Lottery Options for NJ Public School Choice Program Placements

I. Purpose of the lottery

1. The NJDOE target enrollment caps and district target enrollment limit student selection.
2. The lottery is a fair way to select students based on drawing names from submitted applications.
3. The lottery is an open process and the parent or guardian of each child who has submitted an application must be informed of the date and time of the lottery.
4. At the conclusion of the lottery, each participant in the lottery must be assigned a number reflecting the student's place on the list of accepted students or on the waiting list.

See DOE procedures for processing applications and post-lottery steps to be done within designated deadlines.

II. Lottery Process – before lottery day for each district

1. Parents of potential students fill out applications as per the instructions and deadlines posted on the NJDOE Choice website.
2. All applications are flagged for the category/type of applicant as per priorities established by the DOE guidelines and the district's School Choice policy.
3. Some enrollment preferences are mandated by statue, i.e. Tier I over Tier II students or rollover tuition students for new Choice districts.
4. Other priorities are determined by the district. Choice districts may give enrollment preference to students in the following circumstances: a) students who have siblings currently attending the choice district, b) students who attend a choice district with a send-receive agreement (or limited purpose regional districts) that terminates before 12th grade; and c) resident students of the choice district who move out of the district during the course of the school year.
5. Additionally, a Choice district may target specific grade levels or specialized programs and give priority for applications for those grades or specialized programs.
6. Some students may meet more than one enrollment preference criteria. And a district may have more preference students than available seats. Therefore, the district should determine which enrollment preference category has priority.
7. No preference is given to students who applied but were not accepted in a previous year.
8. A spreadsheet of those applying for all open grades is created at each school; a copy is maintained by the school/district's Interdistrict Public Choice Coordinator.

III. Lottery Officials (Sample)

1. School Choice Coordinator
2. District Information Officer or other district designee
3. School officials or designees

IV. Lottery Process

1. Lotteries are held after application due date, as posted on NJDOE School Choice website.
2. The lottery process may be determined by the Choice district, but the public lottery must follow DOE guidelines.
3. Application numbers are drawn randomly, i.e., manually or from a computerized random number generator, such: http://www.random.org/sequences/

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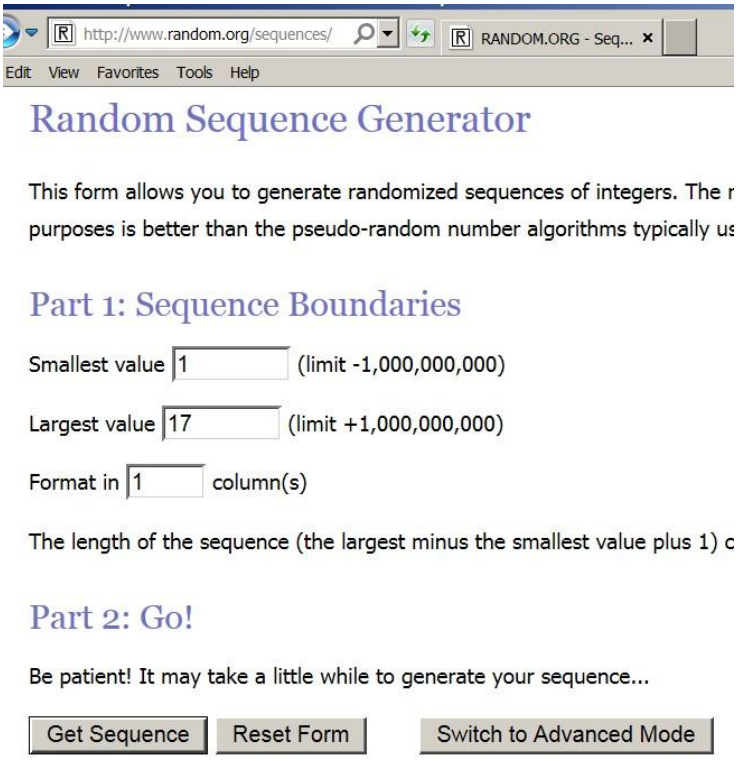
4. After a number is drawn, the officials check for siblings of that name/number, should sibling preference be given by the district. If seats are available and a sibling exists, that sibling will also be placed. If all seats are filled, then the sibling goes to the top of the waiting list.
5. Once all available seats are taken, officials begin drawing for the wait list.
6. Late applications are added to the end of the wait list in the order they are received.

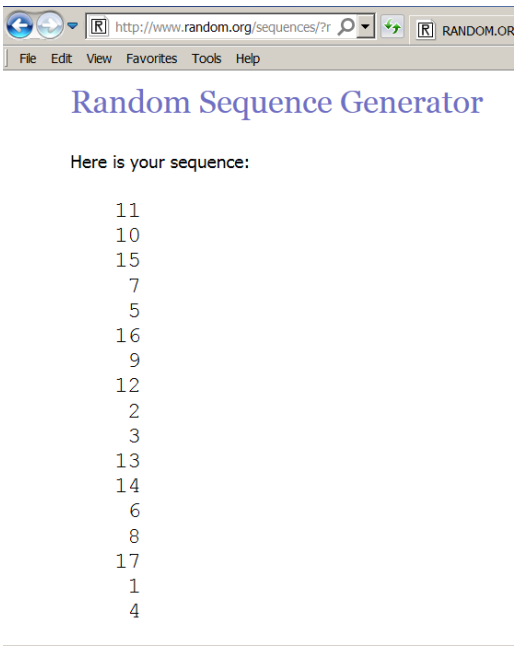
V. Wait Lists

1. If more students apply than there are seats available, then most schools create a wait list based on the lottery draw.
2. A wait list of names is kept until the next year's lottery draw.
3. Wait list names from the previous year are not given priority over new applicants.

VI. Random Drawings

1. May use manual random drawing or web-based services, such as: http://www.random.org/sequences/
2. See sample below on how to generate computerized random drawing.
3. Random drawing may be stratified: grouped by priority with random drawings done in order of each priority.
4. Or, random drawing may be done in two steps: first, draw for the overall order and then arrange by priority group. Next check to see if more than one student is in a priority group. If there are multiple eligible students, arrange by the lower number draw.





Source sample taken from:http://www.meridianschools.org/ChiefJoseph/Newsletter%20Archive/School%20of%20Choice%20Lottery%20Process%202013%20-%202014.pdf

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