

5120 - ASSIGNMENT WITHIN DISTRICT

1. School Zones and the Assignment of Students

The Pinellas County School Board directs that the assignment of students to schools within this District be consistent with the best interests of students and the best use of the resources of this District.

Students will be assigned by the Superintendent to schools according to established attendance zones which will be reviewed and amended periodically by the Superintendent.

2. Process for Determining a Student's Zoned School

The district is divided into grids, which are used to create school zones. The grids are contained in the Grid Atlas that divides the county into 1,123 unique grids. The Grid Atlas, dated March, 15, 2011 and amended December 6, 2011, which is maintained in the Student Assignment Office, is incorporated herein by reference

A student's school zone is determined by associating the student's residential address with a grid, which in turn is associated with a school zone.

3. Functional School Capacity

A functional school capacity will be determined annually for all schools. The superintendent shall establish Student Assignment Procedures defining Functional School Capacity. Capacity determinations for district schools will be posted annually on the district's website.

4. Falsification of Residential Address and Address Verification

District forms pertaining to residence and household membership shall be verified under penalties of perjury.

Where there is a reasonable suspicion that a student is not residing at the claimed address, the District may conduct an investigation and require updated information from the parent. If it is determined that the parent submitted fraudulent documents the student shall be withdrawn from the enrolled school and reassigned to the appropriate school. The fraudulent documents may be submitted to the State Attorney's office for prosecution.

State law provides that whoever knowingly makes a false statement in writing with the intent to mislead a public servant in the performance of his/her official duty commits a misdemeanor of the second degree. Additionally, a person who knowingly makes a false declaration under penalties of perjury commits a felony of the third degree. (F.S. 92.525 and 837.06)

5. Notice of Change of Address

Parents are responsible for notifying the school principal via the Student Reservation System if there is a change in residence or parental responsibility of the student, even if the parent thinks the student is still in the school's zone. The parent must tell the principal within five (5) days of the change. Failure to give timely notice may result in a reassignment to the student's zoned school and/or loss of eligibility for athletics and other activities.

If the primary legal residence of the parent, legal guardian, other person with whom the student primarily resides, or the adult student changes during the school year, parents may choose to have their child remain in the school for the remainder of the school year, but will not be afforded transportation. Parents are responsible to ensure timely student arrival and pickup. In the event of excessive tardies, excessive

late pickups, or excessive absences, or in the event of behavioral issues attributable to the school assignment, the student may be reassigned to the zoned school. Students will be assigned to their zoned or space available school for the following school year.

6. Student Assignment Process

All students, unless otherwise provided by School Board Policy or authorized by the Superintendent shall attend the school serving the student's attendance zone. The Superintendent may assign a student to a school other than the student's attendance zone school when such exception is justified by circumstances and/or is in the best interest of the student. The superintendent shall establish Student Assignment Procedures with regard to the Student Assignment Process.

7. Public School Choice Options

Pinellas County Schools has been declared a Unitary district and the Student Assignment Policy and Public School of Choice Options are race neutral. The School Board has adopted a Controlled Open Enrollment Plan as required by F.S. 1003.03. The following describe the Public School Choice options in Pinellas County Schools.

A. District Application Programs

District application programs are ones to which students must apply for admission. These programs include fundamental programs, magnets, and career and technical programs. District Application Programs are often strategically located in schools in need of a more diverse population accomplished through targeted recruitment of under-represented populations of students.

The purpose of these programs is to provide choice opportunities and promote diversity for the students of Pinellas County while voluntarily desegregating schools. A school is considered diverse when the demographics of the enrolled population more closely mirror the demographics of the students residing in the school's attendance zone. In schools where the zoned population's demographics are not diverse, increasing diversity will be defined as increasing the enrollment of students of races other than the majority race. To accomplish these ends, the district establishes application areas or applicant pools that are significantly more diverse than the attendance zone and employs a variety of targeted marketing and recruitment efforts to increase the number of students making application from the application area/pool.

B. Special Assignment Request (SAR) – For In-County Residents

Parents may make a special assignment request for their children to attend a non-zoned school. Parents must make such a request in accordance with a timeline and procedures that are published annually on the District's website. Parents will be notified of the decision to attend a non-zoned school for the coming school year prior to the end of the current school year, or during the summer. Requests will not be granted unless there is space available.. Students granted a Special Assignment Request may remain at the assigned school through the highest grade. Students granted a Special Assignment Request to a non-zoned school are responsible for transporting their child to and from school safely and on time.

Special assignment requests shall be received during the published time period. After the end of the request period, all requests shall be assigned a computer-generated random number. Sibling requests shall be assigned first, starting with the lowest random numbered request. Students who had been in attendance at the requested school the prior year are assigned next, starting with the lowest random number request. After sibling and previously attending student requests are addressed, remaining requests will be assigned starting with the lowest numbered request.

Late SARs will be accepted after the initial application period each year for the following school year. Special Assignment Requests will not be accepted during the current school year. Students will not lose their current seat assignment until parents accept the special assignment.

C. Special Attendance Permit (SAP) – For Out-of-County Residents

If a parent, legal guardian, other person with primary or shared parental responsibility for the student, or an adult student has his/her primary legal residence in a county other than this county, s/he may apply for an exception known as a Special Attendance Permit (SAP). The student must obtain release from the district of residence and complete a Special Attendance Permit Application (PCS Form 4-302). Special Attendance Permit requests will be accepted for both the current school year and the next school year.

If approved for school attendance in the District, the student will be assigned to the requested school, provided the school has available space and it is the best interest of the educational program at the school. Students granted a Special Attendance Permit may remain at the assigned school through the highest grade.

A student on suspension or who has been expelled cannot be approved for transfer to the District.

No student residing in the district may be displaced by a student from another district.

D. Additionally, the following will be provided preferential treatment through the Special Assignment Request and Special Attendance Permit processes;

1. dependent children of active-duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders;
2. students who have been relocated due to a foster care placement into another school zone;
3. students who move to another school zone due to a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent.

E. The Student Assignment Office staff will assist in the assignment process of:

1. homeless students as defined in Board Policy 5111.01;
2. students in foster care;
3. Assigning siblings to the same school;
4. full-time school based employees who request for their children to attend the school where the employee works full-time;

Staff will make reasonable efforts to provide an assignment that is appropriate for the individual circumstances.

Parents will visit a school or contact the Student Assignment Office to initiate the registration and assignment process. All assignments are based upon available space at schools.

F. Students attending a school other than their attendance zone school for any reason are considered to be attending that school on a zoning exception.

8. Zoning Exception Rules

The following provisions apply to all zoning exceptions:

- A. The student's behavior and school attendance may be considered when reviewing requests for assignment exceptions.
- B. A student's zoning exception may be revoked by the Area Superintendent if the student has multiple unexcused absences, excessive disciplinary referrals, or is not making sufficient academic progress.
- C. The Board provides transportation to students with zoning exceptions on an individual basis.

- D. In reviewing requests for hardship zoning exceptions, consideration shall be given to whether the requested school has sufficient space available for the student and is projected to have sufficient space for the student in the future.

9. Appeals

Parents who believe the established procedures regarding the assignment process have not been followed as written may appeal to the Director of Student Assignment, who will determine whether the assignment process has been followed and whether reconsideration of assignment is appropriate. Parents who wish to appeal the decision of the Director of Student Assignment must do so within five (5) working days of the date of receipt of the Director's decision. The appeal shall be in writing and directed to the Associate Superintendent, Operational Services, who shall render a decision within five (5) working days. The Associate Superintendent, Operational Service's decision shall be final. The student shall remain in the assigned school during the appeal process.

F.S. 1000.05, 1001.41, 1002.20, 1002.31

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