weighted Lottery – Implementation (3 of 6)

## Review, Oversight & Monitoring (cont.)

- Submission of Colorado CSP application
  - Authorizer must review and approve before submission
  - CDE staff review lottery & enrollment policy again
- Inclusion in charter contract
  - Confirmed by CDE staff that lottery & enrollment policy included is consistent with weighted lottery approved
- Year 2 renewal proposal
  - Authorizer must review and approve before submission
  - CDE staff review and approve executed lottery & enrollment policy and process matches what was previously approved

# CDE Weighted Lottery — Implementation (4 of 6)

## Review, Oversight & Monitoring (cont.)

- Year 2 Spring site visit & desk review
  - Evidence of actual lottery and enrollment practices collected and reviewed Inclusion in charter contract
- Year 3 Winter/spring CSSI 3-day school review
  - CDE team checks for lottery violations
- New monitoring introduced
  - Review sampling of CSP subgrantee schools utilizing weighted lotteries to spot-check compliance
  - New questions and documentation being developed for year 2 & year 3 renewal processes
  - Analyze annually pupil count data to inform future policy revisions and clarifications

# CDE Weighted Lottery – Implementation (5 of 6)

## Challenges

- How to implement lottery weights in districts with centralized school choice enrollment systems/processes?
- Helping applicant schools understand how to justify their choice of weights with a rationale backed with hard data/information/statistics

## Use of Weighted Lotteries

- 2 of 11 CSP subgrantees for 2013-14
- 4 of 20 CSP subgrantees for 2014-15 (as of 11/6/2014)
- We expect to see more as we will be prioritizing within the Colorado CSP application beginning 2015-16
- Will develop outreach plan following analysis of 2014 October count data

# CDE Weighted Lottery – Implementation (6 of 6)

## Making a difference?

- Too soon to tell
- Waiting until October count data is released later this month
- With a clear policy in place we are seeing more inquiries by schools considering a weighted lottery policy
- Conversations between authorizers and their existing schools are starting to take place, particularly around serving more FRL, EL & IEP students
- Explicit listing in the Colorado CSP grant RFP made more schools aware
- We will be highlighting the benefits of weighted lotteries at our annual two day Charter School Boot Camp workshop

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# Using Weighted Lotteries

**Achievement First Public Charter Schools**

*Scot Kerr, Associate Director/Systems & Operations, External Relations*



# Overview

Weighted lotteries enable Achievement First to fulfill our mission “to deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all of America's children.”

This requires us to serve the neediest children in our neediest communities first, which weighted lotteries help us achieve.

## **About Achievement First**

- Charter Management Organization formed in 2004 to build on the success of Amistad Academy which opened in 1999
- Currently 29 schools in three states serving nearly 9,700 scholars

## **About Scot Kerr**

- Joined Achievement First in 2013 after a career in publishing/advertising
- Oversaw Board Governance and Authorizer Relations
- Currently heads Systems & Operations for External Relations
- Leading the implementation of student recruitment systems

# Policy Context

- Authorizers
  - Connecticut Department of Education (11 schools)
  - **New York Department of Education/SUNY (17 schools)**
  - Rhode Island Department of Education (1 school)
- In NY, lottery preference is permitted for students that reside in the community school district and to “establish enrollment preferences for students at-risk of academic failure, students with disabilities and English language learners.”

# Administrative Rules

- Conducting the New York lotteries
  - Governed by the “admissions policy” of the charter school
  - Overseen by an impartial observer
  - Open to the public
  - Any random method (lottery ball, technology, paper ticket)
- Preference allowances and procedures available at:  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/CharterSchoolRegulation19.5.html>

# AF Brooklyn Lottery Preferences

## Two Automatic Preferences

1. Returning students
2. Siblings of current/newly enrolled students

## Four Weighted Preferences (2014-15) — weights are additive

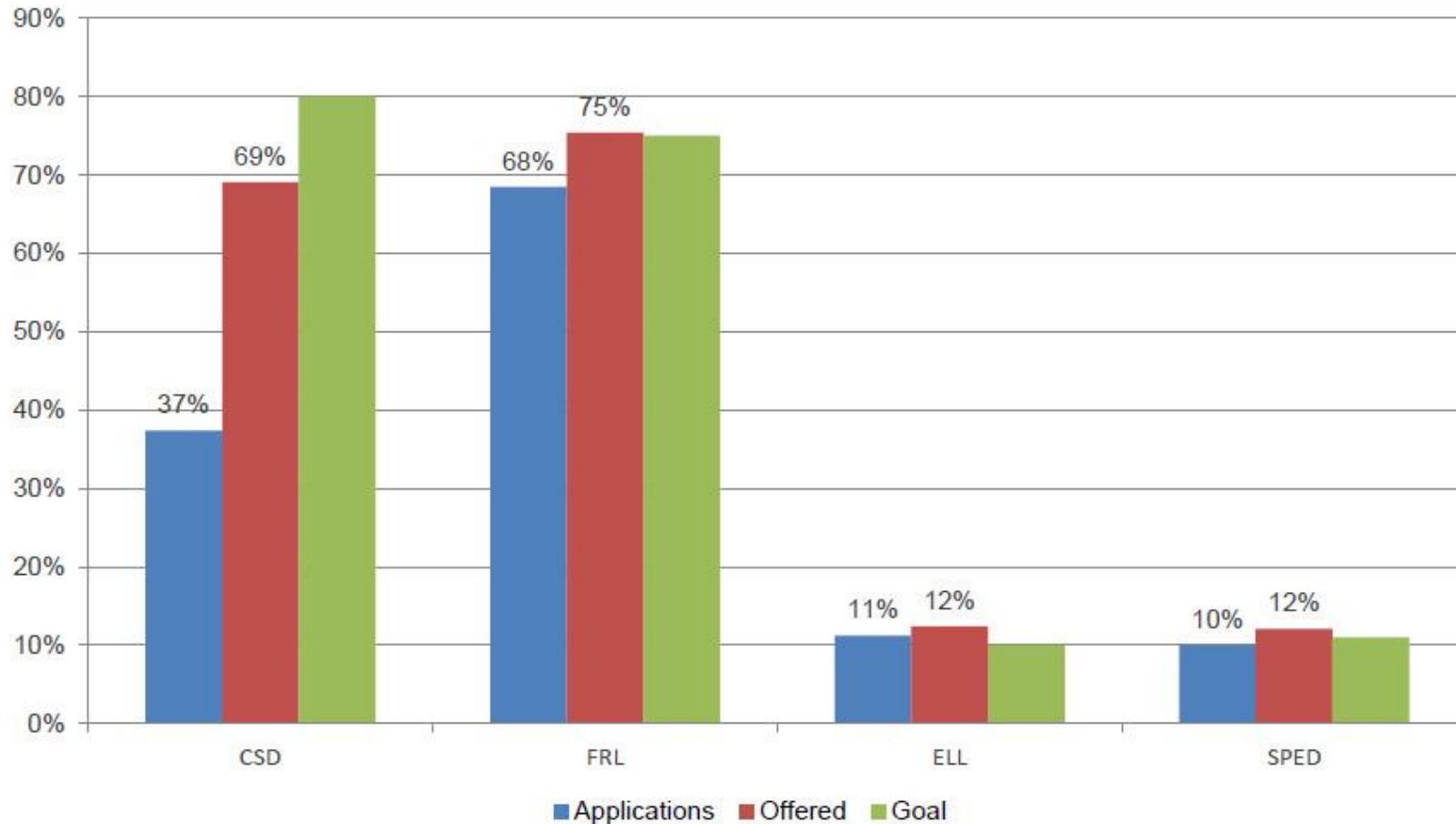
3. District (CSD): +11
  - ▶ Self-identified At-Risk Categories
4. Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) +1
5. English Language Learner (ELL) +1
6. Special Education (SPED) +1

# Determining Lottery Weights

- Equity and Excellence Exemplar
  - Provide an exceptional education
  - Serve the same student population as corresponding district / neighborhood schools
- Review demographics of district schools to determine targets by at-risk category
- Based on projected applicant pool, set weight (incremental lottery chances) to result in targeted outcome
  - Not a perfect science
  - Randomness and sibling preference impact final results

# Outcomes

Comparison among applicant pool, lottery winners and goal:



# Running Weighted Lotteries

- Currently implementing SchoolMint, an end-to-end student recruitment and enrollment system which accommodates multiple preference weights
- Weighting can easily be achieved with a well structured spreadsheet
  - Multiple “chances” determined by the total “weight” available to the applicant

# Demonstration

- Tour of lottery spreadsheet with up to 25 chances
- Demonstration of scenario builder to help determine weights required to hit targets

## Resources / Referrals

- Weighted Lottery Spreadsheet
  - Lottery detail
  - Scenario builder tab
- SchoolMint website: [www.schoolmint.com](http://www.schoolmint.com)
- Contact: Scot Kerr: [scotkerr@achievementfirst.org](mailto:scotkerr@achievementfirst.org)
- Cell: 203-521-2461

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# Questions & Closing Comments

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# Continue the discussion on the SEA Exchange

<https://ncsrcseacop.groupsie.com/login>

The screenshot displays the National Charter School Resource Center website. At the top left, the text reads "National Charter School Resource Center at Safal Partners". To the right, there are links for "About", "Contact", and "Events", along with a search bar and a "Subscribe to our Newsletter" checkbox. Below this is a navigation menu with items like "Our Work", "Focus Areas", "Resource Library", "Education & Training", "Funding Opportunities", "Events", "News", and "Parents". The main content area is titled "SEA Exchange" and includes a "Welcome to the SEA Exchange Group!" message. A list of actions is provided: "Start a Discussion", "Post a Resource", "Find Group Members", "View Group Resources", and "View Group Discussions". A sidebar on the left contains "MY ACCOUNT" (My Profile, Log out) and "MY GROUPS" (CMO Exchange, SEA Exchange, Special Education with 1 new item).

# Contact Us

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[info@safalpartners.com](mailto:info@safalpartners.com)

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