

PATHFINDER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

ADMISSION POLICY

If this policy requires translating in Spanish or Polish please contact the Pupil Services Office at 413-283-98701.

Jeśli ta zasada wymaga tłumaczenia w języku hiszpańskim lub Polski prosimy o kontakt biuro obsługi ucznia w 413-283-98701.

. Si esta política requiere traducir en español o en Polaco, por favor contacto la oficina de servicios de la pupila en 413-283-98701.

I. ADMISSION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The admission process is a -guidance task that is unique to school districts with career/vocational technical educational programs where space is an intrinsic limiting factor. Vocational-technical shops are designed and equipped to serve a specific maximum number of students. Each such shop is specialized. Consequently, a complex of such shops lacks both the space and flexibility to accommodate the possible needs and/or interest of all eligible applicants. Therefore, a selection process is necessary to determine which applicants may most benefit from such opportunities. All applicants to grades nine through twelve at Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy. *The Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School District School Committee approved this policy in July 2013 pending approval of the Department of Education.*

II. EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School admits students and makes available to them its advantages, privileges and courses of study without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or homelessness.

If there is a student with limited English proficiency, a qualified representative from Pathfinder 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 disability submitted voluntarily by the applicant, for the purpose of receiving assistance and accommodations during the entire application and admission process, will not affect their admission to the school.

III. ELIGIBILITY

Any eighth, ninth, tenth or eleventh grade student who is a resident of the Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School District (Belchertown, Granby, Hardwick,

Monson, New Braintree, Oakham, Palmer, Ware, and Warren) and who expects to be promoted to the grade they seek to enter by their local school district is eligible to apply for fall admission or admission during the school year subject to the availability of openings to the Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School. Resident students will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy. Priority for admission is given to Pathfinder School District residents according to the District Agreement.

Note: Students who actually reside (i.e., live) in a town or city, whether with their parents/guardians or other relatives, by themselves, or in a foster or group home, or in virtually any other living situation, are legally entitled to attend the town or city's public schools including the regional vocational technical school.

Students who are not residents of the Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical School District are eligible to apply for fall admission or admission during the school year subject to the availability of openings to Pathfinder provided they expect to be promoted to the grade they seek to enter by their local district. Nonresident applicants must follow the process outlined in the Nonresident Student Enrollment process as outlined in the [Guidelines for the Vocational Technical Education Program Nonresident Student Tuition Process Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 74](#) located on the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education website: www.doe.mass.edu/cte/admissions/nonres_guidelines.

Note: April 1st is the date by which the Chapter 74 Vocational Technical Education Program Nonresident Tuition Student Application must be received by the superintendent of the district of residence.

Students from any school district are eligible to apply for fall admission or admission during the school year to grades 9-12 at Pathfinder provided they expect to be promoted to the grade they seek by their local district. Transfer students will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy.

Students who are *homeless* are eligible to apply and will be accepted to Pathfinder according to the selection criteria contained in this admission policy.

Students in grades 8-10 who are formally being *home schooled* may apply for admission to Pathfinder, including admission during the school year, by completing an application. The home school student's parent/guardian must submit a copy of the home school approval letter from the local school superintendent. Home school students will be accepted to Pathfinder according to the admissions criteria contained in this policy. All school choice students must be able to arrange transportation to Pathfinder or to a district bus stop

Students who have been expelled from school pursuant to General Law Chapter 71, Section 37H of the Educational Reform Act of 1993, are not eligible to apply for admission to the school.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School is located in Palmer, the geographic center of the nine (9) member town school district which includes: Belchertown, Granby, Hardwick, Monson, New Braintree, Oakham, Palmer, Ware, and Warren.

Accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School is committed to providing quality vocational technical and academic programs.

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

Pathfinder has an Admissions Committee appointed by the Superintendent. The committee consists of a member from the Administration, Guidance, Special Education, Vocational Technical, and Academic Departments. Responsibilities of the Admissions committee include:

- Determination of standards for admissions.
- Development and implementation of admissions procedure.
- Processing of applicants.
- Ranking of students.
- Acceptance of students according to the procedure and criteria in the admissions policy.
- Establishment and maintenance of a waiting list of acceptable candidates.
- Interviewing potential students

A member of the Admissions Team will be responsible for disseminating information about Pathfinder through local assemblies, press releases, and the Pathfinder website. The Admissions Team is also responsible for collecting the applications from the local schools.

Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School District Agreement

The Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical School District Committee shall enroll in the Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School those students from the various member towns who, in its judgement, are best suited to profit from the instructional program offered; provided, however, that each member town shall have available to it a guaranteed minimum number of enrollees in the day school in any one year if such students are available and willing to attend. Applicants should contact the district to find out the districts current year quota. Each member town, through its representatives to the Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical School District Committee, shall certify to the District Committee the names of those students who are counted under the provisions of the guaranteed minimum by May 1st. On or before May 15th of any year preceding the opening of the school year, the following September, the District Committee shall determine the number of vacancies remaining unclaimed under the guaranteed minimum, which vacancies shall be known as the surplus enrollment. Each town's quota of surplus enrollment shall be determined each year by multiplying the number representing the surplus enrollment by a fraction; of which the numerator shall be the number of students residing in each member town who are attending all the grades

from kindergarten through grade twelve in public, private, and parochial schools wherever located on the previous October 1st and, the denominator shall be the number of students from all the member towns who were attending all the grades from kindergarten through grade twelve in public, private, and parochial schools wherever located on the same date. (reference: District Agreement Section XII)

V. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Pathfinder disseminates information about the school through a variety of methods.

- a. Pathfinder hosts an annual luncheon for area Guidance Counselors to review the Admission Policy and procedures.
- b. In December a Guidance representative visits the District towns to conduct a presentation of the programs available at Pathfinder. This includes discussion of opportunities for students to pursue non-traditional careers.
- c. Students tour the school in the fall during the school day. The tour includes presentations about vocational-technical programs including academic offerings, athletic programs and extra curricular activities and clubs. School bus transportation to Pathfinder is provided by the district schools.
- d. In the fall, the Career Awareness Open House is held for parents, guardians, and interested members of the surrounding communities.
- e. Newspaper articles are published about specific accomplishments of Pathfinder students in traditional and non-traditional programs, cooperative education and the school in general.
- f. The Pathfinder website (www.pathfindertech.org) contains pertinent up-to-date information about the school, student accomplishments, academic, vocational technical and athletic programs.
- g. Additional meetings and tours for parents/guardians and applicants are arranged upon request.

VI. APPLICATION PROCESS

If there is a student with limited English proficiency, a qualified representative from Pathfinder will assist in completing the necessary forms and assist in interpreting during the entire application and admissions process.

Application Process for Fall Admission to the Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Grade

All applications must be forwarded to Pathfinder by the ***first Friday of February*** for fall admission.

1. Students interested in applying to Pathfinder must:
 - Obtain an application from their local school Guidance Counselor or from the Pathfinder Guidance Office.

- Return the completed application form to their local school Guidance Counselor.
 - Attend a scheduled interview with a Pathfinder representative at their local school.
2. It is the responsibility of the local school Guidance Counselor to:
- Complete their portion of the application form.
 - Complete the Guidance Counselor Recommendation Form.
 - Include with the Application and Recommendation form, the applicant's previous year **final** academic grades (English Language Arts, or its equivalent, social studies, math and science only), unexcused absences and /discipline/conduct records and the applicant's current mid-year academic grades, unexcused absences and discipline/conduct records..
 - Forward the completed Application and Recommendation form with the required student records listed above to the Pathfinder Guidance Office by the **first Friday of February**.
3. Applications are considered complete when all required application materials (Application and Recommendation form, applicant's previous year final academic grades, attendance and discipline/conduct/ records and the applicant's current mid-year academic grades, attendance /discipline/conduct/ records) are received by Pathfinder.
4. If incomplete applications are received, the following procedures will be followed:
- Pathfinder's Guidance Office will notify the local school Guidance Counselor responsible for submitting the application, that the application is incomplete and will request completion.
 - The applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by the Pathfinder Guidance Office in the event the problem is not resolved by the local school Guidance Counselor.
 - after notifying the local school Guidance Counselor and parent(s)/guardian(s), the application remains incomplete, the application will be voided after 10 school days.
 -

Application Process for Fall Admission to the Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Grade for the Current School Year*

The current school year is defined as applying for admission during the school year to begin classes the same school year, as opposed to applying for admission one school year to begin classes the next school year in the fall.

All applications must be forwarded to Pathfinder by the first Friday **in November** for admission during the current school year.

1. Students interested in applying to Pathfinder must:
 - Obtain an application from their local school Guidance Counselor or from the Pathfinder Guidance Office.
 - Return the completed application form to their local school Guidance Counselor.
 - Attend a scheduled interview with a Pathfinder representative at Pathfinder. If the applicant or parent/guardian cannot provide transportation, a Pathfinder representative will go to the local school to interview the applicant. Pathfinder does not require student applicants to attend interviews or functions outside regular school hours or away from their current school of attendance.
2. It is the responsibility of the local school Guidance Counselor to:
 - Complete their portion of the application form.
 - Complete the Guidance Counselor Recommendation Form.
 - Include with the Application and Recommendation forms, the applicant's previous year(s) final academic grades, attendance and discipline/conduct records and the applicant's current school year to date academic grades, attendance and discipline/conduct records.
 - Forward the completed Application and Recommendation forms with the required student records to the Pathfinder Guidance Office by the **first Friday in November**.
3. Applications are considered complete when all required application materials (Application and Recommendation form, applicant's previous year(s) final academic grades, attendance and discipline/conduct records and the applicant's current school year to date academic grades, attendance and discipline/conduct records) are received by the Pathfinder Guidance Department.
4. If incomplete applications are received, the following procedures will be followed:
 - Pathfinder's Guidance Office will notify the local school Guidance Counselor responsible for submitting the application, that the application is incomplete and will request completion.
 - The applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by the Pathfinder Guidance Office in the event the problem is not resolved by the local school Guidance Counselor.

- If after notifying the local school Guidance Counselor and parent(s)/guardian(s), the application remains incomplete, the application will be voided after 10 school days.

LATE APPLICATION PROCESS

Resident and non-resident students who are attending school may apply for late admission prior to the end of Pathfinder's first marking period. Late applicants will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy and will be integrated in rank order on the established waiting list.

However, applications received after the **first week in November** will not be considered for admission for that school year.

***Note:** April 1st is the date by which the Chapter 74 Vocational Technical Education Program Nonresident Tuition Student Application must be received by the superintendent of the district of residence.*

Transfer Students and Applications from students who are enrolled in a state-approved (Chapter 74) vocational technical high school program in another school may be considered for late admission beyond the November deadline if they become residents of the Pathfinder District and wish to pursue the same vocational program. All transfer applicants must be interviewed at Pathfinder. If the applicant or parent/guardian cannot provide transportation, a Pathfinder representative will go to the local school to interview the applicant. Their applications will be evaluated according to the provisions of this Admissions Policy.

WITHDRAWN STUDENTS

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

VII. SELECTION CRITERIA

Completed applications are processed by the admissions Committee using weighted admissions criteria. Each applicant will be assigned a score derived from the sub of the sub scores of the criteria.

- A. Scholastic Achievement: Maximum (40) points
- B.

Grades/	Points
A/A- 100-90	5
B/B- 89-80	4
C/C- 79-70	3

D-69-65	1
F	0

For applicants to Grade 9 (fall admission), the average of the final grade 7 marks in English, Math, Science and Social Studies and terms 1 & 2 grade 8 marks in English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies from the local school report card/ are used.

For applicants to Grades 10, 11 & 12 (fall admission) the average of the final marks of the previous school year in English, or its equivalent,/ Math, Science & Social Studies and terms 1 & 2 marks in English, or its equivalent,/, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies from the current local school report card/ are used.

For applicants to Grades 9, 10, 11 & 12 (admission during the school year), the final marks of the previous school year in English, or its equivalent,/ Math, Science & Social Studies and terms 1 & 2 marks in English, or its equivalent,/,Mathematics, Science and Social Studies from the current local school report card/ are used.

Attendance: Maximum 10 points

Number of Unexcused Absences	Points
0-5	5
6-10	4
11-15	3
16-20	2
Over 20	0

For applications to grade 9 (fall admission), the sum of the grade 7 and terms 1 & 2 grade 8 unexcused absences from the local school report card/ are used.

For applications to grade 10, 11 & 12 (fall admission), the sum of the pervious school year and terms 1 & 2 current school year unexcused absences from the local school report card/ are used.

For applications to grade 9, 10, 11 & 12 (admission during the school year), the sum of the pervious school year and the current school year to the date of the application, unexcused absences from the local school report card/ are used.

Sending School Guidance Counselor's Recommendation:
Maximum 15 points

Rating	Points
Above Average	15
Average	10
Below Average	5
Poor	0

Interview: Maximum 25 points

Rating	Points
Excellent	25
Above Average	20
Average	15
Below Average	10
Poor	5

Discipline/Conduct: Maximum 10 points

Discipline/Conduct/	Points
Excellent (zero detentions; zero suspensions)	10
Above Average (one detention; zero suspensions)	8
Average (three or fewer detentions; zero suspensions)	5
Below Average (more than three detentions; 3 or more	2

suspensions)	
Poor (Conduct/ grades below two; more than three detentions; more than one suspension)	0

For applications to grade 9 (fall admission), the conduct/ grades from the local school report card/ for grade 7 and terms 1 & 2 grade 8 and information from the student's discipline record or from the local Guidance Counselor's assessment are used.

For applications to grade 10, 11 & 12 (fall admission), the conduct/ grades from the local school report card/ for the previous school year and terms 1 & 2 current school year & information from the student's discipline record or from the local Guidance Counselor's assessment are used.

For applications to grade 9, 10, 11 & 12 (admission during the school year), conduct/ grades from the local school report card/ for the previous school year and the current school year to the date of the application and information from the student's discipline record or from the local Guidance Counselor's assessment are used.

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 Pathfinder will examine, discuss and make recommendations for action on the applicants. The Admission Committee considers scholastic achievement, attendance, citizenship/behavior/conduct records, local Guidance Counselor's recommendation and interview results.

After a point total for each resident applicant has been determined, all resident applicants are divided according to their town of residence. The resident applicants are then placed in order of their "point total". Resident applicants are then accepted in order of the point total they have achieved. The resident applicant with the highest point total is accepted first, the resident applicant with the second highest point total is accepted second, and so on, until the quota for that town has been accepted.

All resident applicants are accepted, declined, or placed on a waiting list. All applicants are notified of their status by a letter to their parents/guardians and their local school Guidance Counselor by the middle of April.

If excess openings exist, the seats are filled by accepting resident applicants from the waiting list. These resident 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.

Completed applications received first Friday in February will be evaluated using the same criteria as other applications and their composite score will be integrated in rank order in the established waiting list. Late applicants are notified of their status by letter to their parent/guardian and their local Guidance Counselor by late spring or within 30 days.

Non-resident applicants are evaluated using the criteria in this Admission Policy and will be placed on the waiting list after the resident applicants. Non-resident applicants on the waiting list will only be accepted if all resident applicants on the waiting list have been accepted. Non-resident applicants are notified of their status by letter to their parent/guardian and their local Guidance Counselor by late spring. The wait list will be maintained until the end of the first trimester marking period.

Transfers from other schools will be evaluated according to the provisions of this Admission Policy. Transfer student applicants are notified of their status by letter to their parent/guardian and their local Guidance Counselor by late spring or within 30 days.

IX. ENROLLMENT

In order to enroll at Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School in the fall, applicants must have been promoted to the grade they wish to enter. Any student who fails their English, or its equivalent, and/or Mathematics course(s) for the current grade will be required to take a comparable make-up course (or courses) in a summer school program provided by their local school district or a program approved by Pathfinder during the summer.

X. VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL PROGRAM PLACEMENT

All ninth graders who enroll in Pathfinder participate in a vocational technical exploratory program for a half year designed to help them learn about themselves, their talents and interests relative to a variety of different vocational-technical programs.

Students transferring to Pathfinder after grade nine may explore vocational technical programs that have openings, before making a program selection.

Pathfinder has formulated the following process for shop placement:

1. During the shop placement process applicants are informed of:
 - the shop programs offered at Pathfinder,
 - the necessary aptitudes, interests and attitudes necessary for success,
 - the career opportunities each shop prepares one to pursue,
 - the accessibility of each shop to all students without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, disability or sexual orientation,
 - the accessibility of vocational programs and the potential careers in the non-traditional, vocational technical areas.
2. Students choose five shop programs to explore.

3. Pathfinder chooses three shop programs to be explored, based on the following criteria:

- Information gained from the student interview process
- Parent request
- Exploration of a non-traditional shop

4. Students spend approximately five days in each vocational program which will be broken down between a related and shop. Students academic and vocational rotation follow a bi weekly rotation schedule.

5. Students are evaluated by the instructors in related and in shop. Students may earn up to 100 points in each of the eight shop exploratory programs. After completing the eight exploratory programs, a student may earn a maximum of 800 points.

6. Students make their final shop selections in ranked order at the conclusion of the exploratory program based on the students rank order.

7. Results of the vocational instructor's evaluations are computed, and the students with the highest point average receive their first shop selection. In case of a tie the student with highest overall average will get into the shop.

8. If a shop fills, based on point totals, before a student gets his/her first choice, the Guidance Counselor then moves to the student's second or third choice, depending upon whether there is an opening in the shop. Again, the student is admitted based upon overall point totals. If a student's point totals in all shops combined is so low that he/she was not placed in his/her second or third choice shop because the shops were filled by students with higher point totals, the Guidance Counselor will meet with the student and present a list of the shops with openings which the student explored and ask the student to choose one of them. Again, students selecting shops from among the shops with openings, when they explored, will be admitted based on their point totals. The process continues until all students are placed.

9. Students who wish to transfer from one shop to another may apply for transfer. Transfer requests will be considered, subject to the availability of openings in the requested shops.

NOTE: All placements will be at the discretion and recommendation of the Guidance Department and/or the Administration, but will occur in accordance with this admission policy.

10. Students who enroll in Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School after grade nine may explore one or more vocational programs that have openings. A mini-exploratory could last from two to three days before the student makes a program selection. Students are evaluated and graded by each shop

teacher during the period of exploration. If the number of enrollees seeking a particular shop exceeds the number of openings, the evaluative grades received by the students rank ordered would determine the enrollee or enrollees who are placed in the particular shop.

XI. REVIEW AND APPEALS

The applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s), upon receipt of a letter from Pathfinder indicating that the applicant was not accepted or placed on a waiting list, may request a review of the decision by sending a letter requesting a review to the Assistant Superintendent-Principal within 10 days of the receipt of the letter. The Assistant Superintendent-Principal will respond in writing to the letter with the findings of the review, within 10 days. If after the review, the parent/guardian wishes to appeal the findings of the review, they may do so by sending a letter requesting a review by the Superintendent-Director to appeal the Assistant Superintendent-Principal's findings. The Superintendent-Director will respond in writing to the letter with his decision on the appeal, within 10 days. The Superintendent's decision is then final. A copy of this Admissions Policy including the Review & Appeals process is available at the Guidance Office of the sending school districts as well as on Pathfinder's website.

Program Placement

If a student was not accepted or placed on a waiting list for a particular vocational program, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a review of the decision by sending a letter requesting a review to the Guidance Department within 10 days of the vocational placement. The Guidance Department will respond in writing to the letter with the findings of the review within 10 days. If after the review, the parent/guardian wishes to appeal the findings of the review, they may do so by sending a letter requesting a review by the Assistant Superintendent-Principal to appeal the Guidance Counselor's findings. The Assistant Superintendent-Principal will respond in writing to the letter with his decision on the appeal, within 10 days. The Assistant Superintendent-Principal's decision is then final.

Adopted: January 18, 2006

Revised: June 26, 2013

Pending Approval: July 2013