



**PACIFIC
COLLEGIATE
SCHOOL**

A Distinguished Public Charter School

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First-to-College Program Expands Access to Pacific Collegiate School

SANTA CRUZ, California. On March 22, 2018, when the lottery is held for admission to Pacific Collegiate School (PCS) for the 2018-19 school year, 14% (approximately 8) 7th grade seats will be reserved for students who will be the first in their family to attend college. These students will be selected by a First-to-College Lottery, which runs just prior to the general lottery. If eligible students do not gain entrance through the first-to-college lottery, they are then entered into the general lottery, effectively giving them two chances to enter PCS.

In June of 2017, PCS graduated its first cohort of six first-to-college graduates. Of these six students, four are attending community colleges, and two are attending state colleges. “To me, going to college means being able to pursue higher education, as well as being able to have an opportunity that my parents didn't have at my age,” said Ariana Estrada, who is attending California State University, Bakersfield.

Attending PCS has exposed many first-to-college students to the interests they are pursuing in college. 2017 graduate Cienna Ajir said, “My favorite classes at PCS were drama, choir, and AP environmental science. I'm so glad I had great teachers to help me figure out what I'm passionate about. I'm grateful to PCS for thoroughly preparing me for college and I'm excited to see where it takes me.”

Increasing Diversity and Tracking Results

PCS introduced the First-to-College Program in 2011 in an effort to increase diversity and expand the reach of its college-preparatory program. The PCS Board of Directors permanently adopted the program in 2014, seeing that it consistently enhanced the socioeconomic and cultural diversity of the student body. At that time, the program increased reserved admissions from 10 percent to 15 percent in increments of one percent per year for five years starting in the 2015-2016 school year, and capped them at 15 percent for the 2019-2020 school year.

“Most of the decisions and allocation of resources at PCS are guided by the belief that all students, regardless of race, family income, or educational background, should have access to the highest level of college preparatory classes. Our entire school is designed around this vision,” says PCS Principal Simon Fletcher.

In recent years, PCS has expanded its efforts to increase awareness of the First-to-College Program among eligible students, holding off-site information sessions in mid and south-county locations and offering sessions in both English and Spanish. The school has also devoted additional resources to providing both academic and social/emotional support to first-to-college students throughout their middle and high school experience.

Equal Access to AP Courses

PCS defines a ‘first-generation college-bound’ applicant as one whose parents’ or chief guardians’ highest level of education is less than an Associate’s Degree. The first-to-college program is aligned with one of PCS’s essential core values: that *all* students have the opportunity to be on an Advanced Placement college preparatory track. Typically in public schools, student placement on a non-AP track can make it difficult or impossible to gain access to advanced courses. Current research shows that enrollment in Advanced Placement is correlated with race and socioeconomic status; PCS’s inclusive program ensures access to any and all students enrolled at PCS.

PCS uses a system of specially designed curriculum and comprehensive support to help students prepare for and succeed in Advanced Placement courses. To graduate from PCS students must take and pass five AP classes, which serve to prepare them for taking the national Advanced Placement exams. This provides a substantial advantage to students both in the admissions process as well as for placement and credit once enrolled in college.

How to Apply

PCS is accepting applications for grades 7-12 until March 12, 2018 at 3:30pm. There are only two requirements to enter the lottery: to fill out an application and to RSVP to and attend an information session. For the application and to RSVP to an information session, visit **www.pcslotteryapp.com**. Families may indicate on their application if their student is the first in their family to attend college.

About Pacific Collegiate School

Pacific Collegiate School (www.pacificcollegiate.com) is an independent public charter school open to any student seeking a rigorous college preparatory education in Santa Cruz County. PCS has consistently earned top honors for its outstanding college preparatory program from leading news and educational organizations. Currently PCS is ranked the #1 public school in the state of California and #10 in the nation by US News and World Report.

PCS, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, accommodates up to 535 students in grades 7-12. As part of the school’s commitment to pupil diversity, PCS has a multifaceted diversity outreach program, as well as a unique admissions program for students who will be the first in their families to attend college. Admission to PCS is through a public, random lottery, as required by California law.

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