

Policy 5004

Option Enrollment

The board of education supports the concept embodied in the Enrollment Option Program that parents and legal guardians have the primary responsibility for insuring that their children receive the best education possible. Accordingly, the school district will participate in the option enrollment program and receive option students as provided herein.

1. Definitions

- a. **Option Student Defined.** Option student shall mean a nonresident student who has chosen to attend the school district under the provisions of the option enrollment program.
- b. **Resident School District Defined.** Resident school district shall mean the school district in which a student resides or in which the student is admitted as a resident of the school district pursuant to state law.
- c. **Option School District Defined.** Option school district shall mean the school district that a student chooses to attend other than his or her resident school district.

2. **Persons Entitled to Apply for Option Enrollment of Students.** Only parents and legal guardians may apply for option enrollment of students. Applications filed by foster parents and adults acting in loco parentis are not authorized and will be automatically denied.

3. **Duties, Entitlements and Rights of Option Students.** Except as otherwise provided herein, once an option student's option enrollment application has been accepted he/she shall be treated as a resident student of the school district.

4. Standards for Acceptance or Rejection of Option Students.

- a. **Numeric Capacity.** The board of education may set the numeric capacity of programs, classes, grade levels, or school buildings by operation of this policy or through freestanding action by the board. Numeric Capacity will be determined based upon available staff, facilities, projected enrollment of resident students, projected number of students with which the option school district will contract based on existing contractual arrangements, and availability of appropriate special education programs. Individuals seeking information about the numeric capacity set by the board may contact the superintendent for a copy of that resolution.
- b. **Programmatic Capacity.** In addition to the numeric capacity standards referred to above, the board may, by resolution, declare a program, a class, or a school unavailable to option students due to lack of capacity. Individuals seeking information about the programs that have been declared to be unavailable due to lack of capacity may contact the superintendent for a copy of the board's resolution.
- c. **Other Standards for Acceptance or Rejection of Option Enrollment Applications.** In addition to the numeric and programmatic capacity standards outlined above, the school district shall not accept an option student when acceptance of the student:
 - i. Would increase the operating costs of the school district, such as by requiring the hiring of new staff or contracting with outside entities to provide services to the student;
 - ii. Would require the procurement of new equipment, technology, or furnishings;

- iii. Would cause or require the rearrangement of caseloads for staff and contracted professionals;
 - iv. Is reasonably deemed by appropriate school staff to pose a potential risk to the health or safety of students or staff;
 - v. May pose a risk of adversely affecting the quality of educational services being provided to resident students, as determined by appropriate school staff.
- d. The school district shall accept an option student with a disability only to the extent that the school district's then current staff and facilities are sufficient to accommodate the student's needs without significantly increasing the operating costs of the school district, such as by requiring the hiring of new staff.
 - e. The school district shall not base the decision to accept or reject an option student on the student's previous academic achievement, athletic or other extracurricular ability, disabling condition(s), proficiency in the English language, or previous disciplinary proceedings.
 - f. If there are more option student applicants for any program, class, grade level or school building than can be accepted into such program, class, grade level or school building, applicants shall be accepted in the following order:
 - i. students with brothers or sisters attending the school district, either as resident students or as option students, shall be granted first priority;
 - ii. thereafter, option students shall be accepted into such program, class, grade level or school building in the order in which written applications were received by the school district.
5. False or Misleading Option Applications. If, prior to the student's attendance as an option student, the school district discovers that a previously accepted option application contained false or substantively misleading information, the option application will be rejected.
6. Academic Credits and Graduation. The school district shall accept credits toward graduation that were awarded by another school district, and shall award a diploma to an option student if the student meets the graduation requirements of the school district.
7. Information Regarding Schools, Programs, Policies and Procedures. The school district, its officers and employees, shall make information about the school district and its schools, programs, policies and procedures available to all interested people.
8. Procedure for Students Optioning Into or Out of the School District.
- a. The parent or legal guardian of any student desiring to option into or out of the school district shall submit a proper and timely application to the board of education and the other affected school district for enrollment during the following and subsequent school years. Any application requiring the approval of the school district shall be deemed submitted when the application is actually received in the school district's business office.
 - b. On or before April 1st, the school district shall notify the parent or legal guardian of any student who has submitted an application to option into the school district and the resident school district, in writing, whether the application is accepted or rejected. If an application is rejected, the reason for such

rejection shall be stated in the notification. This written notice shall be sent via certified mail to the address listed on the option application.

9. Late Applications and Requests for Release

- a. The board of education will approve late applications to option into the district under the following conditions:
 - i. When the resident district has released the student;
 - ii. When the student's late enrollment into the district meets the standards for acceptance or rejection of option students contained elsewhere in this policy;
- b. The superintendent will notify parents or guardians who have submitted properly completed option applications after March 15th no later than 60 days following submission of the application of the board's acceptance or rejection of the application.

10. Students Who Do Not Need a Release from the Resident District

- a. A student does not need to be released from his/her resident district under the following circumstances:
 - i. When the student has relocated to a different resident school district after February 1
 - ii. When a student's option school district merges with another district effective after February 1
- b. The school district shall accept or reject an application from a student under this paragraph using the criteria set forth in this policy and will accept or reject the application within forty-five days.

11. Cancellation of Option.

Students who option either into or out of the school district shall:

- a. Attend the option school district until graduation or relocation/re-option in a different resident school district unless the student chooses to return to the resident school district, in which case the student's parent or legal guardian shall timely submit a cancellation form to the school board or board of education of the option school district and the resident school district for approval for the following year.
- b. Attend an option school district for not less than one school year unless the student relocates to a different resident school district, completes requirements for graduation prior to the end the school year, transfers to a parochial or private school, or upon mutual agreement of the resident and option school districts cancels the enrollment option and returns to the resident school district.

12. Authority of Superintendent.

The board of education authorizes the superintendent of schools to make decisions on its behalf pursuant to and to apply the criteria articulated by this policy in determining whether to grant or deny option enrollment applications.

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Reviewed on:

