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Palisades Teens Apply in Droves at Palisades High

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Danielle Gillespie, Staff Writer

Students living in Pacific Palisades have applied to attend Palisades Charter High School this fall in droves, according to Monica Iannessa, director of student services.

'We have received over twice as many applications from residents as in recent years,' Iannessa said, adding that she thinks the increase is due to the economic downturn, which has resulted in more families considering public school rather than private.

PaliHi received 365 applications from residents for the ninth grade, and 230 of those were from residents who did not attend Paul Revere Charter Middle School, Executive Director Amy Dresser-Held said. Residents are those that live not only in Pacific Palisades, but Topanga and parts of Brentwood.

'Historically, the number of non-Revere residents has been a lot lower,' Dresser-Held said.

The high school received a total of 1,475 applications for all grade levels and will accept about 950 students. The school's enrollment cap is 2,760 students, and there are currently 2,678 students enrolled.

PaliHi received 1,188 applications for 744 open spots for the freshman class, and 287 applications for 206 open spaces for sophomores through seniors. The available seats include the magnet school.

The high school admits students in order of preference, starting with residents, then family members of current students and faculty, and Paul Revere eighth graders.

The Paul Revere students are further divided in order of preference. Those who live in the Palisades, have attended a Palisades public elementary school or are a part of the Permit with Transportation (PWT) or the Public School Choice (PSC) programs are selected first.

The remaining Paul Revere students and any students from outside the area were placed in a lottery on March 26 held in the auditorium, B101.

Joseph Irvine, a 20-year-old from Chandler, Arizona, designed a computer software program to conduct the lottery. The new system replaced the school's antiquated approach of drawing pieces of paper, resulting in a more efficient process.

There are now 208 Paul Revere students on the waiting list and 20 eighth graders from outside the area. Iannessa is uncertain that PaliHi will be able to accept all Paul Revere students this fall.

'We still have residents applying to the school, and we are bound to accept them,' Iannessa said, adding the school's charter mandates residents be given first preference.

Paul Revere also hosted its lottery on March 25, and about 420 students filled out applications for the sixth grade, Principal Fern Somoza said. The school, with a total of 2,070 students, accepted 250 applicants and the remainder were placed in order on a waiting list.

'We will issue acceptance letters to the first 250 names pulled,' Somoza said. 'If those families do not turn in enrollment applications by May 22, we will immediately fill those slots using the waiting list. We will continue to call the waiting list until all slots are filled.'

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[^ TOP ^](#)

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