

Regulation JC-R – Student Assignment

This regulation describes the general guidelines for School Choice. If an individual school has additional guidelines or variations, the school-specific guidelines will be published annually on the Office of Choice and Enrollment Services website.

Every student between the ages of 5 and 21, residing within the City and County of Denver, is entitled to enroll at a school within the Denver Public Schools. The below regulation describes the process for determining which school a student is entitled to enroll.

The following definitions apply to this regulation and any other guidelines issued by the Office of Choice and Enrollment:

“Right-to-Attend School”: school that a DPS student has a right to attend if that student does not access the choice process.

“Geographical Catchment”: boundary or zone based on a student’s primary house of residence.

“Enrollment Zone Placement”: for students whose primary residence is located inside of an enrollment zone, that student’s right to attend school will be one of the schools in the zone and will be determined based on the first round of school choice or placement through the Office of Choice and Enrollment Services.

“School of Record”: the school a student is assigned to either because that is the student’s Right to Attend School or the student’s school through the participation in and match in the school choice process.

How to Determine the Right to Attend School

A right-to-attend school is either the school serving the geographical catchment or the student’s designated placement pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). When a student is enrolled pursuant to the IDEA, that same school shall be designated as the right-to-attend school for the family, including all siblings within the household. If a student with an IDEA placement is exited from an IDEA center-based program, the student retains the right to attend that school through the terminal grade at that school or the right to return to the student’s geographical catchment school.

For initial admission to a right to attend school, students must provide a proof of address, documents accepted for proof of address are listed in the Choice and Enrollment website. If a student is unable to provide such proof, the student will not be enrolled until such documentation is provided.

If a student is assigned to a school through the choice process other than their right to attend school, the student no longer has the right to enroll in the right to attend school for that school year. If, after that year, the student wants to return to the student’s right to attend school, the student must participate in the Round 1 choice process and identify their right to attend

school. If the student participates in Round 1, they are guaranteed a seat in the right to attend school for the upcoming school year. If a student does not participate in Round 1 and chooses instead to participate in Round 2, the student may be enrolled in the right to attend school, but only if the school has capacity.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, a student who resides in a geographical catchment area is guaranteed a seat in a school in the geographical catchment area. If there is more than one school in the geographical catchment area, see the definition of enrollment zone placement.

School of Record

Once a student is enrolled in a DPS school, that school becomes the student's school of record, regardless of whether it is their right to attend school, an assignment via school choice or the student enrolled through application or administrative transfer. That school remains their school of record until the student is properly enrolled in another school in Denver Public Schools, provided the student remains residing within the City and County of Denver.

Students who are Unenrolled and Wish to Re-enroll in a DPS School

A student who is unenrolled by a school (removed from the enrollment roster) retains the right to re-enroll in their last school of record without barriers. For example, if a student is unenrolled pursuant to the Attendance Guidelines, that student has the right to immediately re-enroll at the last school of record, if the student so chooses.

Choice Process

Students attending a school other than the right to attend school may do so only when one of the following has been approved:

1. A School Choice application to attend a school that is not their geographical catchment school, including magnet programs and charter schools;
2. A parent-initiated transfer, agreed to by both the sending and receiving school leaders or a district-initiated transfer (limited to the express reasons listed below).

All parent-initiated requests to attend a school that is not the student's right to attend school will be administered by the Office of Choice and Enrollment Services. The procedures are described below.

1. SCHOOL CHOICE

A. First Round:

The highest priority for selecting a school in the next academic year, other than the student's right to attend school, will be for students applying by a specified application date (usually the last school day in the month of January). Students will be allowed to apply for up to five choices and will be enrolled in their highest preference school for which they meet qualifications, if any, and space is available, as determined by the Office of Choice and Enrollment Services and the school principal. Students who apply to attend district-managed schools with catchment areas will be prioritized in the following way:

I. Students Applying to DPS's Early Childhood Education Program (3 and 4-years-old on or before Oct. 1st)

1. Students who reside in the catchment area for the school.
2. Denver residents who have a currently-attending sibling in grades kinder or a higher grade at the requested school.
3. Denver residents who are currently attending the school's 3-year-old ECE program.
4. Children of full-time employees at the school.
5. All other Denver resident students.
6. Non-Denver residents who are currently attending the school's 3-year-old ECE program OR have a currently-attending sibling who will also be continuing at the school the following year.
7. All other students who are not Denver residents.

II. Students Applying to Kindergarten (must turn 5 years old on or before Oct. 1st [1])

1. Students who reside in the catchment area for the school.
2. Denver residents who have a currently-attending sibling in grades kinder or a higher grade at the requested school.
3. Denver residents who are currently attending the school's 4-year-old ECE program.
4. Children of full-time employees at the school.
5. All other Denver resident students.
6. Non-Denver residents who are currently attending the school's 4-year-old ECE program OR have a currently-attending sibling who will also be continuing at the school the following year.
7. All other students who are not Denver residents.

III. Students Applying to 1st – 12th Grades

1. Students who reside in the catchment area for the school.
2. Denver residents who are currently attending the school.
3. Denver residents who have a currently-attending sibling in grades kinder or a higher grade at the requested school. Non-Denver residents who are currently attending the school's 4-year-old ECE program OR have a currently-attending sibling who will also be continuing at the school the following year.
4. Children of full-time employees at the school.
5. All other Denver resident students.

6. All other students who are not Denver residents.

In applying the Denver resident sibling preferences in I, II and III above, a Denver resident sibling will not be excluded because of space constraints unless the principal and the Office of Choice and Enrollment determines that including the sibling will negatively affect the school's ability to serve other students.

Students who apply to attend district-managed magnet programs or schools, an enrollment zone placement, and/or charter schools will be prioritized based on a school-specific schema. School-specific prioritization schemas will be finalized by the school subject to the approval of the Superintendent or a designee and published by the Office of Choice and Enrollment Services prior to the commencement of the First Round Process each year.

B. Second Round:

After the First Round, parents may still exercise their choice options to enroll their child in any school for which they are qualified and space is available, up to a District-established deadline (usually the last school day in the month of August). Applications should be submitted at the desired school of attendance. Priority for Second Round applicants will be on a first-come, first-served basis, only after all First Round applicants have been accommodated.

C. Deadlines

First Round School Choice applications must be submitted to the District no later than the last school day in the month of January. Second Round School Choice applications must be submitted to the district no later than the last school day in the month of August.

D. Overall Guidelines

Students enrolled in a school through School Choice will remain enrolled in this school through the highest grade offered unless one of the following occurs:

- The student enrolls in another school through the School Choice process
- The student withdraws from the District
- The student no longer meets the eligibility requirements for a school or program
- The District reassigns the student
- The student moves out of the City and County of Denver

Waiting lists are not maintained from one academic year to the next. Therefore, students not accepted at a school and who wish to attend must submit a new application for the next school year.

2. PARENT AND DISTRICT INITIATED TRANSFERS

Students wishing to attend a school other than the one serving the residence of the student's parent/legal guardian will most often be accommodated through the School Choice procedure described above. Other types of transfers may also be considered based on specific circumstances. Prior to enrolling a student with an approved transfer, a school will ensure that proper withdrawal procedures have been completed at the sending (current) school.

All schools will be held to their funding number, and available seats may be used by the Office of Choice and Enrollment placements.

A. Administrative Transfers

An Administrative Transfer may be initiated by the parent up to a District-established deadline (typically the last school day in the month of January). The principal of the child's current school and the principal of the desired school of attendance will make a recommendation to the Office of Choice and Enrollment Services as to the disposition of the request. Parents are responsible for providing information that is necessary to adequately consider the transfer, and for understanding the implications regarding transportation and participation in athletics and extra-curricular activities.

Final approval is determined by the Office of School Choice and Enrollment, except that a transfer may only be denied for one of the following reasons:

- Lack of space, potentially including the presence of a waiting list for First or Second Round School Choice applicants, and the number of enrolled students of the desired school of attendance on the transfer request date versus the funded enrollment count of the school and/or grade being considered.
- Safety and discipline issues specific to the desired school of attendance;
- Student-specific concerns related to recent behavior and attendance patterns; or
- Appropriateness of the timing of the request.

Administrative Transfers requested for middle and high school students after the school year has started will become effective at the beginning of the following semester or trimester, unless an exception is approved by the Office of Choice and Enrollment Services. Transfers during the course of a semester will be considered only when exceptional circumstances exist.

Parents may request a review of an Administrative Transfer application that has been denied.

B. Medical Transfers

Medical transfers are approved based on the documented health needs of students. Once submitted to the Department of Student Equity and Opportunity, applications will be investigated by the Student Equity and Opportunity department, which will make a decision as to the disposition of the transfer request subject to review by the Office of Choice and Enrollment Services.

Once approved, transfers will be continued through the highest grade offered by a school, subject to annual review by the Student Equity and Opportunity department to verify the continuing need for the transfer.

C. Program Transfers

Transfers may be approved to allow for a student to participate in a specialized program (for example, Special Education). Such transfers are submitted to the desired school or program and are approved based on acceptance to that program, subject to review by the Office of Choice and Enrollment Services. Program transfers continue through the highest grade offered by the program at a particular school and do not require annual renewal.

D. Social Services and Court-Related Transfers

Transfers may be initiated by the district at the request of the courts or the Department of Denver Human Services.

E. Disciplinary Transfer

The District, on occasion, may reassign a student to a different school as a result of disciplinary considerations. Note: a disciplinary transfer requires the pre-approval of the Department of Student Equity and Opportunity.

F. Space Availability Reassignments

Space availability reassignments are those initiated by the district when the enrollment in a school is capped; that is, enrollment is limited based on facility and/or educational considerations to less than the number of students who wish to attend the school and reside in the attendance area.

3. MAGNET SCHOOL AND PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

A. Opportunity to Apply

DPS Magnet programs may be co-located with a geographical catchment school or reside in their own stand-alone school. Co-located programs are responsible for clearly communicating the differences (both academically and operationally) between programs to all interested parents and students. Each magnet school and program is responsible for disseminating information about its program so that as many parents and students as possible may be informed about the educational opportunity provided. Magnet schools and programs will offer specialized academic programs including, but not limited to:

- Highly Gifted and Talented;
- Fundamental Academies;
- Arts and Science Focus;
- Dual Language;

- Montessori;
- International Baccalaureate.

B. Enrollment Practices and Procedures

Based on a Magnet program's area of specialty, enrollment requirements may exist. Specifically, Magnet programs have the ability to collaborate with the Office of Choice and Enrollment Services in an effort to determine:

1) School-specific qualification, audition, and interview requirements and deadlines, and

2) School-specific student selection procedures.

If it is determined by the Superintendent or designee that the Magnet program's procedures must vary from the published geographical catchment school procedures, the Magnet program will publish such variations on all printed enrollment materials (including qualification application) as well as on the school or program's website.

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A. Change of Address During the School Year

A student attending their Right to Attend school whose address changes during the school year may complete the academic year at the current school or enroll within 60 days at the new Right to Attend school. If the student's new address is within the City and County of Denver, the student will be eligible to remain at the student's School of Record in subsequent years. If the new address is outside the City and County of Denver, the student must apply vis-à-vis the School Choice Process for the following year.

Student addresses need to be kept current and correct at all times; if a student's address is not correct at the time of registration every year, DPS retains the right to investigate and take appropriate steps to determine residency.

A change of residence within Denver shall have no effect on magnet program eligibility or attendance at a school based on School Choice.

B. School Capacity

School capacities shall be calculated taking into account facility size and space needs for a viable educational program at each site.

C. Capping

In order to provide appropriate educational opportunities, enrollment in schools may be limited by the District. When this occurs and students cannot be accommodated at the school serving the residence of the student's parent/guardian, a variety of options including the following will be considered:

- Multi-track year-round calendar
- Program modifications
- Changes in the attendance area
- Grade level configuration changes
- Transportation to another District school with available space
- Facility additions and/or modifications

Students reassigned as a result of capping will be given priority to return to their geographical catchment school based on the date of the original reassignment; at appropriate calendar intervals, the first students reassigned will have the highest priority to return to the geographical catchment school, based on available space.

D. Budget Considerations

These procedures will be reviewed annually as part of the district's Budget development process and may be modified based on revised allocation decisions.

E. Students New to the District After the School Choice Deadline

Students enrolling in the district for the first time during any school year are able to enroll at their Right to Attend School. Students may also pursue enrollment at another school by completing an application within two weeks of enrollment in the district. Seats will be made available to such students on a space-availability basis, as determined by the Office of Choice and Enrollment Services.

F. Non-Denver Residents

Students who do not reside within the city and county of Denver may enroll in a DPS school at any time, based on space availability. However, those students who newly enroll after October 1st will be charged Out-of-District Tuition.

Permission for a nonresident student to attend a district school may be rescinded at the end of the school year if the school's growth in enrollment due to an increase in students living in the school's boundary results in inadequate space or resources for enrolled students. In such cases, the enrollment of nonresident students will be rescinded for particular schools or programs.

Any nonresident student may be denied enrollment for the next school year if, due to a change in circumstances, the school would be required to add programs, space or teaching staff or make an alteration to facilities or equipment in order to serve the student or the student no longer meets the established eligibility criteria for the school.

G. Readmittance

A student who has been expelled shall be prohibited from enrolling or re-enrolling in the same school in which the victim of the offense or member of the victim's immediate family is enrolled or employed when:

- a. the expelled student was convicted of a crime, adjudicated a juvenile delinquent, received a deferred judgment or was placed in a diversion program as a result of committing the offense for which the student was expelled;
- b. there is an identifiable victim of the expelled student's offense; and
- c. the offense for which the student was expelled does not constitute a crime against property.

If the district has no actual knowledge of the name of the victim, the expelled student shall be prohibited from enrolling or re-enrolling only upon request of the victim or a member of the victim's immediate family.

No student will be readmitted to a DPS school until after a meeting between the principal or designee and the parent/guardian has taken place except that if the administrator cannot contact the parent/guardian or if the parent/guardian repeatedly fails to appear for scheduled meetings, the administrator must readmit the student.

H. Geographical Catchment Changes

Geographical catchment areas will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Planning and Analysis department.

[1] For early entrance requirements and application process, please contact the Department of Early Education at EarlyEducation_Processing@dpsk12.org