

STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT

Guiding Principles

This policy outlines the process of registering students in the District and assigning students in grades K through 5 to specific elementary schools. While intended to provide clarity and transparency in outlining enrollment and assignment protocols, this policy must also be implemented with the same guiding principles that informed its development:

- Providing access to quality programs in the District.
- Supporting neighborhood schools.
- Maintaining continuity of learning experiences.
- Supporting students and families making transitions between schools.

There may be unique circumstances in which the Superintendent exercises his/her discretion in applying the guidelines of this policy.

Enrollment/Registration

Kindergarten registrations for the following school year will occur each year between January and April 1st through a centralized process with specified dates announced to the public. The District will utilize town census information to identify age-appropriate incoming Kindergarten students. Information regarding registration will be sent to these identified families including registration dates and necessary documents such as health records and proof of residency, as described in JF – Admission of Students. In addition, information will be sent to area preschools as well through Town and District notification systems. Information will be provided to families regarding Kindergarten Screening and orientation dates at each school at the time of registration.

Registration for new students in all other grades (1 - 12) for the following school year opens March 1st. Families are encouraged to register their children as soon as possible within the specified time frames as placement decisions could depend on the order of receipt of registration documents. Families are also encouraged to inform the school district as soon as possible should their plans change.

Class Size Guidelines

Class size guidelines at the elementary and secondary levels represent the target range of students enrolled in individual classrooms.

Elementary Guidelines

Grades K-2: 18-22

Grades 3-5: 22-24

Middle School and High School Guidelines

	Middle School	High School
Art		

Grades 6 & 7	22	16
Grade 8	16	12
Digital Art		
Business Education		22
English	student load 90	student load 90
Family & Consumer Science	16	16
Child Development		22
Fitness and Health		
Grades 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, & 12	25	25
Grade 10		18
Classical & Modern Languages	22	22
Grade 6	22	
Grade 7 Cluster	80 to 100	
Guidance	200 to 225	180 to 225
Industrial Technology	18	16
Design & Manufacturing Technology.		18
College Prep academic classes		15
Mathematics	22	22
Music/Drama	22	22
Performing groups	based on size and space available	
Science	22	22
Social studies	22	22

It is important to note that these are class size *guidelines* and do not represent absolute class size limits. There may be times when individual classes exceed these guidelines for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Legal mandate (s).
- Participation in specialized programs housed at specific schools.
- Addition of student(s) close to the start of the school and/or during the school year.
- No forecast information of additional students that might lead to the addition of a new section(s).
- Lack of space at nearby schools to take additional students.

The School Department will consider all factors (educational, operational, and fiscal) that affect the learning environment in a classroom when making class size decisions.

The Superintendent shall present an enrollment report to the School Committee each October, following the official District “snapshot” that is reported to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Likewise, the Superintendent shall also present an April update on enrollment and class sizes, which may inform families’ decisions whether to apply for Open Enrollment.

Reassignment

There may be times when the Department closes specific grade levels within a school(s) and

works with the families of new students to reassign them to nearby schools where additional capacity exists. The factors that the Department will consider prior to a grade level closure include:

- Time of year when sections at a grade level reach the high end of the class size guideline.
- Forecast of incoming enrollments:
 - Students moving into the District.
 - Students requiring specialized programs.
- When there is no physical classroom space for an additional section.
- Profile/learning needs of students in the classroom.
- Capacity of nearby schools to take additional students.

Before reassigning students to other schools, the Department may temporarily repurpose specialized spaces such as Music and Art rooms, for regular classroom instruction. This would only occur when the need to open a new section(s) exists and there is no other space at the school to accommodate this section(s). In these situations, the Department will strive for this to be a temporary repurposing and would work to restore these classrooms to their intended use as soon as possible. The Department will work to ensure appropriate program support when Art and Music rooms are temporarily displaced.

Up-to-date information regarding grade levels at schools that are at or approaching closure with the potential for reassignments will be published on the District website.

When a new student moves into an elementary school attendance zone where the student's grade level has been closed to new enrollment, the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations will work with the family to assign the student to a nearby school where there is available space for new enrollment.

The Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations will:

- Review the proximity of the family residence to other schools, with schools within 2 miles identified for first consideration.
- Review class sizes in schools within 2 miles to assess available space under the high end of the class size guidelines.
- Notify parents of these alternative options for placement.
- Offer information regarding class sizes and available space for siblings of the student to be reassigned, allowing parents to consider their options with siblings in mind. Schools beyond 2 miles with classes under guideline will be presented as options only with clear notification provided to parents that free transportation will not be provided by the District. However, if no school within 2 miles has a class under guideline, then the District will provide transportation at no cost to the family.
- Inform the principal immediately of the family's interest. Parents may contact the school to meet the principal. The parent decision on whether to attend the school must be made within five (5) days of being presented with option(s). Space at the school will be reserved in the interim.
- Confirm the school assignment and enroll the student in PowerSchool (the District student database).

Once a student's enrollment is confirmed in writing, this placement will be considered permanent for this student. Parents may, however, submit an Open Enrollment request for the following school year (the year after assignment) in accordance with this policy.

Once a grade level is closed to new enrollment, it is possible that student enrollment could decline, creating space in that grade level. Should this occur **PRIOR** to the start of the school year, the Department will contact parents of previously reassigned students and offer them the option to return to their neighborhood school. If several students have been reassigned before the grade level at their neighborhood school is reopened, those students will be contacted in the order of their reassignment up until the space limit has been reached at that school, per the decision of the Department.

Please note that the option of returning to a student's neighborhood school will only be offered if that grade level is reopened *before the start of the school year*. Once the school year has begun, it is possible that a grade level could be reopened due to declining enrollment. In this case, students who have already been reassigned will not be offered the choice of returning to their neighborhood school; their reassignment is considered permanent at that point. However, new students entering the District at that time may be accepted to ensure that all spaces at schools are being utilized.

The District understands the importance of siblings attending the same school. With this in mind, as long as a reassigned student is attending the school where he/she has been reassigned, any future school-aged siblings of this student may apply under the Open Enrollment process (under which they would have priority consideration) to attend this school also. Parents may still elect to send future school-aged siblings to their neighborhood school.

Siblings of Students in Specialized Programs

The family of a student who receives special education services in a district-wide specialized program as part of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) may elect to permanently choose the school hosting that program as the school of assignment for all siblings (current and future) in the family. A parent/guardian will have 10 calendar days from the date the IEP placement page is signed to notify the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations of their intent to accept that school assignment for siblings; otherwise, the family's neighborhood school is considered the siblings' permanent assignment. Siblings will not be reassigned mid-year.

For example, an IEP placement page is signed on October 1, 2019 for placement of a student in the Skills program at the Upham Elementary School. If the family wishes to place siblings of that student at Upham, then by October 10, 2019, the parent/guardian must notify the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations of their decision. The sibling placements would take effect at the beginning of the following (2020-2021) school year.

Open Enrollment

Open Enrollment is an option that allows parents to voluntarily request attendance at a school other than their neighborhood school. Prior to applying for Open Enrollment, a child must be registered with the District. Open Enrollment requests must be submitted to the Office of Student

Services between March 1 and May 1 for the following school year. Application forms may be downloaded from the District website and/or requested from the Central Office. A family seeking Open Enrollment for more than one student must submit a separate application for each child. Applications will be considered on an individual basis. There is no guarantee that Open Enrollment placements for more than one child in a family will be granted for each child.

All Open Enrollment applications will be reviewed after the May 1 submission deadline. Open Enrollment applications will first be considered based on the order of receipt. Decisions will be based primarily on space availability at the requested school. Additionally, the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations will consult with the principal of the requested school to further assess the learning profile of the class/grade. Maintaining an optimum learning environment for all the students within that class/grade will be a priority.

In order to ensure available seats for student residing within that attendance zone, the following space guidelines will inform decisions related to Open Enrollment:

- From May 1 through May 31, admission may be granted if there are more than 5 spaces available in the requested grade level.
- Applications not granted May 31, will remain active for consideration until June 30.
- From June 1 through June 30, admission may be granted if there are more than 3 spaces available in the requested grade level.
- No applications will be granted after June 30 for the following school year.

Once an Open Enrollment is granted, families will have 5 days to consider and accept the Open Enrollment decision in writing. Once accepted, the Open Enrollment assignment will be considered as a permanent placement and families will not have to reapply for Open Enrollment in subsequent years. Additionally, even though a student may be attending a school other than his/her neighborhood school, any future siblings of that student will still need to apply for Open Enrollment to attend the same school as their older sibling.

Students or siblings that have been affected by a grade level closure and subsequent reassignment will be given priority when making Open Enrollment decisions.

Transportation is *not* provided to any students who are enrolled in a school through the Open Enrollment process.

Single Sections

In the event that enrollment projections and/or early registration numbers indicate that there is a chance that a grade level at a given school will only comprise enough students for one class (according to the class size guidelines described above), the District shall modify its process for registration and Open Enrollment as follows:

- The grade level will not be closed to registration of new resident students.
- Open Enrollment requests for that grade level will be accepted beginning January 1.
- The District shall consider the possibility of Open Enrollment placements when making the decision whether to create a second section at that grade level.

- Before finalizing any decision to create a second section at that grade level, final acceptance of Open Enrollment placements will be required from families.

CROSS REF.: JF – Admission of Students

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