

# Florida Department of Education

## 2010-2011 District Controlled Open Enrollment Plan

### Contact Information

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Enrollment Plan Link: [http://www.pasco.k12.fl.us/studentservices/school\\_choice/](http://www.pasco.k12.fl.us/studentservices/school_choice/)

### Nine Quality Indicators of Consideration

#### 1. Application Process

##### Application Process

Parents access the Schools of Choice through an online application process during the open enrollment period established annually by the district school Board. Parents without direct computer access may seek assistance from their nearest school or public library. Submitting an application does not guarantee that the student will be approved to transfer to the requested school of choice.

School Choice Open Enrollment Applications are required when:

- The request is for initial entry of a student in a school of choice;
- A student is attending a school of choice that is impacted by boundary changes, and the parents want their child to remain at the school the student was previously approved to attend through the school choice process;
- There is a change of home address which places the student in a different neighborhood school, and the parents want their child to remain at the school for the remainder of the current school year;
- The parents want to transfer their child from one school of choice to another school of choice;
- A student withdraws from an approved school of choice, and the parents want their child to reenter the school of choice;
- A student withdraws from a course of study which was the reason for attending the school of choice, and the parents want their child to remain at the school for the remainder of the current school year;
- A school is severely overcrowded, there are no other alternatives for relief, and the Superintendent has deemed that the impact of school choice must be reviewed and reconsidered;
- A parent of a Pasco County student is requesting attendance in another county or a parent

living in another county is requesting attendance at a Pasco County school. In such cases, parents must reapply annually.

Additional School Choice Options are:

1. School approved enrollment in specific High School Program or Career Academy.
2. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.
3. McKay Scholarship

Note: School choice approvals for Pasco County residents remain in effect throughout the highest grade level at the school of choice, unless circumstances warrant a new application or the district rescinds school choice approval.

Application Timeline

- Parents/guardians must submit a completed School Choice Open Enrollment form for each student, for the following school year electronically, between February 1st and March 1st.
- Student Choice Open Enrollment applications are available electronically on the District website.

Applications are accepted outside the open enrollment period ONLY when a school choice request is based on a documented hardship or other eligible situation.

Requests submitted during open enrollment for schools with a projected enrollment below 100% are approved if the student is in good standing and the appropriate educational program exists at the school; and approvals do not place the school above 100% of permanent capacity or violate class by class size legal enrollment limits.

Once a school reaches 100% stated capacity the school is reclassified as frozen to School Choice Open Enrollment.

After capacity has been reached the remaining school choice open enrollment applications are assigned a computer generated lottery number. This number is used to weight the remaining requests.

Applications for students served in self-contained exceptional student education classes for 50% or more of the day are considered for approval based on class size rather than school capacity. Requests will only be approved when space is available and the appropriate educational services exist at the requested site.

NOTIFICATION PROCESS:

- Notifications will be sent electronically for applications submitted with a valid email address. Parents without an email address will be notified via U.S. Mail.

## **2. Process for Declaring School Preference**

School Choice Open Enrollment information is available on the District School Board of Pasco County website, and further publicized through parent publications and mail outs.

School Choice Open Enrollment Applications are accepted for all district schools open to Choice. To be open to choice a school must be below 100% capacity and below class by class statutory set limits.

Applications are accepted outside the open enrollment period ONLY when a school choice request is based on a documented hardship or other eligible situation.

### **3. Process that Encourages Placement of Siblings within the Same School**

Sibling placement is a district priority.

Placement of siblings within the same school is facilitated whenever feasible provided a parent/guardian submits a School Choice Open Enrollment application for a child to attend a school that is open to school choice, provided that appropriate educational services are available for each sibling at the requested school.

Special consideration for approval of school choice is given to:

- Siblings of exceptional education students placed at the school of choice through School Choice Open Enrollment or McKay Scholarship;
- Siblings of students previously approved for school choice who are enrolled, in good standing and attending the school of choice;
- Siblings of students who attend another educational level (elementary, middle or secondary) at schools co-located on the same grounds or physically adjacent to each other when a documented hardship situation warrants approval to attend the requested school;

The School Choice Open Enrollment 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 is currently attending and will continue to attend the requested school. 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.

### **4. Lottery Procedure to Determine Student Assignment**

Once a school reaches 100% stated capacity the school is reclassified as frozen to School Choice Open Enrollment.

After capacity has been reached the remaining school choice open enrollment applications are assigned a computer generated lottery number. This number is used to weight the remaining requests.

### **5. Appeals Process for Hardship Cases**

Hardships or statutory provisions may affect Choice transfers to schools in all status categories. These provisions include documented medical, emotional or psychological and legal reasons.

The Student Services Department, Office of School Choice staff, will assist in the assignment

process and will make reasonable efforts to provide an assignment that is appropriate for the individual circumstances.

In cases where the number of applicants exceeds capacity, priority is given to:

- Homeless students as defined in School Board Policy 5111.01
- Students in foster care
- A child of a full-time school system employee desiring to attend the school where the parent works or that feeder pattern except in cases where student enrollment exceeds 100% capacity or exceeds class by class limits;
- School assignment issues that arise due to custody issues, legal situations and administrative circumstances.
- A twelfth grader wanting to graduate from the high school he has been attending.
- Siblings of exceptional education students placed at the school of choice through Open Enrollment School Choice or McKay Scholarship;
- Siblings of students previously approved for school choice who are enrolled, in good standing and attending the school of choice;
- Enrollment in course offerings not available at their zoned schools;
- Children of parents with active military status;
- No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 eligible students;

Parents of students not approved for placement in a school of choice may request an appeal review based on a documented hardship situation prior to November 1st. A written appeal describing the hardship must be submitted via facsimile, U.S. mail, or electronically to the District Student Services Department.

The District Student Services Department serves as the contact for appeal requests and coordinates the review of hardship requests.

## **6. Procedure to Maintain Socioeconomic, Demographic, and Racial Balance**

A database of school choice requests is maintained and cross-referenced with the district electronic student information system. Updated lists of students approved to attend a school of choice are generated periodically for review by district and school based administration.

School choice data are collected and the Superintendent's staff is apprised of emerging patterns that may potentially impact the socioeconomic, demographic and racial balance of the district. If necessary, further analysis and possible revision to the district school choice open enrollment may be recommended.

## **7. Availability of Transportation**

The parent is responsible for the transportation of a student approved to attend a school of choice through the open enrollment process.

The School Choice Open Enrollment Application includes a section for parents to indicate whether or not they want their child to be considered for transportation services.

- Space on a bus may be available for siblings of special education students.
- Parents are advised not to depend on this service, particularly during the start of the school year.

If transportation is requested and space is available, the student is assigned to the nearest existing stop within the designated transportation boundaries of the approved school of choice; or for siblings of students receiving exceptional student education services.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that the safety and welfare of their child is maintained while traveling to and from an assigned stop.

Transportation may be revoked if:

Accessing the transportation is deemed by the district to be unsafe for the student;

or

The bus becomes overcrowded. In such cases, the last approved for transportation will be the first removed. If transportation is revoked due to overcrowding, transportation will be revoked for all school choice siblings riding the same bus as the student designated as the last approved.

## **8. Process for Promoting Strong Parental Involvement, Including the Designation of a Parent Liaison**

Development of the district School Choice Open Enrollment Plan incorporates input from school based staff, district departments, family members, and community representatives. Input is obtained through:

Ad hoc, focus group meetings to address school choice topics presented by school based staff, district departments, families or community members;

- Family meetings to discuss proposed school boundary changes;
- District liaisons assigned to serve as non-voting members of School Advisory Councils;
- Individual conference meetings with parents, school staff, and community members;
- Superintendent staff meetings with school principals and assistant principals.
- Family Involvement Steering Committee.

The District Student Services Department serves as the district contact for school choice, provides information on school choice options, assists parents with the application process, coordinates the approval process for school choice within the district, and facilitates the appeals process for hardship cases.

Information is available via phone, e-mail, or personal meetings to assist parents with the open enrollment process and discuss individual circumstances pertaining to school choice requests.

## **9. Strategy for Establishing an Information Clearinghouse**

The District Student Services Department serves as an information clearinghouse on school choice options available to parents. The department oversees implementation of school choice open enrollment, the McKay Scholarship for Students with Disabilities, and home education.

The Student Services Department works collaboratively with the district departments responsible for implementation of No Child Left Behind school choice options, charter schools, virtual school programs, alternative education, home instruction, career and technical education, advanced placement, and dual enrollment.

Information regarding the school choice open enrollment process is made available to parents and the community via:

- Local and regional press releases;
- School newsletters to the parents of students impacted by school boundary changes;
- Automated telephone messages announcing open enrollment time lines;
- School marquee announcements;
- Year round postings on the district website;
- Application Guidelines and a Question and Answer Paper published in English and Spanish on the district website and in paper format;
- Letters and flyers mailed to directors of private preschools and daycare centers;
- School based meetings for families of students articulating from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school.