

REGULATIONS GOVERNING ACPS PUPIL PLACEMENT OPTIONS

SEARCH: JC – 1 and JCD – 1

The Alexandria City Public Schools offers school choice to parents and families in a variety of situations.

The School Board also grants to the Superintendent the authority to place restrictions upon the assignment of elementary students to a particular school or school and to assign elementary students to another contiguous or nearby school that is not at the choice level of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) sanctions and where there is space. These reassignments are permitted under certain conditions specified in Policy JCD.

The following guiding principles inform both the policies and the regulations concerning all student transfers:

- ACPS supports stability and continuity in one school environment during a school year and to the extent possible throughout elementary school.
- ACPS supports small class sizes and reasonable school capacities.
- ACPS will not put new administrative transfers in a school/grade level that is at or near capacity.
- ACPS attempts to keep siblings together whenever possible.
- ACPS supports school attendance areas (neighborhood schools) even as we recognize the need to create options to address rapidly increasing enrollments.

The following regulations define the procedures that are followed in administering student transfers. These regulations are effective immediately. In all cases, the Superintendent or his designee has the final approval authority in pupil placement decisions. **All students must register in their home schools before a transfer can be made.**

I. School Choice Options Available to Parents:

A. Administrative Transfers:

ACPS supports a personalized approach to school assignments. Administrative transfers will permit personalized decision-making that takes individual needs into account but under the constraints of space availability and cost.

Parents may request an administrative transfer for their child/ren based on an individual family situation or need. Once approved, administrative transfers remain in place for the number of years spanned by that school's program provided:

- The child demonstrates good attendance and punctuality

- The child demonstrates appropriate behavior in school.

NOTE: Only Temporary Transfers are granted to allow students to finish the year in the home school when the family moves to another attendance area during the year. These transfers do NOT remain in place beyond the current school year.

Should the principal and/or the Superintendent's designee determine that there are sufficient concerns about either of the two requirements and that the student should return to his/her neighborhood school, the parent will be notified by May 1 of that year that the child is to be returned to the home school.

Initial administrative transfer requests are considered on a case-by-case basis involving dialogue between ACPS and the parents. New transfers will be made only to schools where space is available.

The request for administrative transfer must be submitted to the Superintendent or designee. Request forms can be accessed through the ACPS website or in the main offices of all ACPS schools.

ACPS does not provide transportation for administrative transfer students.

B. Modified Calendar Schools:

Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School and Mount Vernon Community School operate on a modified school calendar. Parents of students living in these attendance zones who do not want to participate in the modified calendar may request an administrative transfer to another ACPS school that follows the traditional calendar. Transportation is not provided for administrative transfers.

Modified School Calendar at Mount Vernon is open to all ACPS students on a lottery basis with transportation provided. Deadlines for lottery applications will be established yearly.

C. ACPS Focus Programs (Available Via Lottery, Pending Space Availability) Not all programs will be available in the lottery every year.

- Cora Kelly School for Math, Science, and Technology
- Jefferson-Houston Elementary School (K-8 "elemiddle" structure)
- Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy
- Dual Language Program at John Adams Elementary
- Modified Calendar Program at Mount Vernon

Entering a Focus School from Another Attendance Zone

Pending space availability, Alexandria parents residing outside the attendance zones of these focus schools may apply through the annual lottery for their children to attend any of these programs.

The lottery will take place in late winter or early spring during a specified period to be advertised at each elementary school and on the ACPS website. The number of spaces available by school and grade level will be published at that time.

Pending space availability, siblings of students enrolled in a focus school as a result of the lottery will be granted enrollment to the focus school at the kindergarten level and will be allowed to remain at that school through 5th grade (or 8th grade in a K-8 school) provided there are no breaks in enrollment.

ACPS provides transportation for students transferring into focus schools through the lottery.

Leaving a focus school program to attend another school:

Parents may apply to another school using the administrative transfer process if they wish to opt out of a home school with these programs. Approval for a transfer is not guaranteed, except in the case of modified calendar schools. Individual circumstances are taken into account.

Students who have completed 5th grade at Jefferson-Houston may request an administrative transfer to the neighborhood middle school. These requests will be granted. **In this instance only, transportation will be provided.**

D. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Choice:

Elementary schools that receive Title I funding and that do not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two consecutive years (as defined by the federal No Child Left Behind legislation) are designated Title I Improvement Schools. ACPS provides parents who reside in the attendance zones of schools that are under certain NCLB sanctions the option of having their child/ren attend another school in the division that is not in Title I improvement.

Transportation will be provided for students who opt out of a school that is at the school choice level of NCLB sanctions.

Per federal guidelines, first priority is given to the lowest performing students in the highest poverty schools. ACPS will notify parents in writing if a school is a Title I Improvement School that is required to offer school choice, and that communication will outline all options.

Parents are not required to move their children from a Title I Improvement school to another school. Likewise, any parent may request a transfer into a Title I Improvement school, but ACPS may not require a student to attend a school under improvement.

Children who transfer under NCLB regulations may remain in the new school, with transportation provided, throughout the span of that school's program (K-5 or K-8). However, if the zoned home school is removed from Title I improvement choice status, parents will be offered a choice:

- Continue to send the child to the transfer school, but provide their own transportation, or
- Return the child to the home school and receive ACPS transportation.

Younger siblings will not be guaranteed a slot in the transfer school when the home school is removed from sanctions, but parents may apply for an administrative transfer.

II. Modified Open Enrollment Reassignment by ACPS

Under certain conditions set out by Policy JCD, the Superintendent may place restrictions limiting the assignment of elementary students to a particular school or schools or grade level. If an enrollment limit for a grade level is reached, the Superintendent or designee may reassign elementary students to another contiguous or nearby school where there is space and which is not at the School Choice level of NCLB sanctions. Hereby are the procedures and guidelines for making those reassignments:

Guidelines

- ACPS will provide transportation for all assignments made under Policy JCD, Modified Open Enrollment.
- No student currently enrolled in a particular school will be reassigned. (One exception would be children who have moved during the school year and have been granted an administrative transfer just until the end of the year.)
- Younger siblings of current students who live in the school attendance area will be allowed to enroll even if class size caps are exceeded. Likewise, siblings of students who recently were enrolled in that school, continue to live in the attendance zone, and are currently in an ACPS middle school, will be allowed to enroll even if class caps are exceeded.
- If there is more than one nearby school with space, parents will be given a choice to the extent possible.
- As with all other categories of transfers, all students must register in their home schools before a transfer can be made.

Procedures

- Each year before April 1, the Superintendent will publicly present the projected number of students by school and by grade level for the following school year.

- The Superintendent and School Board will review proposed class size caps annually for the upcoming year during the budget process. The number of homeroom sections for each school at each grade level will be set as part of the budget process.
- If over-enrollment is projected, ACPS will provide the opportunity to parents of students currently in the school at that grade level to have their children reassigned to the nearby school with transportation provided. Also, if over-enrollment is projected, that option will be provided to parents of incoming students before the school uses other methods to determine re-assignment.
- On June 15, if the limit has not been reached, everyone who has applied will have registration finalized.
- For schools with a modified calendar, the deadline for finalizing prior registrations will be June 1.
- On June 15, if the limit has been exceeded at a grade level or levels, all of the new parents making application will be polled to determine if any want to volunteer to have their child/ren reassigned to the nearby school. If so, that request will be granted—with transportation provided. (This will happen on June 1 for modified calendar schools.)
- On June 16, all of the students with new applications will enter a lottery for random selection. Every student will be assigned a rank through the lottery (with siblings in the same grade having the same rank). Students will be placed in the home school until all slots are filled according to rank. The remainder will be re-assigned to another nearby or contiguous school.
- The students who were reassigned will be placed on a waiting list, according to rank, to be given the option to return to the home school at the start of the following school year, should spaces become available.
- NEW requests for administrative transfers will not be approved for a school that is at or near capacity until all new applications from students within the zone are assigned.
- By May 1, the Superintendent will make known any spaces that have opened during the course of the year due to mobility or other factors. Before enrolling new students, parents of the reassigned students—according to predetermined order-- will be offered the opportunity to return to the home school for the next school year.
- The Superintendent will develop an outreach program to encourage parents in all parts of the community to enroll before June 15. The Superintendent will develop procedures to simplify the registration process and to help parents to

meet all requirements, including the possibility of extending deadlines for vaccinations and health records.

III. In keeping with the guiding principles listed above, transfers will be made in the following order of priority:

- Existing Administrative Transfers (Remain in place except under specific conditions listed above)
- No Child Left Behind
- Lottery or Focus School Requests
- Modified Open Enrollment Reassignment
- New administrative transfers

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