

6Gx53-4.018 SCHOOLS OF CHOICE OR PROGRAMS OF CHOICE:

A school of choice or a program of choice is a school or program with a specialized instructional focus or theme. Schools of choice and programs of choice must enable the Polk County school district to provide diversity and must not disadvantage the composition of the sending or receiving school.

I. Authorization: Schools of choice or programs of choice must be authorized by the School Board following the School Board's consideration of a recommendation by the Superintendent preceded by a review of each proposed school of choice or program of choice by a Review Committee.

A. Review Committee: The Review Committee shall consist of the following members:

1. Superintendent, or designee;
2. Senior Director of Magnet, Choice, and Charter Schools, and/or designee, who will act as chair;
3. Senior Director of Assessment, Accountability, and Evaluation ;
4. Senior Director of Minority Relations;
5. Assistant Superintendent of the Human Services Division, or designee;
6. Associate Superintendent of School Based Operations;
7. Assistant Superintendent of the Facilities and Operations Division, or designee;
8. Assistant Superintendent of the Support Services Division, or designee;
9. Assistant Superintendent of Business Services Division;
10. Director of the Exceptional Student Education Department;

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11. Assistant Superintendent of Information Services and Technology Department, or designee;
12. A member of the community not employed by the School Board to be appointed by the School Board.
13. Senior Coordinator of Demographics and Planning Analysis
14. Senior Director of Community Relations
15. School Board Attorney

B. Review and Recommendations by Review Committee: The Review Committee shall review each proposal to establish a school or program of choice considering the following:

1. The impact of each school of choice on other previously established schools or programs
2. Impact on diversity.
3. The adequacy and appropriateness of the educational services offered under each proposal.

C. Eligibility for School of Choice Application: Eligibility of any school to apply to the School Board, as prospective sponsor, to form a school of choice shall be governed by school board policy.

1. Request for Application Information and Form: All schools interested in submitting a school of choice application should notify the School Board in writing of such interest in order to receive an application packet.
2. Applications: Applications must reflect the diversity of the community and not disadvantage the composition of the sending or receiving school.

D. School of Choice Application Review: The Review Committee shall review all applications and by majority vote make a recommendation for

acceptance or denial of each application to the Superintendent who shall take such recommendation to the School Board for its approval or denial of a school of choice application.

1. All applications will be submitted to the School Board with an explanation of the review committee's recommendation for acceptance or denial, including the committee vote.
2. The School Board will vote on all applications.

II. Attendance or Enrollment: Attendance or enrollment in a school of choice is based upon designated attendance area or neighborhood areas; e.g., North Area or District-wide or communities that feed into Auburndale, Lake Region, and Winter Haven High Schools. However, a school may have both a zoned and a choice population of students; e.g., North Lakeland Elementary School has a zoned population from fixed attendance lines in a designated area of Lakeland. For the purpose of schools of choice, the magnet school boundaries will serve as zones unless otherwise specified. Applicants must be able to provide proof of residence within the zone of application. Schools of choice will be staffed as approved in the District staffing plan. The schools of choice attendance zones consist of the following:

A. Lakeland Area: The Lakeland area consists of all attendance zones for schools that feed into George Jenkins, Kathleen, Lake Gibson, Lakeland, and Tenoroc High Schools. The following schools of choice shall serve the Lakeland area:

1. Blake Academy (grades K-8);
2. North Lakeland Elementary (grades K-5);
3. Valleyview Elementary (grades K-5); and
4. Summerlin Academy (grades 9-12).

B. Bartow and Lake Wales Area: The following schools of choice shall serve the Bartow, Fort Meade, Lake Wales, Mulberry, and Frostproof Communities:

1. Daniel Jenkins Academy (serves students zoned for Lake Wales High School grades 6- 8);
2. Valleyview Elementary (grades K-5); and
3. Summerlin Academy (grades 9-12).

C. Auburndale and Winter Haven Areas: The following schools of choice shall serve the Auburndale and Winter Haven communities:

1. Jewett School of the Arts (grades K-8);
2. Snively Elementary School of Choice (grades K-5);
3. Valleyview Elementary (grades K-5); and
4. Summerlin Academy (grades 9-12).

D. Davenport and Haines City Areas: The following schools of choice shall serve the Haines City and Davenport Communities:

1. Daniel Jenkins Academy (serves students zoned for Haines City High school upon grades 6- 8); and
2. Davenport School of the Arts (grades K-8);
3. Valleyview Elementary (grades K-5); and
4. Summerlin Academy (grades 9-12).

III. Admission and Selection: Admission shall be by application to the Senior Director of the Office of Magnet, Choice, and Charter Schools and in cooperation with other program administrators may involve non-discriminatory screening that is publicized prior to application. (For specific information see approved guidelines) Waiting lists may be established as needed to fill vacancies. Diversity and capacity in both the school of choice and the sending school shall be controlled in the admissions process.

A. Applications will be accepted during three prescribed enrollment periods each year. These periods will run for the duration of four weeks each. The first enrollment period of each year shall be called the open enrollment period. All applications received during the first week of this enrollment period with a postmark inclusive of said week are considered to be the same date for the purposes of establishing priority. If more students apply during this period than seats are available, a computer will assign a number for each student by grade to execute a random sort. This week is referred to as the lottery week and will occur once annually. Students who apply after the first week of the open enrollment period will be assigned a number based on date of application. The second enrollment period shall be considered the summer application period and the third application period considered the fall application period. These enrollment periods will

be executed in the same manner as the open enrollment period with the exception of the lottery week. No hand deliveries will be accepted since each application must be submitted electronically.

B. A waiting list for each school will be maintained through the Office of School Choice. Students will be notified when a vacancy occurs at their grade in the order of the waiting list number assigned to them. If a student is not selected for entry into the school of choice in the year for which he or she has applied, his or her priority status may be maintained for the following year. Applicants may request to have their name removed from the waiting list.

C. Students applying for more than one school will be placed into the school of first opportunity and the status on a waiting list for any other magnet and/or choice school will be canceled. Applicants should be prepared to accept placement into any school for which they have applied; however, they will have the opportunity to make a decision at the same time of the opening. Failure to accept at the time of the opening will result in removal from the waiting list.

D. Students enrolled in a school of choice, who move outside of the zoned area for the school of choice, may continue in that school for the balance of the school year; however, transportation will be the responsibility of the parent. School of choice students who move from one zone to another must reapply for the appropriate choice school in the new zone. Priority from one zone does not carry into the new zone.

F. All students who make application for a school of choice are given a priority number for the grade and school of application. This number only applies for that grade and school. If a student is retained in a grade, there is no status for that child other than that which was established during the application process. Each student is offered a seat in a specific grade of application and not to the school in general. Therefore, students who are retained do not have access in the grade of retention and must reapply to be eligible in that grade.

G. Kindergarten applicants with siblings enrolled during Open Enrollment in January in the school of choice of application who will be returning to that site for the upcoming school year will receive guaranteed admission within the same school to permit families to remain together in the same school facility. The application for the incoming kindergartner must be made during Open Enrollment in January.

H. Children of employees at a school of choice shall be considered for admission into that school of choice.

I. While there are no admission requirements into a school of choice, individual school sites may require parents and/or students to sign contracts of commitment and expectation.

IV. Operating Guidelines: Guidelines for operating schools of choice will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis by the Senior Director of the Office of Magnet, Choice and Charter Schools and submitted to the School Board for approval.

V. Programs of Choice Defined: A program of choice affects or involves a limited number of students in a given school or across schools. Programs of choice may serve a selected population but participants must be selected by non-discriminatory procedures. Any such program may not be authorized except as described in Section I. Approved programs of choice shall have approved guidelines as described in Sections II through IV.

Statutory Authority: Florida Statutes 1001.32, 1001.41, 1001.42, and 1001.43

Laws Implemented: Florida Statute 1002.31; Mills, et al. vs. The School Board of Polk County, Florida; and Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District.

Adopted: September 12, 1995

Amended:

May 26, 1998

April 22, 2003

January 9, 2003

April 22, 2008