



Red Clay Consolidated School District Board of Education Policy

School Choice Enrollment

A. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish criteria and processes for application, participation, and termination of school choice in the Red Clay Consolidated School District (“District” or “Red Clay”), and for the acceptance and rejection of school choice applications. The choice program is designed to increase access to educational opportunities for all children in the State.

This policy is needed to promote a school choice program in the District consistent with 14 Del.C. Ch. 4 and policies of the Red Clay Consolidated School District Board of Education (“Board”).

B. Issue:

The expectation set in place by this policy is that a parent, legal guardian, or relative caregiver (collectively “parents”) who wishes to enroll his/her child in a public school in any district independent of the student’s area of residence will adhere to the guidelines listed in this policy.

This policy must be applied in all instances of school choice in the District.

This policy does not apply to special schools (Meadowood, Richardson Park Learning Center, and Central School) or the ELL program.

If this policy is not implemented, the efficiency of the school choice process through which students enter and exit Delaware public schools may be compromised.

C. Definitions:

“Reside,” “residing,” and “residence” refer to the residence of the student’s parent.

D. Policy:

The Board recognizes that a parent residing within Delaware may seek enrollment for his/her child in a public school in any district independent of the student’s area of residence. It is the policy of the Board that the criteria and processes for school choice follow the guidelines provided in this policy.

Eligibility for Choice Enrollment

The following students must submit a choice application through the choice enrollment process:

1. Any student who wishes to choose a school and/or program other than his/her regularly assigned attendance zone school and/or program.
2. Any student who is assigned through the special permission process described in this policy.

Choice applications will be accepted only for students who are *currently registered* in their attendance zone school or choice school. Students who are not already registered in a Delaware public school (e.g., students coming from private, parochial, and vocational schools), and students coming from charter schools, *must register in their school of residence prior to submitting a choice application.*

Policy 8013

Students residing in the Lewis Dual Language Elementary School attendance zone, who opt not to attend that school, will be assigned to Warner Elementary School or they may file a choice application to attend another elementary school.

A choice application will not be accepted for a student who has been expelled from the District or another district until that student is eligible for readmission to the expelling district. Students who are enrolled in alternative programs may submit applications as appropriate for the next school year under the established guidelines.

Any student who changes residence after September 30 (with the exception of a student who changes residence after the conclusion of the third marking period of the junior year) may be extended the option to continue attendance at his/her present school until the conclusion of that school year. If the student wishes to continue attendance at that school until the end of the grade configuration, the student must apply for choice by submitting a good cause late application. A student who changes residence after the conclusion of the third marking period of the junior year may be extended the option to continue attendance at his/her present school through graduation. The enrollment options described in this paragraph shall be subject to the school choice enrollment provisions of this policy.

Choice Enrollment Process

Applications for the school choice process will be accepted from the first Monday in November to the second Wednesday in January for enrollment during the following school year in a program in grades 1 through 12, or up to the first day of the school year for enrollment in a kindergarten program during that school year.

All applications must be submitted on the form designed by the Delaware Department of Education. No altered applications will be accepted unless the corrected portion contains a parental signature (initials) at the place of correction.

Applications may be obtained from the main office of any Red Clay school, the Choice Office, the District Office, the District website (www.redclay.k12.de.us) during the choice enrollment period, or by contacting the Choice Office ((302) 552-3789).

All applications must be postmarked to, or received in person at, the Choice Office, Red Clay Consolidated School District, 1502 Spruce Avenue, Wilmington, DE, 19805, by 4:30 p.m. on the identified closing date. No State applications are to be submitted directly to schools.

Students will be permitted to identify up to three school choices on the application. The choices will be identified in priority order.

Choice Applications for Magnet Schools

Cab Calloway School of the Arts and Conrad Schools of Science are magnet schools which require an additional, school-level application that is sent directly to them. Applications for these schools can be obtained from the school websites or the main office of the respective schools.

Enrollment after the Choice Application Period (Good Cause)

No consideration will be given to late submissions or mail inadequacies that delay postmark or receipt of the application. After the identified deadlines, applications that meet the good cause provisions of the law may be submitted.

Good cause late applications will be accepted for one of the following reasons:

1. A change in a child's residence due to a change in family residence;
2. A change in the state in which the family residence is located;
3. A change in a child's parent's marital status;
4. A change caused by a guardianship proceeding;
5. Placement of a child in foster care;
6. Adoption;
7. Participation by a child in a foreign exchange program;
8. Participation by a child in a substance abuse or mental health treatment program; or
9. A set of circumstances consistent with this definition of good cause, including a change in day care providers resulting in daycare or daycare-provided transportation now within the feeder pattern of the requested school of choice.

Students who submit late applications because of good cause reasons as outlined in this policy will be considered for enrollment or wait list status on a space available basis. This process will occur after the initial choice assignments have been made.

Students who are new to the District will be enrolled on a space available basis for all grades and programs but will be guaranteed enrollment at the school of residence.

Withdrawal of Choice Applications

An application may be withdrawn by written notification to the receiving district and district of residence at any time prior to the Board's action on the application. If more than one application is on file in the District at the time the assignment is made, the most recent timely application receipt dated will be used for assignment.

If an application is withdrawn, the student will remain assigned to the school of residence.

Notification and Acceptance of Choice Assignments

Notice of the school assignment will be sent to students within five working days of the Board's action on the choice recommendation at the February Board meeting. In the case of the applications submitted after the initial deadline, notice will be sent no later than 45 days after the application is received.

Enrollment in a school by application is for the grade span of that school's regular assignment program and is for that school only and not for the attendance zone of the residential area of the school. Students return to their attendance zone school at the completion of all grades of the choice school unless an application is submitted and an invitation is issued.

Any student who is accepted for enrollment in a school and fails to be promoted to the grade for which application was made will have his/her choice invitation rescinded. Parents may write a letter to the Choice Office to request a seat at the retained grade. Placement will be made based upon available space.

All students will be sent a notice that a choice application has been received. If that notice is not received by the parent by 15 days after the application deadline, the parent must contact the Choice Office to determine if the application has been received.

Parents must accept or reject invitations to choice schools on or before the third Friday in March. If no response is received, the invitation will be rejected.

The District assumes no responsibility for ensuring correct contact information for any notices transmitted to applicants, including notices of wait list assignments.

Criteria for Acceptance to a Choice School

The capacity of each school will be reviewed annually by the Superintendent in conjunction with the Board prior to the start of the choice assignment process. The number will be used as a guideline to decide the choice capacity of each school (i.e., how many choice students will be issued invitations to enroll in each school and/or be placed on a wait list for that school). A school's choice capacity will be determined by the amount of available building space and projections regarding the total number of seats that need to be reserved for attendance zone students and currently enrolled students.

Prior to the time that the choice assignment is conducted, a school capacity and projected enrollment will be calculated for each grade of a school for which applications are being accepted.

Projected enrollment for each grade will take into account attendance zone students and existing enrolled choice students.

Seats available at each grade level will be determined by subtracting the projected enrollment from the capacity allocated to each grade within the school.

The assignment process will be conducted so that students assigned out of the school will increase the seats available for students selecting the school.

The District may disapprove an application because of lack of capacity in the District or in the school or program for which the application is submitted.

As required by State law, the District's criteria for acceptance or rejection of application shall include the authority of the District to reject an application based upon the requirements of any applicable existing individualized education program (IEP) relating to an applicant who has special needs.

Student Choice Selection Criteria

School choice applications received by the specified dates will be considered in the following order:

1. Returning students who continue to meet the requirements for the program or school.
2. Students who meet the requirements for the program or school and who seek to attend based on the residence of the student's parent in the designated feeder pattern, if any, for the school.
3. In-district siblings of in-district students who are already enrolled in the program and who will remain enrolled in the program for the next school year, provided that the siblings meet the requirements for the program or school. Exiting students are not considered siblings for this enrollment preference.
4. In-district students who have designated the school as first, second, or third choice based on the random number assigned by the computer lottery process.
5. Out-of-district siblings of out-of-district students who are already enrolled in the program and who will remain enrolled in the program for the next school year, provided that the siblings meet the requirements for the program or school and the siblings have designated the school as first, second, or third choice based on the random number assigned by the computer lottery process. Exiting students are not considered siblings for this enrollment preference.
6. Out-of-district students who have designated the school as first, second, or third choice based on the random number assigned by the computer lottery process.

Policy 8013

Within each category (1-7), if there are more students' selections for the school than there are seats available, the computer lottery process will be used for selection. All remaining students will be placed on the wait list based on category and random number within that category.

Wait List

A wait list may be established for each school based on the random number assigned to each applying student and, for students who submit a late application that meets the provisions of good cause, the order in which the application was received.

Students will be maintained on the wait list for first, second, and third choice schools as appropriate.

Red Clay students who are not assigned any of their three choices may contact the Choice Office after the close of the assignment process to request assignment to any school that is not oversubscribed, if such a school is chosen over the school of residence. These students will remain on the wait list of their first, second, and third choice schools.

The wait list will be maintained until June 30.

Special Permission

All applications for assignment that are not covered in the above provisions may be considered for special permission. Special permissions will be granted in extenuating circumstances where the provisions of the choice enrollment process are not applicable. An application and an explanatory document outlining the reasons given for the request must be submitted to the Superintendent, whose decision shall be final.

Parents who are full-time employees of the District may apply for special permission as follows:

1. An employee may request special permission for the employee's child to attend the school to which the employee is assigned, even if that school is closed to choice or is a magnet school.
2. An employee who is not directly assigned to a school building may request special permission for the employee's child to attend a District school, even if that school is closed to choice or is a magnet school.
3. An employee who resides out of state may request special permission for the employee's child to attend a District school as described above. The employee will be charged tuition by the District in accordance with state law.

Students seeking special permission to a magnet school must meet the requirements for admission to the magnet school. Special permissions are granted for the current school year only. A student who is assigned to a school through special permission must submit a choice application in order to remain at the school for subsequent years.

Program Continuation

Once a student is assigned to a school through the choice process, no action is necessary in order for the student to remain for subsequent years except as described in this policy. The student will have all the rights and responsibilities of a resident student.

Any magnet school or program that is populated only by choice applicants may establish additional requirements for enrollment application and may identify admissions based on recommendations. At Cab Calloway School of the Arts and Conrad Schools of Science, a student must apply in order to continue to the next grade when transitioning from grade 8 to

Policy 8013

grade 9. At Brandywine Springs School, grades 6-8 are populated only by choice applicants; a student must apply to continue to the next grade when transitioning from grade 5 to grade 6.

Transportation

Bus assignments and stops for all choice students will be issued by the Transportation Department. A within-district location will be assigned on a regular bus route for the choice school.

Once the pick-up and drop-off location is established, parents must assume the responsibility to have the student at the designated location.

Participation in Interscholastic Athletics

Students shall be governed by the rules of the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA) with regard to eligibility of the transferring student.

Students for whom this is a concern should check with the principal of the school(s) being considered for choice.

Termination of Choice Enrollment

A parent may provide notice by the prior December 1 to terminate enrollment in a school of choice at the end of the school year. An application to withdraw may be accepted after the December 1 deadline if the deadline was missed for good cause reasons.

Following the granting of a request for withdrawal, the student's district of residence will be notified that the student will be returned to the roster of the school of residence for projection purposes and any application for a choice enrollment handled according to the established process.

Any requests for program termination and reassignment outside of the attendance zone within the school year will be processed as special permission requests.

A student who fails to meet the academic requirements and attendance requirements of a choice school may not be permitted to return the next school year. Meeting the academic requirements is defined as meeting the District's standards for promotion to the next grade level.

A student who violates the Student Code of Conduct, as well as a student who engages in conduct which may result in a recommendation for alternative placement and/or expulsion, may not be permitted to return to the choice school for the following school year.

E. Review and Reporting:

This policy shall be reviewed annually and/or according to policy review guidelines established by the Board.

This policy shall be monitored by the Board and the Superintendent with assistance from the Choice Office.

At each monthly Board meeting, the District will provide to the Board information regarding approved special permissions.

F. History:

This policy previously existed as Policies JEC School Choice Enrollment Process and JECC Assignment of Students to Schools.

G. References:

Related policies: (None)

Policy 8013

Related documents: Delaware Department of Education School Choice Application Form, Red Clay Consolidated School District Student Code of Conduct, Red Clay Consolidated School District Online Choice Application, Cab Calloway School of the Arts School Choice Application, Conrad Schools of Science School Choice Application

H. Laws/Relevant Agencies:

14 Del. C. §§401-414

14 Del. C. Ch. 6

Delaware Department of Education

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