

## **Students**

### **Magnet Schools/Enrollment Outside of Attendance Districts**

The Board of Education endorses the concept of neighborhood schools in which students attend schools close to their homes as defined by attendance districts. The Board of Education also recognizes the necessity of providing flexibility within the school system to meet the needs of individual families, to alleviate potential overcrowding at individual schools, and to achieve improved racial balance within schools. Therefore, the Board of Education may designate certain schools as magnet schools.

A magnet school will be defined as one drawing students from its own attendance district and from other designated districts. A magnet school may choose a theme or specialty as a means of enhancing student achievement and of attracting other students to attend.

For any magnet school that has been identified by the State as not in compliance with the State's racial balance regulations, the Board of Education will work toward attracting students to that magnet school to improve its racial balance.

### **Schools/Programs of Choice**

Students who currently reside in the Windham Public School District and Windham Public Schools staff members' children may apply for schools/programs of choice. Windham Public Schools currently has a Two-Way Dual Language Program, Compañeros, for which entrance is based on lottery.

### **Staff Resignation**

Students enrolled in a school/program of choice or a magnet school are eligible to stay in that school or program to the terminal grade of the school or program, except as noted below:

1. If a student is selected to be in Compañeros through staff preference, and the staff member parent voluntarily ends his/her employment with Windham Public Schools, the student shall be permitted to stay in that school or program of choice until the end of the following school year only if the student is a Windham resident.
2. If a student is selected to Barrows through staff preference and the staff member parent voluntarily ends his/her employment with Windham Public Schools, the student shall be permitted to stay in that school or program of choice until the end of the following school year.

### **Change of Student Address**

1. If a student attends Compañeros and moves out of district, the student may not stay in the program.
2. If a student is selected as an out-of-district student for Barrows and moves in district or is selected as an in-district student for Barrows and moves out of district, the student may continue to attend Barrows. However, the student's parents/guardians must inform both districts of the address change within 2 weeks.

### **Application Process for Magnet Schools or Schools/Programs of Choice**

1. Applications will be made available online beginning in January.
2. Only one application per child per year will be entered into the lottery for each school or program of choice.
3. Only custodial parents/legal guardians of the student may complete the application.
4. Siblings are defined as children who share at least one custodial parent/legal guardian and who reside at the same address.
5. Complete and accurate applications must be submitted online by the publicized due date prior to the school year of enrollment. Falsification of information may result in denial of seat even if the student is selected in the lottery.
6. Custodial parents/legal guardians who would like to submit applications to multiple schools or

programs of choice for one student must fill out an application for each school or program of choice.

7. Custodial parents/legal guardians are fully responsible for the accuracy of information submitted on their student's application. Windham Public Schools is not responsible for inaccurate information that may affect the lottery or enrollment process.
8. Applicants to a Pre-Kindergarten program must turn age 3 by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the school year for which they are submitting an application. Applicants to a Kindergarten program must turn age 5 by January 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year for which they are submitting an application.
9. Applicants are only eligible to apply for the grade level in which Windham Public Schools or their home district has placed them for the enrolling year.
10. For the Compañeros Two-Way Dual Language Program application process only: A custodial parent/legal guardian must participate in a mandatory parent information session about the program in addition to submitting an application for their student. Participation in this session is required for all custodial parents/legal guardians submitting an application, including those given preference. If an application is received but there is no record that a custodial parent/legal guardian participated in the mandatory information session, the application will be removed from the application and lottery processes.
11. For the Compañeros Two-Way Dual Language Program application process only: Language pool determination (for students/applicants whose eligibility for the lottery has been verified) takes place between January and March. Lotteries are conducted within each language pool in order to maintain a balance of languages within the program.
12. Custodial parents/legal guardians are responsible for informing Windham Public Schools of any changes in student information after filing their application, and prior to the lottery process (i.e. a move to a different address, or student retention.) Failure to do so may disqualify the student from the lottery process or result in the student being moved to the bottom of the wait list.
13. Applicants who are not offered a seat in the lottery must reapply each year.

## **Lottery Process**

A lottery process will take place in the event the number of applications exceeds the number of available seats in selected schools or programs of choice.

1. Lotteries will be conducted no later than the last school day of March prior to the school year of enrollment.
2. Lotteries will be conducted utilizing a randomizing program.
3. The Superintendent may choose to conduct the lottery drawing in public.
4. Applicants will be informed of their selection in the lottery by letter no later than April 30<sup>th</sup>.
5. If an applicant is offered a seat for their selected school or program of choice, the applicant has until the deadline specified in the letter to accept or decline their seat. If the acceptance form is not returned within the time period specified in the letter, the applicant forfeits the seat and the next student on the wait list is offered the seat.
6. For Barrows, twins or other multiple birth siblings who live within the same household will be entered into the lottery as a single unit and selected only if sufficient seats are available. Sufficient seats means that multiple birth siblings must receive a lottery number low enough to provide for all in the unit. For example, if 20 students are to be selected, twins must receive a number of 19 or less to be accommodated; otherwise neither is accepted, and the last seat will go to the student whose selection number is 21. For grades above Kindergarten, parents may request that their twins or other multiple birth siblings be entered into the lottery as individual students. This means that each would be selected by their own lottery number, not as a unit. Kindergarten applicants must be entered as a unit.
7. Wait lists will be developed based on the lottery for each grade when the number of applicants

exceeds the available seats.

8. Wait lists will remain active until the first day of the third marking period prior to the lottery drawing for the next enrollment year.

The lottery process may give preference in the following order, only if seats are available, to:

1. Students entering PK3, PK4, or Kindergarten of the school or program of choice to which they are applying who have a sibling who will still be enrolled in the school or program of choice during the next school year when the applying student enters the school or program of choice.
2. Applicants for PK3, PK4, or Kindergarten program of choice whose sibling is selected during the lottery process for any grade above the grade to which they are applying.
3. Students whose parent is a full time, regular, permanent staff member/employee of Windham Public Schools (not temporary). If available, up to two seats may be used for this preference at each grade level in Compañeros. At Barrows, up to two seats per classroom will be reserved for each grade level for this preference. ~~For interdistrict magnet schools, the ratio for in-district and out-of-district students will comply with the school's Operations Plan as approved by the State Department of Education.~~
  - a. At Barrows, the staff lottery will be conducted after the general lottery. Only **staff members** ~~students~~ whose children are not selected through the general lottery and whose parents are Windham Public Schools employees will be eligible for the staff lottery. If the number of applicants for this preference exceeds the number of seats available, then selection will be conducted utilizing a randomizing program.
  - b. For Compañeros, staff members' children who also have a sibling in the program will be counted as siblings for the purposes of the lottery. Because siblings have preference over staff members, this maximizes students' opportunities to be accepted through the lottery.
  - c. For Compañeros, a staff member's child who is not selected through the staff preference will then be entered into the general lottery for the same school or program of choice.
  - d. Staff member preference can be used only once for each child. If staff member preference was previously used for a child in their entry into a school or program of choice, and a family subsequently wants to apply to another school or program of choice for that child, staff member preference may not be used again for the same child.

## **Students Eligible for Bilingual Education**

1. Elementary-level students with a home language of Spanish will be offered the opportunity to attend a Dual Language Program at the time of registration if they are identified as English Learners and meet late-entry criteria, if applicable. For identified English Learners at North Windham School, this means they will first be offered a seat in the Compañeros Program, if a seat is in their grade and language pool is available. If a seat is not available at a student's home school, they will be offered the opportunity to attend a Dual Language Program at another school and provided with transportation to that school.
2. Middle School new arrival English Learners who have Spanish as a home language will be offered the opportunity to attend the Dual Language Program, if a seat is available in their grade level. Research shows that new arrival students do better in Dual Language Programs. Furthermore, because most English Learners who begin a Dual Language Program in elementary school exit "English Learner" status by middle school, the addition of new arrival students to the program re-establishes the balance of languages necessary in a Two-Way Dual Language Program. "New Arrival" students are defined as students with limited English proficiency who have been enrolled in U.S. public schools for fewer than two years.

## **Technical School Application Process**

Windham students are eligible to attend technical schools. The admission process to attend a technical school requires filling out a release of records form at the Windham Public school they currently attend, prior to withdrawal.

## **Transportation**

Transportation for Windham students will be provided by the District in accordance with applicable transportation policies and administrative regulations. The administration will make its best effort to provide transportation to all such students. If transportation cannot be provided, the parents will be notified prior to registration.

Primary responsibility for transportation of students attending Windham Public Schools from outside the district will belong to the parents/legal guardians.

## **Addendum**

Staff who previously exercised a staff preference to enroll a child in a choice program before December 9, 2016 may have a one-time option to enroll in another program of choice provided:

1. A seat to the target program is available after staff exercising a staff preference for the first time have applied.
2. One-time choice is made before May 11, 2016.

This Addendum will no longer be in effect after May 13, 2016.

(cf. 3541.3 - Routes and Services)

(cf. [5117](#) - Attendance Areas)

(cf. [3541](#) - Transportation)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

[10-55](#) Pupils to attend regional school.

[10-226a](#) Documentation of pupils and teachers of racial minorities and pupils eligible for free or reduced price lunches.

[10-226b](#) Existence of racial imbalance.

[10-226c](#) Plan to correct imbalance.

[10-226d](#) Approval of plan by state board.

[10-226h](#) Programs and methods to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation.

PA 96-213 An Act Concerning School Readiness and Intradistrict Choice

Policy adopted: January 24, 2007

Policy revised: December 11, 2013

Policy revised: April 9, 2014

Policy revised: January 14, 2015

Policy revised: December 9, 2015

Policy revised: May 11, 2016

Policy revised: February 24, 2021

Policy revised: May 13, 2022

Policy revised: June 15, 2022

Policy Revised 06.07.23

WINDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Willimantic, Connecticut