



## Opening Day Admission Report

August 28, 2019

### What Happened? Part Two

We opened the 2019-2020 school year with an enrollment of **476 students**, 396 returning students and 80 new students (including 21 siblings and 1 faculty/staff child). This is significantly lower than our April 1 enrollment of 491, but exceeds our budgeted enrollment of 472.

How did we get from 491 to 476? This represents a highly unusual “spring melt” (net loss of enrollment from April 1 until enrollment agreements become binding on June 1) of 15 students. For the last five years, the spring melt has averaged five students.

Ten new students returned enrollment agreements and then decided not to enroll. This is a high number (for the past four years, the number of new students who ultimately did not enroll averaged four students).

- The family of one student ended up not moving from New York
- The families of three students decided to stay at their current schools
- The families of two students got into higher-choice independent schools
- The families of four students got into their top choice public schools on the SFUSD second round

In addition, for the 2018-2019 school year, attrition was on the higher side, at 9%. Last school year (2017-2018), our attrition was at an historic low of 5.4%, and the prior two years it was 8.3%.

The admission experience this year cautions that we should continue to be conservative when setting enrollment goals. Missing an enrollment goal by even a few students can have a meaningful impact on the budget. Alternatively, pressure to increase enrollment to get closer to a budgeted number could translate into the need to accept students who in other situations we would not consider to be qualified candidates for our program.

### **2019-2020 Enrollment, grade-by-grade**

Preschool:	72
Transitional K:	12
Kindergarten:	48
Grade 1:	44
Grade 2:	44
Grade 3:	42
Grade 4:	40
Grade 5:	45
Grade 6:	43
Grade 7:	44
Grade 8:	42

### **Demographics**

Of the 476 students:

- 246 are boys (51.7%); 230 are girls (48.3%)
- 127 students are receiving sliding scale tuition (27%).
- 8% are from LGBTQ-headed households
- 48% are students of color
- 30% of our students are multiracial, a demographic that continues to increase each year (last year, 29.4% of our students were multiracial)

### **Attrition**

As mentioned, attrition was on the higher side, at 9%.

Attrition is calculated based on the number of students leaving the school **voluntarily**. The NAIS attrition formula does **not** include students who were **not offered contracts or counseled out** (we had two such students for the 2018-2019 school year).

The families of 38 students voluntarily chose not to return to CDS:

- 22 students moved out of San Francisco
- 7 students transferred to public school
- 7 students transferred to another independent school
- 2 students transferred to a faith-based school

Students moving out of San Francisco accounted for **58%** of our attrition. Family relocation has been impacting attrition for several years. Here is a comparison of the

reasons students voluntarily left over the last three years:

<b>School Year</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>
Moving	22	10	20
Public Option	7	5	13
Another Independent School	7	7	3
Faith-based School	2	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Moving as a percentage of total</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>56%</b>

### **Yield**

Our overall yield (first round and subsequent offers) for the Early Childhood Program (preschool and TK) was very strong at 72%, higher than the yields for last year (70%) and the year before (64%).

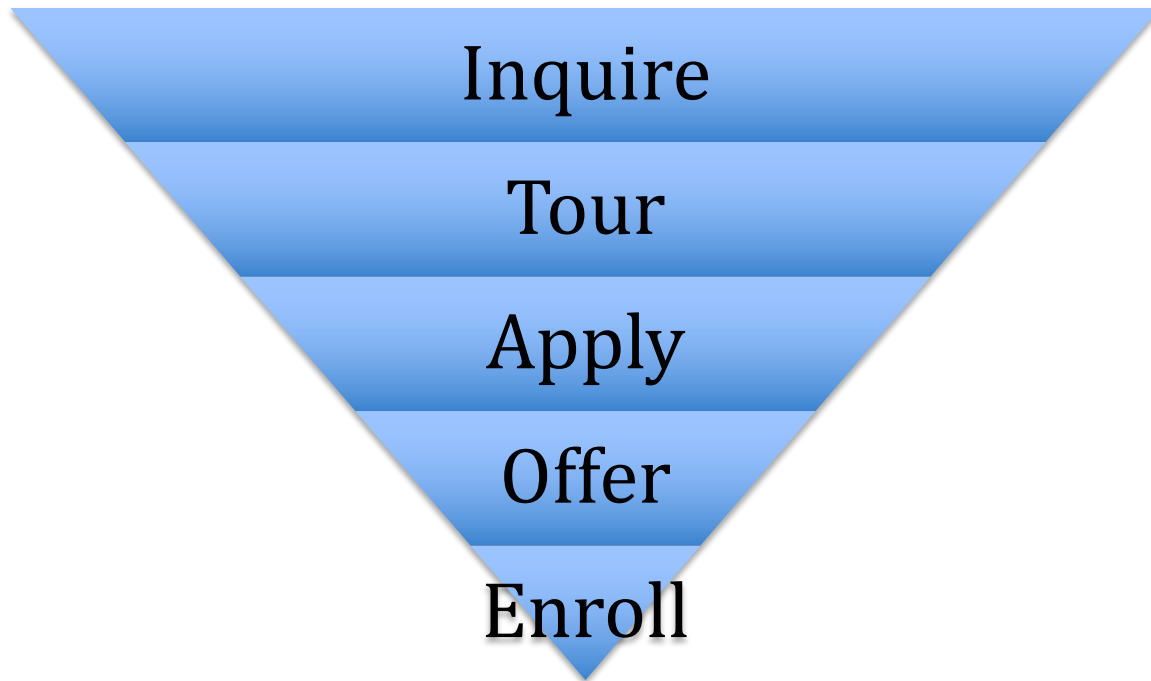
Our overall K-8 yield was 43% (last year’s overall yield was 36%). While much smaller than our yield for our Early Childhood Program, this is a solid yield in the highly competitive K-8 marketplace.

We surveyed the 47 families (representing 61 children) who turned down our offer of enrollment, and received 16 responses. While there was no one reason mentioned by families when they declined an enrollment offer from CDS, the reason cited by 50% of respondents as “most important” or “very important” was “tuition [was] too expensive.” Interestingly, the other 50% of respondents said the cost of tuition was “not important.” Some of the other reasons cited this year included:

- Having a strong public school option.
- Location – being accepted at a school more convenient to home.
- Wanting an immersion program (families choosing CAIS, FAIS, Lycee, or Presidio Knolls).
- Wanting a single-sex environment (families choosing one of the all-boy or all-girl schools).
- Seeking the “Quaker experience” (for Friends) or a Jewish school (for Brandeis).
- A “gut feeling” that another school was a “better match.”

## The Admission “Funnel”

Traditionally, the admission process has been seen as a “funnel,” as depicted below:



Using the admission funnel model, during the 2018-2019 school year (for 2019-2020 enrollment):

We received **Inquiries** from the parents of **660 children**.

We **Toured** the parents of **458 children**.  
(69% of parents Inquiring went to the next step of Touring.)

We received **Applications** from the parents of **308 children**.  
(67% of parents Touring went to the next step of Applying.)

We extended **Enrollment Offers** to the parents of **143 children**.  
(46% of applicants received an enrollment offer.)

We **Enrolled** a total of **80 children (the “yield”)**.  
(56% of enrollment offers were accepted, a solid school wide yield, overall, although this number was bolstered by the very high yield in the Early Childhood Program.)

## **Successes**

- We exceeded our enrollment goal.
- The number of applications received (308) was roughly comparable to last year (326). We had more than plenty of applicants to fill our classes with families we wanted at our main entry points.
- **57%** of the children in the 3-year-old preschool class are students of color. There are also seven students from LGBTQ-headed households in the 3-year-old preschool class.
- 50% of newly enrolled students have at least one parent who works in some capacity in the **technology** industry (both a success and a challenge as we think about who we are as a school).

## **Challenges**

- We remain the most expensive preschool in San Francisco. Our peer schools with preschool-8<sup>th</sup> grade programs are (for the most part) close but not at our tuition (La Scoula is closest at \$34,000, although that includes lunch; San Francisco School, our main independent school competitor at the preschool level, is \$32,050, which also includes lunch for preschool-grade 5). Our most significant stand-alone preschool competitor is Pacific Primary, and its tuition is \$27,261 for a year-round, 12-month program.
- Competition for students of color is fierce.
- Even with over \$3.2 million in sliding scale funds, we do not have enough funding to reach the 30-33% level of students on sliding scale that over the years has been discussed as a desirable level (we currently are at 27% of students on sliding scale). San Francisco Friends School on its website reports that 27% of its students are paying adjustable tuition; San Francisco School on its website reports that 28% of its students are receiving indexed tuition (although that school is significantly smaller than CDS, with 278 students). We are definitely **among** the leaders in socioeconomic diversity, but we cannot say we are **the** leader in socioeconomic diversity.
- The cost and scarcity of housing continue to impact families. 22 students enrolled last year did not return because their families moved out of San Francisco. Families moving out of San Francisco accounted for **58%** of our attrition.

## **Admission for the 2020-2021 School Year**

- We have renamed the Admission Office and are now the Enrollment Management Office.
- Kristina Berman has come on board as the Assistant Director of Enrollment Management. Amanda Richard is now full-time as the High School Transition Counselor, but will periodically assist with admission work during peak times.

- We are transitioning our online admission process to Ravenna, a Community Brands company used by a number of our competitors. Ravenna allows prospective parents to create an account which they can go to in order to access all aspects of the admission process (signing up for tours, Open Houses, visits, interviews, etc.). This system is significantly simpler for prospective parents to use than our prior system, which required parents to re-enter the same demographic information (name, address, child, etc.) each time they signed up for an admission event. Ravenna also allows the teachers of prospective students to complete evaluations online. Ravenna will go live for tour and Open House signups shortly, with the remaining features following by early-October.
- We are continuing to work on our admission materials to creatively distinguish ourselves from our competitors. We are in the process of incorporating the new Mission/Beliefs/Values and Learning Beliefs into admission materials, and our admission website, [www.experience.cds-sf.org](http://www.experience.cds-sf.org), is being updated for the new admission season and will be ready when tours start on October 7. We also are actively working on an admission-office blog.

### **The San Francisco Admission Landscape**

After admission season, the Bay Area Directors of Admission (BADA) organization conducted a survey of the admission landscape in the San Francisco Bay Area. 61 BADA-member independent schools (preschool-8 and K-8), including CDS, completed the survey. The data shows that many of the issues and trends we see are shared by many of our peer schools. Here are some key results as of June, 2019:

#### The Applicant Pool

- Over 90% of schools with preschools received 150 applications or less for preschool (CDS received 114, not including TK.)
- 86% of schools received 150 applications or less for kindergarten (CDS received 94).

#### Yield

- 54% of schools reported yields of 60% or less (CDS' school wide yield was 56%).

#### Enrollment

- **77% of schools reported having 1 or more spaces.** Only 23% of schools characterized themselves as full. We did not characterize CDS as full, since we do have the capacity to add a few students (e.g., in grade 4); however, we did meet/exceed our enrollment goal.
- **95%** of schools reported that **family relocation** contributed to students voluntarily leaving the school “to a great extent” (45%), “to a significant extent” (31%), or “to some extent” (19%).

### Students of Color

- Collectively, the BADA schools reported an average of **42%** students of color.
- For 2019-2020, students of color enrolled at CDS comprise **48%** of the student population.

### Attrition

- 60% of schools reported attrition for the 2017-2018 school year of 6% or greater. Our attrition for 2017-2018 was 5.4%.