

JBCE

Public School Choice

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

GENERAL

Louisiana Public School Choice (La. Rev. Stat. Ann. 17:4035.1) provides for the right of a parent or legal guardian to enroll his child in a school other than the school to which the child was scheduled to be enrolled based upon a school district attendance zone, if the school at which the child was most recently enrolled received a School Performance Score of "D" or "F" in the most recent school year, and the school to which the child is sought to be enrolled received a School Performance Score of "A", "B" or "C" in the most recent school year, pursuant to the state's school and district accountability system. To facilitate the operation of Louisiana Public School Choice, the Rapides Parish School Board establishes the following policy and procedure. As Louisiana Public School Choice provides for certain variable eligibility criteria, any enrollment based upon Louisiana Public School Choice will be considered an annual enrollment and will not obligate the School Board to allow for enrollment beyond one school year.

SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT

A parent or guardian wishing to utilize Louisiana Public School Choice who resides and intends on continuing to reside during the upcoming school year inside of Rapides Parish must contact and meet with the Director of Federal Programs at the Gladys Higdon Instructional Resource Center, 502 Beauregard Street Alexandria, Louisiana. This will be the only office authorized to process an application to enroll under Louisiana Public School Choice.

An application for enrollment under Louisiana Public School Choice shall serve as consent for the School District to obtain the records and information necessary to determine the eligibility/ineligibility of the student.

DEFINITION AND VERIFICATION OF CAPACITY

The primary obligation of the School District is to provide for the enrollment of students who reside within Rapides Parish and more specifically to provide for enrollment of students in Rapides Parish in the schools aligned with duly established attendance zones. Therefore, the District shall not enroll students utilizing the provisions of Louisiana Public School Choice to the extent that such enrollment may conflict with this primary obligation.

Upon receipt of an application for enrollment under Louisiana Public School Choice, the District shall verify whether the school to which the student is sought to be enrolled has sufficient capacity. Capacity is defined as the means to which a school can appropriately educate its student population with the intentional and meaningful use of resources afforded to it.

At no point shall the Rapides Parish School Board be obligated to hire additional teachers/staff or secure portable classroom space in order to provide capacity. As such, the district sets student-teacher ratios will be set for each school during years staffing meetings. These meetings consist of district administration and school administration reviewing individual school course offerings, available student learning spaces, student population, expected student enrollment, and teacher allotments. The School Choice Program and the additional enrollment under Louisiana Public School Choice will not exceed the district set student-teacher ratios for each school.

Upon such a determination, the parent shall be advised whether or not the school at which enrollment is sought has sufficient capacity.

The verification of capacity shall be an annual determination for the re-enrollment of Louisiana Public School Choice students for each subsequent year.

The placement of students under Louisiana Public School Choice with respect to the district student:teacher ratio and staffing process will not exceed the following ratios.

- "A" Rated Schools will not exceed student-teacher ratios of 22:1.
- "B" Rated Schools will not exceed student-teacher ratios of 20:1.
- "C" Rated Schools will not exceed student-teacher ratios of 18:1.

This practice will determine eligibility for seats and individual school capacity among individual grade levels. While the district reserves the right to exceed these ratios for staffing purposes, the placement of students under Louisiana Public School Choice will not.

ENROLLMENT PERIOD

The enrollment period for a student currently enrolled in a Rapides Parish public school seeking participation in Louisiana Public School Choice shall be March 1 to March 31 of each calendar year. The application shall be found on the District's webpage. Applications will be completed electronically or in person within the Federal Programs Department at the address listed above.

Students who move into the district during the school year or move into a failing school zone during the school year are eligible to apply for Louisiana Public School Choice placement based on available school capacity at the time of application.

NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY

During the month of February each calendar year, the Federal Programs Department shall notify all eligible students attending a "D" or "F" school of their eligibility to participate in the Louisiana Public School Choice Program.

Flyers shall be printed and delivered to the identified schools for distribution. Posters are also distributed for schools to display in highly visible common areas of the school. The Federal Programs Department shall also utilize the district's social media accounts and district webpage for additional publicity regarding School Choice enrollment.

Communication regarding Louisiana Public School Choice enrollment will consist of an explanation of the School Choice Program, identification the enrollment period, explanation of the enrollment process, identification of "D" and "F" schools, identification of "A", "B", or "C" schools, and the LDOE website which contains school performance data.

VERIFICATION OF INITIAL ELIGIBILITY

In order to determine eligibility to enroll, the parent or legal guardian must provide the following:

1. A completed application to enroll in a Rapides Parish Public School, available online at www.rpsb.us during the month of March or in the Office of Federal Programs located at the above address.
2. Documentation of the prior school enrollment of the student will be verified through the district's Student Information System (SIS).

3. The District shall verify that the school in which the student was most recently enrolled or would have otherwise attended, received a school performance letter grade of "D" or "F".
4. The parent or guardian shall identify the school to which the student is sought to be enrolled, and the District shall verify that such school received a letter grade of "A", "B", or "C" for the most recent school year.
5. Eligibility shall be determined on an annual basis.
6. A student from a "D" or "F" school may remain in their School of Choice until he or she has completed the highest grade in the school as long as the student remains in good academic standing.
 - A. Students who are eligible to remain at their School of Choice will be contacted during the month of February to verify their continued enrollment in the Louisiana Public School Choice program.

EXCESS APPLICATIONS

In the event the number of applications for enrollment exceeds the capacity in any particular school, students enrolled in the school for the prior year shall have preference.

After enrolling all prior year students, if applicants exceed the remaining capacity, applicants will be selected based on students of greatest need until capacity is no longer available.

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

Parents and guardians are responsible for contacting the LHSAA to determine the eligibility of the student for participation in varsity sports. In order to participate in varsity sports sanctioned by the LHSAA, students must have written approval of the LHSAA.

TRANSPORTATION

The Rapides Parish School board will provide transportation for students who have transferred from "F" school zones **only** provided that the board has no obligation to provide transportation for students approved for transfer from outside Rapides Parish into an "A" "B" or "C" school within the parish.

INELIGIBILITY

A student meeting any of the following will be ineligible to enroll as a Louisiana Public School Choice student:

1. The student was previously enrolled in an alternative school/program;
2. The student was expelled for disciplinary reasons in the current or preceding school year;
3. The student was suspended more than once in the current or preceding school year;
4. The student was involved in more than one fight or other act of violence on school grounds or at a school sponsored event in the preceding school year;
5. The student was found in possession of any illicit drug, narcotic, or weapon on school grounds in the current or preceding school year;
6. The student had more than 10 unexcused absences during the current or preceding school year.

After enrollment, a Louisiana Public School Choice student shall become ineligible to continue enrollment, and must return to his district-zoned school, if any of the following apply:

1. The student is suspended more than once during the school year;
2. The student is expelled for disciplinary reasons during the school year;

3. The student is involved in more than one fight or other act of violence on school grounds during the school year;
4. The student is found in possession of any illicit drug or narcotic on school grounds during the school year;
5. The student has more than ten (10) unexcused absences during the school year.

NOTIFICATION OF CHOICE STUDENTS TO LDOE

As outlined in R.S 17.4035.1(G), the state board shall report to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education no later than October thirty-first annually regarding student transfers including but not limited to the following information, disaggregated by economically disadvantaged status and race and ethnicity:

1. The number of interdistrict student transfer requests received, accepted, appealed, and denied during the most recent school year.
2. The number of intradistrict student transfer requests received, accepted, appealed, and denied during the most recent school year.

NOTICE OF APPEALS

As outlined in R.S 17.4035.1(C)(1), if a school or governing authority denies the enrollment request of a prospective student for an intradistrict transfer, the parent or legal guardian of the student may request a review of the denial of the transfer request by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Within ninety days of receipt of a request for review, the state board shall determine if the capacity policy established for the school was followed. If the state board determines that the school's policy was not followed, the school's governing authority shall reconsider the transfer request. However, the state board shall not approve any transfer request that would exceed the enrollment capacity of a school or classroom, as established by the school's governing authority.

New Policy: November 2, 2021

Revised: January 5, 2016

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Revised: December 4, 2018

Revised: December, 2018

Revised: August, 2021

Ref: 20 USC 6316; La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§17:105, 17:4035.1; Louisiana School, District, and State Accountability System, Bulletin 111, Louisiana Department of Education; Board minutes, 1-5-16, 2-2-16, 12-4-18.