

ESSEX AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICY

March 12, 2008

I. INTRODUCTION

An admission process is necessary in vocational technical schools where space is a limiting factor. Vocational agricultural laboratories (shops) are designed and equipped to serve a specific maximum number of students safely. Consequently, a complex of such laboratories lacks both the space and flexibility to accommodate the potential needs and/or interests of all applicants. Therefore, a selection process is necessary. All applicants to grades nine through twelve at Essex Agricultural and Technical High School will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy. The Essex Agricultural and Technical High School Board of Trustees approved this policy on **March 13, 2008**.

II. EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Essex Agricultural and Technical High School admits students and makes available to them its advantages, privileges and courses of study without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.

If there is a student with limited English proficiency, a qualified representative from Essex will assist the applicant in completing the necessary forms and assist in interpreting during the entire application and admission process upon the request of the applicant.

Students with disabilities may voluntarily self-identify for the purpose of requesting reasonable accommodations during the entire application and admission process.

Information on limited English proficiency and disabilities submitted voluntarily by the applicant, for the purpose of receiving assistance and accommodations during the entire application and admission process, will not affect the applicant's admission to the school.

III. ELIGIBILITY

Any eighth, ninth, tenth, or eleventh grade student who is a resident of Massachusetts, and who expects to be promoted to the grade they seek to enter by their local district is eligible to apply for fall admission or admission during the school year subject to the availability of openings to Essex Agricultural and Technical High School. Students will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy. **Essex Agricultural and Technical High School is required to provide transportation to the cities and towns within a twenty-mile radius of the school. Only students within this twenty-mile radius are eligible for transportation services by Essex Agricultural and Technical High School.**

Students who reside in cities and towns located outside the 20 mile transportation radius are eligible to apply for fall admission or admission during the school year subject to the availability of openings at Essex provided they expect to be promoted to the grade they seek to enter by their local district. **These students will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy; however, these students are not eligible for transportation services by Essex Agricultural and Technical High School. These students are eligible for transportation services through their sending district consistent with M.G.L. c. 74 s. 8A (please see the "guidelines for Vocational Technical Education Program Nonresident Student Tuition Process Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 74 located at www.doe.mass.edu/cte/admissions/nonres_guidelines).**

Transfer students from other vocational agricultural technical schools are eligible to apply for fall admission or admission during the school year to grades 9-12 at Essex provided they expect to be promoted to the grade they seek to enter by their current school and availability exists in the agricultural vocational major in which they are interested. Transfer students from comprehensive high schools are eligible to apply for fall admission or admission during the school year to grades 9 and 10. All transfer students will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Essex is a public agricultural vocational technical school located on a 166-acre scenic campus in the historic Hathorne section of Danvers, Massachusetts. Essex is fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Essex is committed to providing quality agricultural vocational programs in Animal Science, Environmental Technology, and Plant Science.

It is the responsibility of the Essex Superintendent/Director to supervise the administration of the policies and procedures required to admit and enroll applicants in conformity with this Admission Policy.

Essex has an Admission Committee appointed by the Superintendent/Director. The committee is chaired by the Director of Community Relations and consists of a member of the Administration, Guidance, Special Needs, Student Services, Agricultural Vocational and Academic Departments. Responsibilities of the Admissions Committee include oversight of the:

- A. determination of standards for admission
- B. development and implementation of admission procedures
- C. processing of completed applications
- D. ranking of students
- E. acceptance of students according to the procedure and criteria in the admission policy
- F. establishment and maintenance of a waiting list of acceptable candidates

The Director of Community Relations is responsible for disseminating information about Essex through local school assemblies and press releases, and for collecting applications from the local schools. Presently there is no quota system for any community. Essex does not participate in the School Choice Program.

V. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

1. Essex disseminates information about the school through a variety of methods.
 - a. Visitations with an informational slide and DVD presentation to 8th grade classes in local schools by the Essex Director of Community Relations from October to January are scheduled.
 - b. An Open House during the month of October is scheduled on a Saturday so prospective students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) have an opportunity to visit all academic and agricultural technical programs and speak with teachers, as well as view a DVD/slide presentation about all offerings at Essex. This event is advertised in several local newspapers, as well as radio stations and cable station. Posters of the event are distributed to sending school district.
 - c. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may schedule individual visits at a mutually convenient time.
 - d. Group tours are scheduled during a school day at least once per month throughout the fall, winter, and early spring.

- e. Brochures, which describe agricultural technical programs and include academic courses, sports, cooperative education, and special education resources, are distributed during the 8th grade visitations and by contacting the Director of Community Relations.

VI. APPLICATION PROCESS

APPLICATION PROCESS-FOR FALL ADMISSION*

1. Students interested in applying to Essex for fall admission must:
 - a. obtain an application from the local school Guidance Counselor or the Essex Director of Community Relations as early in the school year as possible.
 - b. return the application form with **pages one and two completed and signed by the student and her/his parent/guardian** to the local school Guidance Counselor by the deadline set by the Guidance Counselor.
 - c. attend an interview at Essex. If the applicant or parent/guardian cannot provide transportation, a representative from Essex will go to the local school to interview the applicant.
2. It is the responsibility of the local school Guidance Counselor/Adjustment Counselor to:
 - a. complete the designated portion of the application form.
 - b. forward the completed applications to the Director of Community Relations at Essex by March 1st.
Complete applications include:
 - (i) Completed application form (including required signatures).
 - (ii) For applications to grade 9 (fall admission), the average of grade 7 and term 1 of grade 8 marks in English language arts or its equivalent, social studies, math and science from the local school report card/transcript are required. For applications to grade 10 (fall admission) the average of the previous school year and term 1 of the current school year marks in English language arts or its equivalent, social studies, math and science from the local school report card/transcript is required.

For applications to grade 9 (fall admission), the sum of grade 7 and term 1 of grade 8 **unexcused absences** from the local school report card/transcript are required.

For applications to grades 10 (fall admission) the sum of the previous school year and term 1 of the current school year **unexcused absences** from the local school report card/transcript is required.

For applications to grades 9 and 10(fall admission), a recommendation form completed by the applicant's guidance counselor or current teacher in English language arts or its equivalent, social studies, math and science.

For applications to grades 9 and 10 the local school discipline records are required.
3. If incomplete applications are received, the following procedures will be followed:
 - a. The Admission Office at Essex will notify the local school Guidance Counselor responsible for submitting the application that the application is incomplete and will request completion.
 - b. The applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by the Essex Admission Office in the event that the problem is not resolved by the local school Guidance Counselor.
 - c. If after notifying the local school Guidance Counselor and parent(s)/guardian(s), the application remains incomplete for ten school days, the application will be voided.

* applying for admission during the winter and spring to begin classes the following fall

APPLICATION PROCESS - FOR ADMISSION FOR THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR*

The process outlined for fall admission will be followed for students applying for admission during the school year with the exception of:

1. The March 1st deadline date is not be in effect.
2. The required report cards are from the previous school year and the current school year to the date of the application.
3. The required attendance and tardiness reports are from the previous school year and the current school year to the date of the application.
4. The required school discipline records from the previous school year and the current school year to the date of the application.

LATE APPLICATIONS

Applications for fall admission received after the March 1st deadline will be accepted; they will be evaluated using the same criteria as other applications and the composite score will be computed. They will be placed in rank order on the established waiting list.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Applications from students who are enrolled in a state-approved (Chapter 74) vocational agricultural high school program in another school (transfer students) will be considered for admission to grade 9 - 12(including admission during the school year) if they relocate away from their current school and wish to pursue the same program of study at Essex. All transfer applicants must attend an informational meeting at Essex. If the applicant or parent/guardian cannot provide transportation, an official from Essex will go to the local school to meet with the applicant. **Such applications will be evaluated according to the provisions of this Admission Policy.**

WITHDRAWN STUDENTS

Students who withdraw from Essex and who are attending or not attending another high school may reapply to Essex following the procedures contained in this admission policy and will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy.

HOME SCHOOL STUDENTS

Students who are formally being home schooled may apply for admission to Essex, including admission during the school year, provided all Admissions Policy criteria are followed. The Home School student's parent(s)/guardian(s) must submit a copy of the Home School approval letter from the local school superintendent **and** if grades are not available, a representative sample or portfolio of the student's body of work in English language arts or its equivalent, math, science, and social studies. Home schooled students will be ranked on their portfolio/grades (50%) and the applicant interview (50%).

* applying for admission during the school year to begin classes during the same school year, as opposed to applying for admission one school year to begin classes the next school year in the fall

VII. Selection Criteria

The Admissions Committee, using weighted admissions criteria, processes completed applications. Each applicant will be assigned a score derived from the sum of the sub scores of the following criteria:

- A. **Scholastic Achievement:** Maximum 24 points (*previous year's and current year's averages in: English language arts or its equivalent, math, science, and social studies*)

6 points – (90-100%)

5 points - (80-89%)

3 points – (70-79%)

2 points – (60-69%)

0 points – (59% and below)

For applications to grade 9 (fall admission), the average of grade 7 and term 1 of grade 8 marks in English language arts or its equivalent, social studies, mathematics and science from the local school report card/transcript are used. For applications to grades 10 - 12 (fall admission) the average of the previous school year and term 1 of the current school year marks in English language arts or its equivalent, social studies, mathematics and science from the local school report card/transcript are used. For applications to grades 9 – 12 (admission during the school year), the previous school year and the current school year to the date of the application marks in English language arts or its equivalent, social studies, mathematics and science from the local school report card/ transcript are used.

- B. **Attendance: Unexcused absences/tardiness (Yearly average) Maximum 15 points**

0 – 7 absences/tardiness 15 points

8 - 14 absences/tardiness 10 points

15- 21 absences/tardiness 5 points

22 plus absences/tardiness 0 points

For applications to grade 9 (fall admission), the sum of grade 7 and term 1 of grade 8 **unexcused absences and tardiness** from the local school report card/transcript are used. For applications to grades 10 - 12 (fall admission), the sum of the previous school year and term 1 current school year **unexcused absences and tardiness** from the local school report card/transcript are used. For applications to grades 9 - 12(admission during the school year), the previous school year and the current school year to the date of the application, **unexcused absences and tardiness** from the local school report card/transcript are used.

- C. **School Discipline/Conduct: Maximum 15 points**

15 points – No disciplinary incidents

10 points – 1-3 minor disciplinary incidents

5 points – 4-6 disciplinary incidents and/or 1 suspension

0 points – 7 or more disciplinary incidents or more than 1 suspension

For applications to grade 9 (fall admission), the grade 7 and term 1 of grade 8 assessments from the local school discipline record are used. For applications to grades 10 - 12 (fall admission), the previous school year and term 1 of the current school year assessments from the local school discipline record are used. For applications to grades 9 - 12(admission during the school year), the previous school year and the current school year to the date of the application assessments from the local school report card/transcript or from the local school discipline record are used.

D. Recommendation form: Maximum 6 points

For all applicants a recommendation form completed by the applicant's guidance counselor or current teacher in English language arts or its equivalent, social studies, math and science is required. The recommendation form consists of three statements relating to the applicant and vocational education. Each statement receives either 2 points (agree) or 0 points (disagree) based on the response.

E. Interview: Maximum 40 points

An interview comprised of five (5) questions using a scoring rubric for each question of 0 – 8 points

8 points = Strong interest

6 points = Above average interest

4 points = Average interest

2 points = Below average interest

0 points = Poor/No interest

After points are given in each area, the points are totaled for each applicant. A maximum total of one hundred (100) points can be earned.

VIII. SELECTION PROCESS

The Admission Committee at Essex will examine, discuss and make recommendations for action on the applicants.

The Admission Committee considers scholastic achievement, attendance/tardiness, school behavior, local teachers' recommendation and interview results. Applications are reviewed, processed, and assigned points by grade level.

After a point total has been determined, all applicants are placed in order of their point total. Applicants are then accepted in order of the point total they have achieved. The applicant with the highest point total is accepted first, the applicant with the second highest point total is accepted second, and so on until all seats are filled. All applicants are accepted, declined, or placed on a waiting list. If openings occur, the seats are filled by accepting applicants from the waiting list. These applicants, like those accepted earlier, are accepted in order of their place on the waiting list determined by the total points given according to the selection criteria.

Applications received after March 1st may be accepted and will be evaluated using the same criteria as other applications and their composite score will be integrated in rank order on the established waiting list.

All applicants whose applications are received by Essex by March 1 are notified of their status by a letter to their parents/guardians and their local school Guidance Counselor by mid-April. Applicants whose applications **are not received by Essex by March 1st but before May 1st** will receive a letter by mid-May informing them of their status. Applicants whose applications are received **after May 1st** will receive a letter informing them of their status within two weeks of receiving the **completed** application form.

IX. ENROLLMENT

In order to enroll at Essex Agricultural and Technical High School for the fall, applicants must have been promoted to the grade they seek to enter by their local school district. Students must have passed courses in English language arts (or its equivalent), mathematics, science, and social studies for the school year immediately

preceding their enrollment at Essex. Students who have been accepted and do not pass these courses will have their acceptances rescinded.

X. VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL PROGRAM PLACEMENT

All ninth graders who enroll in Essex Agricultural and Technical High School participate in a full school year agricultural vocational exploratory program designed to help them learn about their talents and interests relative to a variety of different agricultural vocational programs. Students in Grade 9 explore: Animal Science and program offerings in small animals, horses, livestock, and agri-business; Environmental Technology and program offerings in water resources, wildlife biology, and limnology; and Plant Science and program offerings in floriculture, natural resources, and horticulture.

At the end of this exploratory period, each student selects her/his first program of choice and second program of choice. A student is assisted in making that choice by meeting with her/his guidance counselor in small group discussions about evaluating interest, assessments, and goals. Department heads are available to speak by phone or meet with a parent(s)/guardian(s) regarding questions about the various agricultural majors, so parents can assist their child in making an informed decision.

If the number of applicants to a program/program concentration exceeds the number of seats available, students will be selected in rank order based upon the following areas: academic average (0-25 points), agricultural average of all programs explored (0-25 points), portfolio entry (0-20 points), attendance/tardiness (0- 15 points), and discipline (0-15 points). A waiting list based on this criterion is maintained for the year in the event that an opening in the over-subscribed program becomes available. Students who do not get into their first program of choice will be placed in their second program of choice.

A. Academic averages:

25 points – 94% - 100%
20 points – 85% - 93%
15 points – 77% - 84%
10 points – 70% - 76%
5 points – 65% - 69%
0 points - < 65%

B. Agricultural averages:

25 points – 94% - 100%
20 points – 85% - 93%
15 points – 77% - 84%
10 points – 70% - 76%
5 points – 65% - 69%
0 points - < 65%

C. Portfolio Entry:

20 points – 90 – 100%
15 points – 80 – 89%
10 points – 79 – 70 %
5 points – 65 – 69%
0 points - < 65%

D. Attendance: Unexcused absences/tardiness (yearly average)

0 – 5 absences/tardiness 15 points
6 – 9 absences/tardiness 10 points
10 – 12 absences/tardiness 5 points
13 + absences/tardiness 0 points

E. School Discipline/Conduct

15 points – No disciplinary incidents

10 points – 1-3 minor disciplinary incidents

5 points – 4-6 minor disciplinary incidents and/or one suspension

0 points – 7 or more disciplinary incidents and/or more than one suspension

Students accepted to Essex Agricultural and Technical High School after grade nine are placed in vocational agricultural programs (majors) based on the available space in the that program.

After placement any student who wishes to transfer from one agricultural major to another may apply for transfer. Transfer requests will be considered subject to the availability of openings in the requested programs. If there are no openings in the program, the student will be placed on the waiting list based on the vocational technical program placement criteria stated above in Section X of this policy. Each transfer applicant will be interviewed and counseled individually to determine the appropriateness of the transfer for the particular student.

XI. REVIEW and APPEALS

The applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s), upon receipt of a letter from Essex Agricultural and Technical High School indicating that the applicant was not accepted or was placed on a wait list, may request a review of the decision by sending a letter to the Principal within fourteen days of the receipt of the rejection/wait list letter. The Principal will respond in writing to the letter with the findings of the review within fourteen days. If after the review, the parent(s)/guardian(s) wish to appeal the findings of the Principal's review, he/she may do so by sending a letter requesting that Superintendent/Director review the Principal's decision. The Superintendent/Director's decision will be final and will be communicated in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s) within fourteen days of the receipt of the letter.

The applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s), upon receipt of a letter from Essex Agricultural and Technical High School indicating that the applicant was not accepted or placed on a wait list for a particular program (major), may request a review of the decision by sending a letter to the Principal The Principal will respond in writing to the letter with the findings of the review within fourteen days. If after the review, the parent(s)/guardian(s) wish to appeal the findings of the Principal's review, he/she may do so by sending a letter requesting that Superintendent/Director review the Principal's decision. The Superintendent/Director's decision will be final and will be communicated in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s) within fourteen days of the receipt of the letter.