



## **I. Introduction**

The student transfer process seeks to provide equal access to all families in District schools and programs through a fair process that is consistent and easy to understand. The process includes student transfers requested before the transfer deadline through the required admissions process. This directive also outlines the petition transfer process for families who request a transfer after the transfer deadline for students in extraordinary circumstances.

The District has the responsibility to provide families and students information that will enable them to make informed decisions about their choice of educational options. All procedural handbooks and guidelines for this administrative directive are available at the District's Enrollment and Transfer Center (ETC) and schools.

## **II. Definitions**

- (1) School and program terms.
  - (a) Neighborhood school. A school serving a designated attendance area and as defined in 6.10.022-P.
  - (b) Transfer school. The school to which a student has transferred.
  - (c) Enrolled school. The school a student is currently attending.
  - (d) Focus option. A school or program of a school structured around a unique curriculum or particular theme and as defined in 6.10.022-P
  - (e) Continuing program. A program that continues from one school grade grouping to the next, often in different school buildings. For instance a K-12 language immersion program begins in an elementary school for the K-5 grades, then continues to a middle school in a different building for the 6-8 grades. Students in continuing programs are pre-approved to continue to the next grade grouping.
  - (f) Open Enrollment program. A new or growing program that remains open to transfer after the regular transfer cycle closes. The Superintendent or designee will

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approve all open enrollment programs, application processes, and deadlines annually.

(g) School grade grouping. Refers to different school levels: elementary, middle and high school. Elementary schools may contain PK through 8<sup>th</sup> grade or K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Middle schools contain grades 6-8, and most high schools are grades 9-12.

(2) Student and family terms.

(a) Siblings. Children with the same parent or supervising adult living together at the same address.

(b) Co-enrolled siblings. Siblings who will be enrolled in the same school at the same time. For students applying to focus option programs at schools with multiple programs, co-enrolled sibling status will be assigned at the program, not school, level.

(c) Linked siblings. Siblings who are requesting a transfer to the same school for the same grade for the same school year.

(d) Supervising adult. An adult who is a legally mandated guardian or caretaker of the child. Supervising adults include surrogate parents, legal guardians, foster parents, or others who can establish they are acting in that capacity. Supervisory adult status is confirmed by the ETC.

(e) Articulating students. Students transitioning from one school grade grouping to the next. For example, fifth graders in elementary school preparing for sixth grade in middle school; eighth graders in middle school preparing for ninth grade in high school.

(f) Transfer student. A District student attending a school other than his/her neighborhood school.

(g) Resident student. A student who is a resident of the Portland Public School District.

(h) Nonresident student. A student from another district attending a PPS district school on a tuition basis or inter-district transfer. A nonresident student includes both in state or out of state.

(i) New to the District. New to the District includes students who move into the Portland Public School District from a residence outside of the District, residents not yet old enough to attend a PPS school, and students who reside in the PPS District but are not enrolled in a PPS school or program such as students who are home schooled or attending private/parochial schools.

(3) Admission and transfer terms.

(a) Transfer. A formal request by a District family for a student to attend a school or program other than his/her neighborhood school or to return to his/her neighborhood school from a transfer school. Transfer requests must be submitted by the annual transfer deadline to be considered. Transfers are approved to the highest grade of the school.

(b) Transfer cycle. The period of time in which families may request a student transfer for the following school year by submitting a School Choice Application.

(c) Lottery. A computer software based system that determines student assignment and generates wait lists. The lottery process includes admission preferences and equity and diversity factors aimed at eliminating barriers to educational attainment and improving student achievement, as provided in Policy 4.10.051-P, VII.

(d) Petition transfer. A request by the student/family to transfer out of the enrolled school submitted outside of the annual transfer cycle. Petition transfers are considered for students and families only if there are extraordinary circumstances and are not routinely granted. See Sections VIII-XII.

(e) Extraordinary circumstances. The basis for granting or denying petition transfers. They include urgent family situations or situations that pose imminent health, safety or serious educational concerns for the student.

### **III. Student Transfer Request Process/School Choice Application**

All PPS families have the right to request a transfer to a school or program other than their own assigned neighborhood school. Such

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transfers are granted based on following the admissions process including submitting applications by the deadline, space availability, and preferences. Transfer students also have a right to return to their neighborhood school for the following year by submitting a School Choice Application by the deadline.

(1) The ETC shall develop a School Choice Application that will be widely available to schools and families. The School Choice Application shall include space for families to indicate the following:

- (a) Student and family information
- (b) Sibling information
- (c) Up to three school or program choices
- (d) A parent or guardian signature.

The application will also include a brief explanation of the required school-year commitment and the deadline.

(2) All students requesting a transfer to a school other than their neighborhood school are required to submit a School Choice Application by the deadline to be considered in the lottery. This includes New to the District students wishing to attend a PPS transfer school and interdistrict students wishing to attend a PPS school.

(3) Students enrolled in continuing programs such as language immersion programs who wish to continue to the next school grade grouping (middle or high school) of the program are not required to submit a School Choice Application.

(4) Students wishing to enroll in their neighborhood school for the first time or who will be continuing in their neighborhood school feeder pattern for middle or high school are not required to submit a School Choice Application.

(a) Students on transfer wishing to return to their neighborhood school must submit a School Choice Application by the deadline.

(b) New to the District students who will be attending their neighborhood school for the first time must go to their neighborhood school to register.

(5) Transfers to Special Programs

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- (a) Students requesting a transfer to a focus option may be required to attend informational meetings and/or sign a statement of understanding before being included in the lottery. See Section IV(2) regarding admission requirements for focus options. All other transfer procedures are the same whether a focus option or not.
  - (b) Students who transfer to a program in a school must meet the program requirements to remain in the program the following year.
  - (c) If a student in a program leaves the program, the student must complete a School Choice Application and receive a transfer to enroll in the school's regular program for the following year. Such students are not guaranteed assignment to the school unless the regular program is their neighborhood school based on the student's residence.
- (6) Nonresident students who are not enrolled in continuing programs, must submit a School Choice Application to be considered in the lottery when articulating to the next school grade grouping. In addition, they must receive annual approval through an interdistrict transfer from their resident school district (see 4.10.040-P and 4.10.041-AD), coordinated through the ETC.
- (7) The deadline for submitting a School Choice Application shall be posted on the District's web site and widely publicized in other District communications. For a School Choice Application to be accepted, it must be received by the ETC no later than 5:00 pm on the student transfer deadline date or postmarked by that date. Faxed forms will not be accepted.
- (a) The deadline for open enrollment at new or growing programs may be later than the standard School Choice deadline.
  - (b) Families requesting a student transfer any time after the student transfer deadline must use the Petition Transfer Form. Petition transfers are accepted on a limited basis for students in extraordinary circumstances. The petition transfer process is explained in Sections VIII-XII below.

(8) Length of transfer. Neighborhood and transfer students may remain in a school to the highest grade of the school. Upon completion of the highest grade of the school, students are enrolled in their neighborhood, not transfer, feeder pattern school unless they submit a School Choice Application and are assigned through the lottery assignment process.

(a) Exception: Students enrolled in a continuing program (see Definitions, Section II) that continues from elementary to middle school and/or middle school to high school are pre-approved to continue without submission of a School Choice Application.

#### **IV. Student Admissions and Assignment**

(1) Neighborhood students who wish to attend their neighborhood school shall have a space in that school. Transfer students who have submitted a School Choice Application by the deadline to return to their neighborhood school shall have a space in the neighborhood school. For all other students, when transfer requests exceed available spaces for schools and programs, the centralized lottery determines student assignment and generates wait lists.

(2) Admission requirements. Admission requirements to any District school or program shall be the same for neighborhood and transfer students.

(a) Interested and informed requirement. A school or program may require the family and student to sign a statement of understanding about program expectations prior to enrollment as provided in 4.10.051-P (V) (3)(b).

(b) Admission criteria. There shall be no admission criteria for students to any PPS school or program unless approved by the Board as part of a plan of operations. Admission criteria for elementary focus options shall be limited to language criteria for language immersion programs.

(3) Special education. Students in special education and students eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may request a student transfer to another school in the District. In order to be approved, the requested transfer must meet both of the following criteria:

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- (a) The requested transfer must meet District guidelines for student transfers including the lottery process, as described in this administrative directive; and
  - (b) The requested transfer must not deny the student a free appropriate public education (FAPE)
- (4) Placement by English as a Second Language (ESL)/Bilingual Program for Needed Language Services. Students who qualify for services from the ESL/Bilingual Program may be placed in schools outside of their neighborhood attendance areas.
- (a) Students requiring services from the ESL/Bilingual Program may be offered placement in a school other than their neighborhood school by the ESL/Bilingual program, based on student's needs and service availability at the neighborhood school.
  - (b) When those services are no longer necessary the student may continue in the enrolled school to the highest grade of the school, but will be responsible for transportation. In this case, families must submit a Petition Transfer Form to the ETC to remain in the enrolled school.

## **V. Lottery Administration for Student Transfer Requests**

- (1) The ETC conducts all lotteries and notifies families of the results. To be included in the lottery, families must submit a School Choice Application by the student transfer deadline.
- (2) Preferences. The lottery allows for preferences in the following order:
  - (a) Transfer students requesting a transfer back to their neighborhood school are pre-approved for assignment.
  - (b) Students required by state or federal law or other District policy to receive priority including the No Child Left Behind Act. Students attending schools designated as not achieving Adequate Yearly Progress receive the highest priority for transfers. Among those students, those who are low-income and lowest achieving receive higher priority.
  - (c) Resident students:

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- (A) Resident co-enrolled sibling (See Section (II)(8) definitions)
- (B) Resident without co-enrolled siblings
- (d) Nonresident students:
  - (A) Nonresident co-enrolled sibling (See Section (II)(8) definitions)
  - (B) Nonresident without co-enrolled siblings
- (3) Weighted factors.
  - (a) Weighted factors are included in the lottery to ensure that all schools reflect the diversity of the District. A weighted factor is not a preference and does not guarantee admission. Weighted factors include:
    - (A) Socio-economic status (SES). SES is measured by the percentage of students district-wide who qualify for the District's Free and Reduced Price Meals program. Students whose SES improves the socio-economic balance of the school community shall be weighted in the lottery.
    - (B) Gender. Gender balance is measured by a school's current percentage of boys and girls with the District's overall percentage. Students who improve the gender balance at their school are weighted in the lottery.
- (4) Linked siblings. Siblings applying for transfer to the same school and same grade for the same school year may link their names under one student/family number in the lottery. Linked siblings in a lottery allow the family to have the same outcome for their children who are requesting a transfer.
- (5) Early Entry. Families requesting early entry into Kindergarten or first grade must follow all of the procedures outlined in the application process on the Talented and Gifted webpage. Kindergarten early entry applicants are eligible to apply for lottery transfer if they complete a cognitive evaluation before the close of the lottery application period. If a kindergarten applicant is found non-eligible for early entry, the lottery application will be withdrawn. First grade early entry applicants must apply for kindergarten in the lottery. If the child is approved through the lottery, s/he will enter kindergarten at the requested school and once enrolled,

will contact the Talented and Gifted Office to begin the early entry process into first grade.

(6) Language Immersion Program Openings. A proportion of available spaces may be allocated for native language speakers or for students living in the neighborhood of the school in which the program is located.

(7) Lottery Logic. A detailed description of all lottery priorities will be available on the District's website during the transfer cycle.

### **VI. Wait List Management for Student Transfer Requests**

(1) The centralized lottery also generates the wait list for each school and program that has more applicants than spaces. The wait list is based on the same weighted factors and preferences as the lottery.

(2) The wait list shall be limited to a designated number of transfer students. The number of students allowed on any given wait list is determined by the ETC and school principal using a standard formula. As a result, a student might not be drawn from the wait list for any school he or she requested. In that case, the student is assigned to his or her neighborhood school (if articulating to the next grade grouping) or currently enrolled school.

(3) The ETC manages and maintains all wait lists for schools and programs.

(4) Wait lists remain active until the 20<sup>th</sup> day of school. After that date, wait lists become inactive for all schools and programs.

(5) Wait List guidelines:

(a) Students may keep an approved choice school or program and stay on the wait list of a higher choice school or program until the wait list expires. If, on the last weekday before the first day of school, a space does not open for the student and the student is articulating to the next school grade grouping, the student enrolls in his/her neighborhood school. Students not articulating will remain in their currently enrolled school.

(b) The wait list does not roll over to successive years.

### **VII. Notification**

The ETC will send families a letter with the results of the lottery. Families must then contact the approved transfer school for enrollment information.

(1) Parents may withdraw their transfer request within ten days of receiving their notice. They may return to their currently enrolled school or neighborhood school if the student is articulating to the next grade grouping.

### **VIII. Petition Transfers**

A petition transfer is a request to transfer based on extraordinary circumstances and are granted under very limited circumstances.

### **IX. Process for Filing a Petition Transfer**

- (1) Before a Petition Transfer Form is filed by the family, the family and school staff should discuss ways to resolve the concerns and help the student and the family recommit to the enrolled school.
- (2) When a family requests a transfer for health reasons, safety reasons or an urgent family situation after the student transfer deadline (a petition transfer), the ETC will expedite the process.
- (3) Students and their families initiate a petition transfer.
- (4) Petition Transfer Forms may be obtained from the ETC.
- (5) Reassignment. Reassignment determines the school to which a student is assigned after being granted a petition transfer. The Petition Transfer Form includes a section which asks for information to enable the ETC to consider schools for reassignment based on the family's transportation needs, desired school characteristics, and if the student wishes to return to his/her neighborhood school. Families may list up to three schools and why they consider them appropriate; however, there is no guarantee that the student will be reassigned to any of the listed schools.

## **X. Petition Transfer Notification**

- (1) Students remain in their enrolled school until a decision is made by the ETC to grant or deny the petition transfer request.
- (2) If the family's petition transfer is granted, the ETC shall first facilitate communication among the principal of the enrolled school and potential receiving principals. The family will receive a letter with reassignment information. The school designated for reassignment by the ETC is final. If the family refuses the assigned school, the student is expected to return to the enrolled school.
- (3) If the family's petition transfer is denied, the ETC notifies the family with a letter that explains the reason for the denial. The student remains in the enrolled school unless an appeal is filed and granted.

## **XI. Appeals Process**

- (1) The family may appeal the ETC's decision to deny a petition transfer by submitting a letter explaining the reason for the appeal and any additional information or documentation. An appeal may be granted on two grounds:
  - (a) Failure of the school or ETC to follow the established petition process, or
  - (b) New substantial information related to the petition transfer request.
- (2) The ETC shall forward to the Area Director (or designee) for the enrolled school all documents related to the petition transfer, including the reason for the denial, and documentation of extraordinary circumstances.
- (3) The Area Director/designee for the enrolled school shall review the ETC decision. The Area Director's/designee's decision is final.
- (4) The appeals process shall be completed within ten business days from the time the appeal is received at the ETC. The Area Director/designee sends the written decision to the family.

### **XII. Compliance with Federal and State Mandates**

Decisions by the ETC and schools related to student transfers shall be consistent with all federal and state mandates including the No Child Left Behind Act.

### **XIII. Break in Attendance and Status of Transfers**

- (1) Alternative Education Options. If a transfer student leaves a school to enroll in an alternative school, they may return to the transfer school during the same school year. This applies to an expelled student who was placed in an alternative program for the period of expulsion.
- (2) Non-Attendance. If a student stops attending a school or is dropped for non-attendance after ten consecutive days (OAR 581-023-0006(4)(b)) during the school year without enrolling in another school or program, the student may return to the transfer school during that school year. However, if the student does not return to the transfer school during that school year, the transfer is no longer valid for the subsequent years and the student must return to the neighborhood school or request a new transfer. If the student completes a school year but does not return during the first ten days of the subsequent school year, the transfer is no longer valid and the student must return to the neighborhood school or request a petition transfer.

### **XIV. Implementing Notes for 4.10.051-P and 4.10.054-AD**

Exceptions to the lottery preferences outlined above will be described in the lottery logic located on the school choice website.

Policy Implemented: 4.10.051-P (Related policies: 2.10.010-P; 6.10.010-P; 6.10.022-P)

History: This AD number formerly was assigned to Boundary Changes, which is now 4.10.055-AD. Amd 7/2004, Amd 10/2006, Amd 4/2007; Amd 3/2009