



Escambia County

PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Office of Enrollment Services

Controlled Open Enrollment

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I. Introduction:

A controlled open enrollment plan allows school districts to make student school assignments using parents indicated preferential school choice as a significant factor. The legislation requires that beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, each district school board adopt a controlled open enrollment plan that allows a parent from any district in the state to enroll his or her child in and transport his or her child to any public school that has not reached capacity. Parents/guardians access schools of choice through an application process during a pre-determined Controlled Open Enrollment period established annually by the district. The application for Controlled Open Enrollment can be obtained from the Escambia County Public School's Enrollment Services website. Parents/guardians without computer access may seek assistance from the Enrollment Services office at the J E hall Center, a public district school or the public library. Applying does not guarantee that the student will be approved a transfer to the requested school. The application is completed online.

Approval to attend an out of zone school through the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan is subject to the application process, eligibility criteria, and the limitations set forth herein. Additionally, approval to attend a School of Choice is subject to revocation based on eligibility factors, which include, but are not limited to: unsatisfactory attendance, unsatisfactory grades, Student Code of Conduct violations, other behavior that adversely impacts the educational environment, or if a student withdraws from a program upon which the approval was originally based.

Choice Exclusions

This Controlled Open Enrollment Plan does not govern charter or alternative schools. These schools do not designate attendance or transportation zones, and determines their own registration and enrollment process. Each of these schools has admissions criteria to determine enrollment along with program capacity.

Magnet Schools, Academic Programs and Career Academies within the Escambia County Public School system requiring an application for admission, shall be processed within the Controlled Open Enrollment process, and admission will be based upon program criteria and qualifications, as well as space availability in the program.

The Escambia County School District offers parents and guardians an opportunity to choose an appropriate school for their children through several methods. These choice opportunities provide clear information so families can make the best decision to meet the educational needs of their children. The district will hold a School Choice Expo annually to provide information to parents and students on all the options available in the coming school year.



II. Definitions:

A. Capacity:

Escambia County Schools defines school capacity for the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan as 90% of permanent FISH capacity (Florida School House Inventory) considering the District's facilities work program (five-year plan), as well as class size limitation, which is constitutionally mandated in the state of Florida. This includes growth projections, specifications, plans, elements, commitments contained in the school district educational facilities plans, and the long-term work programs required under Section 1013.35, Florida Statutes.

B. Window(s):

The term "window(s)" refers to the period of time specified for when a parent (guardian) can apply for a School of Choice through the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan which is published on the school district's website prior to each window opening. Parents (guardians) can request a Hardship Application at any time throughout the year as defined by the Hardship Application process.

Reassignment can only be requested during the window(s) referred to above unless a hardship is present.



C. Sibling:

Escambia County Schools defines sibling as children:

- A.) having one or both parents in common; or
- B.) who are brother(s)/sister(s) through the operation of law; or
- C.) who belong to blended families as stepbrother(s)/sister(s) residing in the same household.

D. Educational Choice Appeal/Hardship Workgroup:

In implementing and upholding the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan, the Superintendent shall request input and information from the Educational Services Appeal/Hardship Workgroup. This group will endeavor to include representation from Escambia County Schools. Representatives from the below departments may be present:

- ✚ Career and Technical Education
- ✚ Communications
- ✚ Curriculum and Instruction
- ✚ School Transformation
- ✚ Student Services



E. Applicant:

For the purposes of this document, the Applicant refers to the authorized Parent/Guardian of the student or eligible student requesting to participate in the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan.

F. Superintendent:

For the purposes of this document, the term Superintendent refers to the Superintendent of schools or their designee(s).

III. School Choice Options:

Available choice options that are guided by the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan:



- School of Choice outside the student’s normally zoned school in accordance with this plan
- Career and Technical Programs of Study
- Academic Programs of Study
- Magnet Programs and Schools

IV. School Choice Application:

Eligibility Requirements:

Parents of school age children, entering grades kindergarten through 11th, not subject to a current or impending expulsion or suspension may submit a School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan application during the posted specified period. In addition, students must meet the minimum criteria for any specialized programs or schools for which they apply. Specific program criteria can be found on the Enrollment Services website as well as in the School Choice Application. Students must meet and maintain the minimum criteria to participate in the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan in order to remain in their School of Choice.

For students requesting enrollment in one of Escambia County School’s Pre-K programs, the following applies:

- Pre-K students with a disability, who have a current IEP, interested in enrolling in a Pre-K ESE site may not apply for school choice options as indicated in this plan. They must enroll in a Pre-K ESE location determined by the district.
- Pre-K students interested in enrolling in Head Start may not apply for school choice options as indicated in this plan. They must follow the Head Start application process.
- Pre-K students enrolling in VPK may not apply for choice options as indicated in this plan. They must follow the VPK application process. The VPK Enrollment Center is located at the Spencer Bibbs location.

The Office of Enrollment Services manages School Choice and is responsible for maintaining information on schools and choices available to parents, selection of students to choice schools, notification to parents as to the status of their child's application, and assisting schools with the controlled open enrollment process and selections. The Office of Enrollment Services is the central information site for parents to receive information regarding schools in the district and choices available. Applications for School Choice Programs can be submitted to the office at the J E Hall Center, 30 E. Texar Dr., Pensacola, Fl. 32503 or through the established online application available only during controlled open enrollment periods. Applications must be submitted annually for new choice selections. If a student is not selected for the current school year, the parent must resubmit an application for consideration for the next school year. The application period is open to all incoming Kindergarten through 11th grade students.

The Office of Enrollment Services will support marketing activities for all district recommended programs, in collaboration with the district's Communication Coordinator. Each magnet/academy program has an application deadline that is posted on the Enrollment Services Timeline which is located on the district's website. Once this deadline has passed, the magnet school lotteries will be run as determined by the timeline. Students will be notified and must commit to the school of choice by the deadline according to the Enrollment Services Timeline. The registration cards will serve as a commitment from students for attendance in the school and/or program. Students will be notified and must accept the school of their choice. If a parent does not complete the registration process, the student will not be considered. Students that do not commit to a choice school by the established deadline will be placed at their residentially zoned school, and will not be reconsidered until all waitlists have been exhausted. Students will only be allowed to enter academies/programs, magnet programs and magnet schools at the beginning of the school year, based on selections indicated during the open enrollment period.

When a parent/guardian accepts a School Choice placement, they agree to the following:

1. A student may receive only one choice assignment in a school year.
2. An applicant granted a choice assignment shall register the student at the school by the eighth day of the new school year. If the student fails to begin attending classes, the choice assignment shall be deemed forfeited.
3. A student who is subject to a current expulsion or suspension from any public or private school is ineligible to apply for a choice assignment.
4. A parent or legal guardian may discontinue a choice assignment within a school year at the end of a grading period or semester.
5. Cannot withdraw the student from their zoned school until an approved transfer has been processed and approved.
6. A separate application must be completed for each student.
7. Transportation to and from the choice school is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

The school district will notify each family by email or phone call from the Enrollment Services Office should additional information be needed or to communicate the outcome of the application.



A choice assignment may be revoked by the school principal. In order to remain in a School Choice Placement, the student must:

- o Comply with the Student Code of Conduct.
- o Maintain satisfactory academic performance.
- o Maintain satisfactory school attendance.

Applications are accepted outside the open enrollment period ONLY when a school has not reached capacity, and a school choice request is based on a documented hardship. Parents who are interested in submitting a Hardship Choice application may do so by contacting the Enrollment Services office.

Application Process:

Parents seeking to have their child(ren) attend a School of Choice through the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan must submit an online application during the application window. Applications must be submitted no later than the published deadline on the School Choice Webpage.

Parents without computer access may seek assistance from the Enrollment Services office, the nearest public school, or a public library where computer access is available for parents.



School Choice Applications during the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Windows are applicable when:

- a. The request is for initial transfer of a student into a School of Choice (CTE program, Magnet school or Academic program).
- b. A student is attending a zoned school impacted by boundary changes, and the parents want their child to remain at the impacted zoned school.
- c. There is a change of home address, which places the student in a different residential school zone, and the parents want their child to remain in the current school for the remainder of the school year. Parents may apply for their student to remain enrolled through the hardship application process. Notification of any subsequent address change must be given to the school district within 10 days and prior to the opening of the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment window for their application to be considered;
- d. A student, who is otherwise in good standing, withdraws from an approved School of Choice, and the parents want their child to return to the same School of Choice. Upon withdrawal from the School of Choice, the student will return to their regularly zoned school until otherwise transferred through the next upcoming School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan window. Students withdrawn from a magnet school are unable to return.
- e. A student withdraws from a program or course of study that was the underlying basis for attending the School of Choice, and the parents want their child to return to the School of Choice. Upon withdrawal from the program or course of study, the student

will return to their regularly zoned school until otherwise transferred through the next upcoming School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan's application process. Exceptions can be made at the Superintendent's discretion when there is capacity for the student to remain at the School of Choice, outside of the subject program or course of study. If the withdrawal from the program or course of study occurs during the school year, the parent may apply for their student to remain enrolled through the hardship application for remainder of the school year.

- f. A school becomes overcapacity, when the Superintendent determines that the enrollment at the School of Choice must be reduced in order to preserve the integrity and effectiveness of the educational program and environment. At that time, the Superintendent may reduce the number of students to the appropriate amount at the school by revoking the School of Choice enrollment of students who meet the criteria.
- g. Any other applicable reason defined by Florida Statute.

Verification of Applications:

Once the application period ends the District will review all fully completed applications received within the application window. Consideration of applications will be based on the current capacity of each public school in the District. Only those schools identified in the application will be considered by the District.

Notification of Acceptance into a School of Choice:

Notification concerning acceptance or denial of a timely application to a School of Choice under the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan will occur during the published notification timeline. All applicants will be notified of the application decision via an email generated by the student information system and school selections will be visible in the parent portal.

Waitlist Procedures:

If capacity is reached before all enrollment requests can be fulfilled, the remaining applications will be maintained on a waiting list. The waitlist will be exercised throughout the year as capacity becomes available. The Enrollment Services Office will notify families via email in waitlist order to offer enrollment. The family will have (5) days to accept or decline. Once email confirmation of acceptance is received, the Enrollment Services Office will remove the student from the waitlist and notify the selected school of enrollment. If the opportunity for enrollment is declined, the student will be removed from the waitlist and the next student will be notified.



The District will review the applications in the order of individual preference that the applicant has selected and will attempt to honor the ranked choices of each applicant.

If a student's application indicates an intent to enroll in a school or program with enrollment limitations, the Superintendent shall determine whether the student's preferred School of Choice has a program already in place in which the student wants to enroll. If there is such a program and it is not at capacity, the student will be enrolled.

If the student's preferred School of Choice does not have capacity in the program in which the student wants to enroll, the student shall not be enrolled in that school. If the student's alternate school does not have capacity in the program in which s/he wants to enroll, the student will remain at the current school/program in which s/he is enrolled. If the student is transitioning to a new level of his/her academic program (i.e., from elementary school to middle school or middle school to high school), his/her assignment shall be in accordance with capacity and program limitations.

This process will continue until the choices listed on each fully completed application have been honored or until all available classroom slots have been filled.

Approved applicants will be notified in writing at the e-mail address provided within the application, and shall be enroll at their approved School of Choice as directed in their acceptance e-mail.

Failure to accept an invitation by the deadline will result in your application being cancelled. The district, if capacity remains, will contact students in waitlist order.

Failure to enroll by the deadline identified in the written notification shall result in an automatic revocation of the District's approval of the application. Once the deadline passes for students to enroll at their School of Choice, if any capacity remains, the District will begin contacting students in order of lottery selection regarding enrollment opportunities. Applicants who have their approval revoked must submit a new application.

If capacity is reached before all applicants can be placed and enrollment requests fulfilled, the remaining applications will be maintained on a waiting list.

If, after submitting an application to participate in the District's School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan and before a decision is made about the application, a student is suspended, expelled, or is subject to potential suspension or expulsion, assigned to a Department of Juvenile Justice program, or subject to any alternate assignment as a result of his/her behavior, the student shall notify the District within seven (7) days by submitting documentation related to this change in the student's status. This timeline of notification also applies to students who are suspected of having a disability, who have been found eligible for Exceptional Student Education and/or have an IEP. Failure to do so shall constitute grounds for revocation of approval to enroll, under this policy. The information provided will be utilized to determine whether the student's School of Choice is appropriate, whether the student's needs can be met at the School of Choice, and whether the student remains eligible to transfer to the School of Choice.

V. Capacity of Schools

Capacity to Accept Out-of-Zone Students:

A School of Choice is only open to out-of-zone students when that School of Choice has sufficient capacity to serve such students.

Schools projected to be at or above 90% of capacity, as defined above, shall be deemed as overcapacity for the purposes of the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan and out-of-zone students will not be enrolled in such schools.



Schools projected to be below 90% of capacity shall be deemed as open to the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan for the year(s) the school has not reached 90% of capacity, as defined below.

Schools that have exceeded, or are projected to exceed their teaching allocations, and would be unable to meet Florida’s Constitutional Amendment for Class Size if non-zoned students are enrolled, will be designated “overcapacity due to class size.”

The initial School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment window shall be the only window where all schools and programs are advertised for the purposes of magnet and career/academic program enrollment, up to the capacity of the program or school’s available capacity. Subsequent windows of enrollment for cases of hardship will only advertise schools and programs with capacity remaining.

Special Program capacity as defined herein is subject to program-specific enrollment limitations. Programs with enrollment limitations may include, but are not limited to, self-contained Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs, career and technical programs, magnet programs/schools, and other academic programs that require student-teacher ratios less than the FISH capacity for that space.

Publication of Capacity is required in Section 1002.31, Florida Statutes. Escambia County Public Schools posts capacity information on its website, under the Enrollment Services department, which can be viewed at escambiaschools.org.

VI. Lottery Process and Preference Applications:

During the Open Enrollment Application Periods, held during the months of November/December at the secondary level and January/February at the elementary level, parents may select up to three schools and rank them in order of preference. The application is available online or through the Office of Enrollment Services. Completing an application does not guarantee assignment to the choice school. Students not completing an application are assigned to their residentially zoned school as determined by the enrolling parent/guardian’s address.

Every effort is made by the School District of Escambia County to accommodate the placement of a sibling related to any student already enrolled in a school if space is available and if the student meets admission criteria, if applicable. The Choice plan provides guarantees for placement of siblings within the same school students of transitioning active duty military families, and placement of a district employee's child at the parent's work site.

Although these students are guaranteed their choice, they must apply during the Open Enrollment Period.

Siblings, provided they meet the eligibility criteria and there is space availability, will be automatically accepted if two or more siblings of the same family are enrolled at that school during the same school year.

For a district employee accommodation, District employees must be full time employees assigned to the school of their request. District employees may also request schools not at capacity, and such requests will be forwarded to the Enrollment Services Coordinator for consideration.

Placement of siblings within the same school is facilitated whenever feasible during the open enrollment window if appropriate educational services are available for each sibling at the requested School of Choice, if capacity exists, and if they will attend for the same school year. Student must meet the requested school's eligibility criteria to receive the requested preference.

Students of transitioning active duty military, that have moved to the area within the last 12 months would receive a preference as required by Florida Statutes. Student must meet the requested school's eligibility criteria to receive the requested preference.

Employees that work at a requested school may also receive a preference for their children or grandchildren under their daily care. Student must meet the requested school's eligibility criteria to receive the requested preference.

Sibling Preference:

The School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan application includes a section for the parent to indicate if they have submitted new applications for other siblings to attend the same school or if a sibling in good standing is currently attending and will continue to attend the requested School of Choice. The application includes a section for parents to provide the full name and grade level of each sibling so that blended families with different surnames can be cross-referenced. Each student must have an individual school choice application.

As set forth in the lottery application process, siblings are entitled to preferential status and treatment. As such, placement of siblings within the same school is facilitated whenever feasible during the open enrollment window if appropriate educational services are available for each sibling at the requested School of Choice, if capacity exists, and if they will



attend for the same school year. Student must meet the requested school's eligibility criteria to receive the requested preference.

Applicants residing in district, no preferences applied:

If capacity is available after preference students are assigned, the District will process applications from applicants residing in the District. The District will review the applications in the order assigned by means of the lottery and will attempt to honor the ranked choices of each applicant utilizing the same process as outlined above. An applicant in this category will not displace a preference applicant.

Applicants Residing Outside the District with sibling, military or employee preference:

If capacity is remains available after all in district applicants are placed, the District will process applications from applicants residing outside the District with a preference applied. The District will review the applications in the order assigned by means of the lottery and will attempt to honor the ranked choices of each applicant utilizing the same process as outlined above. Applicants in this category will not displace applicants residing in district.

All Remaining Applicants, no preferences applied:

If capacity is available, the District will process applications from applicants residing outside the District with no preferences applied. The District will review the applications in the order assigned by means of the lottery and will attempt to honor the ranked choices of each applicant utilizing the same process as outline above regarding applicants. An applicant will not displace applicants described above.

Lottery Process and Preferential Status

After the close of the application period and the determination of capacity at each school, the District shall conduct a lottery as described below and then process the applications according to the lottery selections. Students who are applying for programs with entrance criteria shall not have the preference treatment applied unless entrance criteria are met. The preferences outlined below will not be applied for Pre-K programs.



The lottery involves the assignment based on pre-determined categories as applied to each applicant. The respective students will be randomly chosen through the lottery system, and available seats are in accordance with the preference status applied during the application verification process. Verified applications shall be reviewed, and preference treatment is applied as follows:

1. In District Students with preferences applied:

Applicants in this category shall reside in the District and qualify for preferential treatment in at least one of the following ways:

- a. Dependent children of active-duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders within the last 12 months
- b. Children of full-time District employees assigned to the requested school
- c. Siblings as defined in the District's School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan.

2. In District Students with no preference applied:

Applicants included in this category reside in the District but do not qualify for preferences

3. Out of District Students with preference applied:

Applicants included in this category do not reside in the District but do qualify for at least one of the preferences outlined above

4. Out of District Students with no preference applied:

Applicants included in this category reside outside the District and do not qualify for preferences.

Lottery Procedure to Determine Student Assignment

At the end of the controlled open enrollment window, if the number of applicants exceeds the number of available seats, a lottery shall be conducted.

Individuals seeking admission to magnet schools, and/or academy programs must meet individual school criteria before being permitted to participate in the lottery. Each student applying to a magnet school or choice academy program must meet and maintain the criteria as set by the school and approved by the Curriculum and Instruction Department. The criteria shall be on file at the school and in the Office of Enrollment Services. Students from out of county will only be accepted into magnet programs, magnet schools or academies/programs if the student was in a similar academy/program prior to coming to Escambia County, the program is not available within the residentially zoned school, and there are available seats. The district will first consider programs at residentially zoned schools for placement in these programs.

A lottery will be utilized to select students whenever the number of eligible applications exceeds the program/school's capacity. The lottery selections must maintain socioeconomic, demographic and racial balance, and consider the families residential zone for selection purposes. Applications may be randomly audited by a team consisting of the Office of Enrollment Services, designated directors and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. The electronic database will be processed through the office of Evaluation Services, who will generate a selection list.

Student selection will be based on the following criteria:

1. Students of Active Duty Military that have transitioned to the area within the last 12 months, or will be transitioning to the school before the first day of school of the requested school year, and that applied by the deadline, met all the eligibility requirements, and submitted a copy of the official orders will be automatically selected. Upon arrival, the family must reside in Escambia County.
2. Siblings, provided they meet the eligibility criteria, will be automatically accepted if two or more siblings of the same family are enrolled at that school during the same school year. The older sibling must have attended the requested school in the current school year, and be enrolled for the upcoming school year.
3. Children of full-time district employees at that school, who apply by the deadline and meet the eligibility criteria, will automatically be accepted into the school/program.

The formula to determine how many students are selected from each school is as follows:

- (i) Capacity of the school/program/grade level and/or facility will have numbers which ensure that normal attrition will not affect the ability to offer academic programs during the course of the year or maintain class size reduction requirements.
- (ii) Number of incoming students assigned to each school, including home school and private school students, at the desired grade level.
- (iii) Percentage of students selected from each school to reach capacity.

VII. Completion of Highest-Grade Level:

Absent circumstances set forth in the “Application Process” above, a student who enrolls in the District through the District’s School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan may remain at his/her current school until completion of the highest grade at the school.

After completing the highest grade at the school, a student who resides in another school district and wants to transition to the next level of the academic program in this District must reapply for enrollment through the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan.



VIII. Inter-scholastic and Intra-scholastic Extra-Curricular Activities (including Athletics):

Students participating in the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan are eligible to try-out or participate in Interscholastic and Intra-scholastic Extra-Curricular activities, so long as the student otherwise meets the eligibility criteria set forth in School Board Policy, Procedures, and FHSAA Regulations.

An otherwise eligible student who enrolls in a School of Choice through the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan, is generally, immediately eligible to try-out or participate in inter-scholastic and intra-scholastic extra-curricular activities. However, a student may not participate in a sport at the School of Choice if the student participated in that same sport at another school during that school year, unless the student meets one (1) of the following criteria:

- A. Dependent children of active-duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders;
- B. Children who have been relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone;
- C. Children who move due to a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent; or
- D. For good cause, as determined on a case-by-case factual review conducted by the Superintendent.



For the purposes the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan, “good cause” is defined as “any legal or factual excuse or reason that was not created, caused, or contributed to by the actions of the student or the student’s parents, which, out of fairness and reasonableness would justify permitting the student to immediately participate in the activity, and for which there is no evidence that the good cause:

- 1) would create an unfair advantage or gain to the student or student’s parent, and
- 2) is not an attempt to advantageously avoid the application of the general eligibility rules.

A student who believes "good cause" exists must submit a written request to the District's Athletic Director identifying the facts and circumstances the student believes establishes "good cause". The Superintendent will consider the written request and make a recommendation to the Board during a publicly noticed meeting.

IX. School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan- Appeal Process:

For Escambia County residents for whom a school choice is denied for a reason other than overcapacity or lottery selection, the parent, guardian, or student of legal age shall have the right of appeal to an Appeals Board. A challenge of a student assignment may be made on the grounds that the School Choice process was not followed, the extenuating circumstances of the eligibility criteria or to appeal the denial of a reassignment.

Parents of students who applied during the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan’s window and were not approved for placement in a School of Choice may request an appeal review based on a documented hardship or preferences not included in the initial application within three (3) calendar days of receiving notice that their application was denied. If the last day for appeal falls on a day that the Enrollment Services Office is not open for business, the

deadline shall be extended to the next day that the Enrollment Services Office is open for business.

An applicant may appeal the denial of a choice assignment if received prior to the deadline posted within the timeline. Appeals are based solely on the academic criteria. Appeals are not considered due to the capacity constraints of the school, or the lottery selection process. Appeals are reserved only for circumstances in which the Applicant has a reasonable basis to believe that the application process, as applied to them, did not abide by or otherwise comply with the standards established within the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan's application process. Any other requests for consideration outside of the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Window(s) are to be presented through hardship.

Appeals based on course availability will not be considered unless the requested program was stated in the original application and is not available at the zoned school, and the selected school has space available in the core academic classes as well as in the requested program.

Only one (1) appeal may be filed per school calendar year per window. The Superintendent has designated that the Educational Choice Appeal/Hardship Workgroup serves as the contact and decision maker regarding hardship appeal requests. The Appeals Board may be composed of three or more voting members from the following:

- ✚ Superintendent
- ✚ Deputy Superintendent
- ✚ Assistant Superintendent,
Curriculum and Instruction
- ✚ Directors,
Curriculum and Instruction
- ✚ Specialists, Workforce Education
- ✚ Specialists, Enrollment Services
- ✚ Specialist, School Transformation



The Appeals Board shall be chaired by the Coordinator of Enrollment Services, who will facilitate the process, but not vote on the final decision. The decision regarding your appeal is final. Applicants will be notified of the outcome via email.

The following procedure shall be followed:

- ✓ Each request for appeal must be in writing on the established school district appeal form. Appeals based on denial of assignment under the Choice Plan may be accepted at any time; appeals based on denial of a reassignment request must be received by the Enrollment Services Coordinator within three working days after notification of denial.
- ✓ Appeals will be heard only at scheduled times.
- ✓ Additional information presented at an appeal hearing by the Coordinator of Enrollment Services may necessitate the hearing being temporarily recessed for referral back to the principal(s) involved for reconsideration, pending completion of the hearing process.

- ✓ Three members shall be present for recommendations on all appeals. An affirmative decision to recommend the appeal (reverse the denial) of any transfer or reassignment shall require a simple majority of those voting. If a member determines that he or she cannot cast an objective vote for any reason, that member must abstain from voting. If the abstention causes the council to fall below a quorum, the appeal shall be rescheduled to the next appeals meeting.
- ✓ Any recommendation of the Appeals Board which is averse to the student may be appealed to the Superintendent. However, no appeal will be heard or considered by the Superintendent until the final recommendation of the Appeals Board is rendered.
- ✓ The Coordinator of Enrollment Services, or a designated staff member, will notify the parent/guardian and/or student of the recommendation of the Appeals Board. When the recommendation is a denial of the request for reassignment, the parent/guardian or student shall be notified of their right to appeal to the Superintendent. Each request for appeal to the Superintendent must be in writing and must be received within three working days after notification of the denial.

X. School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan -Hardship Request:

At any time, an Applicant has not been approved for assignment to a School of Choice, or who has otherwise encountered a qualifying hardship outside of the published application windows, the Parent(s)/student may utilize this Hardship Request to seek reconsideration of their application and/or transfer to a School of Choice. Hardships under this request process include the following. The preferences outlined below will not be applied for Pre-K hardship requests.

- A. Military Orders
 - 1. Must include military paperwork (current military orders)
- B. Foster Care Placement/Adoption (home placement paperwork)
- C. Medical and/or Psychological Matters;
 - 1. If a hardship is submitted for medical reasons, including psychiatric, the parent or guardian must submit a Medical Hardship Documentation and Release of Records form, including a physician's statement describing the medical condition of the student and specific medical reasons justifying the request.
- D. Legal or Law Enforcement Matters;
 - 1. If a hardship is submitted for legal or law enforcement reasons, the parent or guardian must submit documentation of the legal hardship.
 - 2. Custody or parenting plan must be submitted.
- E. Sibling Consideration
 - 1. Must include student name and student number
 - 2. Must meet one of the conditions set forth by the sibling preference policy
- F. New Employee or Employee Transfer
- G. Student Displacement Due to School Boundary Reassignments or Overcrowding:
 - 1. If a student is attending a school impacted by boundary change, and the parents want their child to remain at the impacted school.
 - 2. If a student is attending a school impacted by overcrowding or capacity issues and is reassigned to a different educational facility due to the same, and the parents want their child to remain at the impacted school.
 - 3. If a student is attending a school impacted by student redistribution or programmatic

changes and is reassigned to a different educational facility due to the same, and the parents want their child to remain at the impacted school.

I. Opportunity and other State Scholarship Programs.

J. A student, who is otherwise in good standing, withdraws from an approved School of Choice, and the parents want their child to return to the same School of Choice. Upon withdrawal from the School of Choice, the student will return to their regularly zoned school until otherwise transferred through the next upcoming School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan's application process.

K. A student withdraws from a program or course of study that was the underlying basis for attending the School of Choice, and the parents want their child to return to the School of Choice. Upon withdrawal from the program or course of study, the student will return to their regularly zoned school until otherwise transferred through the next upcoming School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan's application process.

L. Any other circumstances demonstrating a hardship.

1. As used herein, "hardship" can mean any legal or factual excuse or reason that was not created, caused, or contributed to by the actions of the student or the student's parents, which, out of fairness and reasonableness would justify permitting the student to enroll in the School of Choice, and for which there is no evidence that the good cause:

- 1) would create an unfair advantage or gain to the student or student's parent, and
- 2) is not an attempt to advantageously avoid the application of the general application process.

The decision by the superintendent or his/her designee, regarding whether a hardship exists, is final, and is not appealable. Applicants will be notified of the decision via email or phone. Submission of a timely and complete Hardship Application does not guarantee that the student will be approved to transfer to the requested school. Applications submitted without appropriate supporting documentation will not be reviewed.

XI. Non-Discrimination and Other Components of the District's School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan:

One of the goals of the School Choice program is to create a student population at every district school that reflects the diversity, based on these factors, of the county overall. This goal is based on research that has shown that students show greater educational success, as well as greater success in future careers, when they have been educated in an environment that reflects the diversity of the population with which they may later work.

Given our diverse society and the importance of preparing students for education, work, and citizenship, the Board is committed to providing students with equal educational opportunities, promoting educational diversity in the District, and providing students with the educational benefits of a diverse student body. To that end, should a concern arise regarding socioeconomic, demographic, or racial balance in one or more of the District's schools, the Superintendent shall consult with legal counsel to determine the appropriate steps that should be taken, including, but not limited to, any necessary policy revisions and other actions necessary to comply with Florida and Federal law. The Superintendent shall then make the appropriate recommendations to the Board.

The District's School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan must be implemented in such a way that:

- A. Is applied in a non-discriminatory fashion,
- B. Adheres to Federal desegregation requirements;
- C. Allows parents to declare school preferences, including placement of siblings within the same school;
- D. Provides a lottery procedure to determine student assignment and establishes an appeal process for hardship cases;
- E. Maintains socioeconomic, demographic, and racial balance;
- F. Maintains existing academic eligibility criteria for public school choice programs pursuant to Florida law;
- G. Identifies schools that have not reached capacity, as determined by the District;
- H. Ensures that preferential treatment is provided to individuals as set forth in Florida law; and
- I. Ensures the District shall report the number of students participating in public school choice by type as required by the Department of Education.

XII. Availability of Transportation:

The parent is responsible for the transportation of a student approved to attend a School of Choice through the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan. Center to Center stops may be provided for students on a space availability basis for pre-determined magnet schools/programs.

Student transportation to a district choice option school outside the student's residential attendance zone is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, but parents/guardians may request school bus transportation for students who reside more than two (2) miles from certain Choice schools in accordance with procedures established for Choice transportation. Students may be authorized school bus transportation from an existing bus stop assigned by the District either at a bus stop located within the attendance boundary of the approved school of choice on a space available basis, or from a center-to-center bus stop as appropriate.

Students authorized to attend a school outside of his or her residential attendance zone shall arrange for his or her own transportation to and from school. Parents/guardians of students who reside outside of their school's attendance zone may request transportation from an existing bus stop located in his or her destination school's attendance zone by requesting a transportation accommodation each year from the Transportation Department.

Requests will be approved on a space available basis. The Board will not provide additional or different transportation service for students accommodated under this rule, to include the establishment or relocation of bus stops, alteration of school bus ride times, or deployment of additional school buses for route service.



XIII. Parent Involvement

Process for Promoting Strong Parental Involvement, Including the Designation of a Parent Liaison

Parents provide valuable information through their involvement with the School Advisory Committee, recommending changes and better ways of communication. Parents can also participate on redistricting committees representing each of the schools under review.

XIV. Strategy for Establishing an Information Clearinghouse

A centrally-located Office of Enrollment Services, located at the J. E. Hall Center, 30 E. Texar Drive, provides the community with information on the educational options available for students living in Escambia County. This central office offers information on public, magnet, charter, and private schools, as well as information on home-education and on-line course options.

Employees work collaboratively with local media outlets while utilizing other effective communication avenues to inform parents of the opportunities available. The office also assists parents with registration, guardianships, student records, scholarship opportunities and other details necessary for enrollment in school.

The School District provides Choice Program information to parents via the district website, school messenger call outs, media releases through the communications coordinator, and each school's individual website. The Enrollment Services department also promotes choice programs through an annual School Choice Expo, held in the fall of each school year.

XV. Revocation:

Participation in the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan is a conditional privilege, and not a right. Approval to attend a School of Choice is subject to revocation based on factors, which include, but are not limited to: unsatisfactory attendance, unsatisfactory grades, Student Code of Conduct violations, other behavior that adversely impacts the educational environment. A student's admission to a School of Choice is subject to revocation, requiring the student to return to the student's residential home zoned school.

- a. The student accumulates an unacceptable number of absences (5 or more in one quarter or 10% or more in the year) at the School of Choice
- b. It is determined by district and school personnel that enrollment at a School of Choice is having a negative impact on the student's educational progress (e.g., failing grades or the student fails to successfully pass coursework in the program/academy they initially received entrance)
- c. Out of district students who, after receiving appropriate disciplinary due process in accordance with School Board Policy and procedures, have been found to have committed offenses subject to disciplinary alternative placement or expulsion shall lose eligibility for School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment.
- d. The student and/or parent/guardian is unable or unwilling to work cooperatively within the policies and procedures of the School of Choice
- e. The student withdraws from a course of study that was the basis for enrollment at the

- requested school (i.e. Career Technical Programs, International Baccalaureate, etc.);
- f. It comes to the attention of the school that the reassignment or registration request was fraudulent, was intended to circumvent athletic or other eligibility rules, or was supported by false or misleading documentation (i.e. false address) (in which case any further reassignments will be precluded for the remainder of the current and following school year);
 - g. The student or parent's failure to disclose information concerning a current or impending suspension, expulsion, disciplinary reassignment, assignment to a Department of Juvenile Justice program, or other disciplinary action;
 - h. The student or parent's failure to disclose information concerning the student's need for services, accommodations, or specialized education that make the School of Choice an inappropriate placement for the student's needs;
 - i. The student needs services, accommodations, or specialized education that make the School of Choice an inappropriate placement for the student's needs;
 - j. The student fails to enroll in the School of Choice within the time period specified in the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan; or
 - k. If the Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee determines that a revocation of the School of Choice assignment is appropriate. The Superintendent, or designee, may assign or reassign students on a case-by-case basis to schools or programs other than that designated by the attendance area or the School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment Plan when the Superintendent or designee determines that such a revocation is in the best educational interest of the child, or to prevent disruption of the educational environment, or otherwise promote the health, safety, or welfare of the student, other students, or staff.

XVI. Hearing Rights for Revocation of School of Choice Assignment:

When a student's admission to a School of Choice is subject to revocation, the student will have the same rights to appeal, as described in section XI. This includes a right to a District-level appeal. The decision made at the District-level appeal is final and non-appealable.

