



Gilchrist County School District's

Controlled Open Enrollment (COE)
Public School Parental Choice Plan

Window for submitting a COE application: May 8 – May 31, 2019

[Click here to see which schools are open for COE enrollment](#)

Understanding 1002.31 F.S. Controlled open enrollment (COE); Public school parental choice.-

Controlled Open Enrollment Defined:

- According to 1002.31, F.S., controlled open enrollment is defined as a public education delivery that allows school districts to make student school assignments using parents' indicated preferential educational choice as a significant factor.

Eligibility requirements for consideration:

- Parents from any school district in the state whose child is not subject to current expulsion or suspension.
- The Gilchrist County School District is charged by 1002.31, F.S. to maintain socioeconomic, demographic, and racial balance in all schools when implementing controlled open enrollment. Our goal is to ensure that this process selects families for enrollment in a non-biased manner. The random-selection lottery procedure will help to ensure that this goal is achieved. In addition, data from the October and February survey count weeks will be reviewed to ensure the targets for each school will be proportionate to the community as a whole.
- Requested school must be on the Controlled Open Enrollment (COE) available school list.
- Pre-K programs are not mandatory. Therefore, COE options are not available for Pre-K students. Pre-K out-of-county requests should be made directly with the Pre-K Program Director.

Factors considered by school district when determining schools with the capacity to accept parental choice students:

- A determination is made on the current capacity of each school as determined by class size pursuant to s. 1003.03 and s.1, Art. IX of the State Constitution in conjunction with projected class size numbers for each school in order to ensure each school has the capacity to sustain the additional out-of-county students over time (until the highest grade level at the school).
- The calculation for compliance with maximum class size pursuant to s. 1003.03(4) is the average number of students at the school level.
- Calculations to determine COE eligible schools will be made and updated annually.
- Students residing in the district may not be displaced by a student from another district seeking enrollment under the controlled open enrollment process.
- Once this determination has been made, the names of the schools that have capacity for public school choice will be posted on the Gilchrist County School District's website (www.gilchristschools.org) with the application so parents may apply accordingly.
- A school is considered open for COE when the school's projected enrollment is less than 80% of the determined capacity of the school.

Availability of school transportation:

- 1002.31, F.S. states that a school district may provide transportation to students associated with public school parental choice.
- GCSD will provide transportation when there are seats available on the appropriate route for the out-of-county student as decided by the Transportation Department.
- Out-of-county students may ride Gilchrist County School buses provided the student boards at the nearest, in-county, public bus stop (voting precinct, etc.) and the bus is not overcrowded (GCSD School Board Policy 5.031D).
- School routes are designed to deliver students to a zoned school. When seats are available on a route, the first stop for an out-of-county, school choice student would be at the first available existing stop within the district and then to the appropriate zoned school.
- Special connecting routes or extension of existing routes will not be created to transport an out-of-county, school choice student.
- Routes will be reconfigured annually and the availability of transportation for COE is not guaranteed from year to year. It will be determined on whether or not the route has open capacity for COE students.

Preferential Treatment is provided in the GCSD controlled open enrollment process to all of the following:

1. Dependent children of active duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders.
2. Children who have been relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone.
3. Children who move due to a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent.
4. Students at multiple session schools (not applicable in GCSD).
5. Students residing in the district.

Hardships:

6. Employees in the school district may request a GCSD hardship for out-of-county approval for family members and must indicate this request on the application.
7. Students who have been attending as in-county or out-of-county students who are in good standing in the district (academics, attendance, and discipline will be reviewed) but whose residence changed to an out-of-county location.

Application Process:

Window for submitting a COE application: May 8 – May 31, 2019

Download an application here: [COE Application](#).

- Only applications received in the above stated window will be considered for COE.
- One application should be submitted for each child applying for COE.
- Parents may obtain applications from any of our four public schools in Gilchrist County or from the district office. Applications will also be available on the district's website (www.gilchristschools.org).
- Parents wishing to request public school parental choice **must submit a completed application to the district office by May 31, 2019**. Only applications received at the district office will be entered into COE.

Gilchrist County School Board Office is located at:
310 NW 11th Avenue
Trenton, Florida 32693

All applications will be stamped with the date received, and a copy will be provided to the parent as a form of receipt.

Students previously approved as an out-of-county student:

- Students previously approved as an out-of-county student will not have to reapply for COE unless they are making the following grade level transitions at which time will be required to complete the COE application process:
 - At the end of Pre-K prior to entering Kindergarten
 - At the end of Grade 5 prior to entering Grade 6
 - After withdrawing from the school district
- Students approved for out-of-county prior to the 2017-2018 school year will be considered “grandfathered” in to the district and not have to enter the COE process (with the exception of the transition years listed above).
 - Grandfathered students will continue to be required to remain in good standing while in the school district. If at any time that the student is not in good standing in the area of academics, attendance, discipline, etc., out-of-county approval may be revoked.

Application information:

Request for a school preference

- Parents may declare school preferences on the application submitted.
 - Indicate on the application if you are requesting consideration at more than one school.

Request for siblings to attend the same school

- The application allows for a parent to request placement of siblings within the same school.
 - Indicate on the application the names of all siblings to be considered for the same school.
 - Sibling is defined as a brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother, or step-sister that lives in the same household.
 - Verification will be made by the district.
 - Applications indicating a request for siblings to attend the same school will be placed in the lottery as one unit and, if selected, all will be accepted provided the grade level(s) needed are within the class size limits.

Request for Preferential Treatment

- Indicate on the application under the Preferential Treatment section which of the below preferential treatment items apply to the COE request.
 - I have dependent children of active duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders.
 - I have children who have been relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone.
 - I have children who move due to a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent.
 - I have students at multiple session schools (not applicable to Gilchrist County Schools).

*Note: Students residing in the school district have preferential treatment and do not have to complete the COE process.

Request for a Hardship (preferential treatment)

- Parents may declare a hardship on the application submitted.
 - Indicate on the application the hardship involved with the request.
 - Employees requesting out-of-county approval for a family member should indicate this under the hardship section of the application.

Process for reviewing applications:

- If the number of public school parental choice student applications is greater than the number of seats available for a particular school, prioritized/preferential students will be admitted first and a lottery procedure will be utilized to fill the remaining slots.
- Prioritized students are:
 - Applicants that have a sibling already attending the requested school.
 - Preferential treatment students as defined above.
- In the event that there are more requests than available slots for a requested school, a lottery procedure will be used to determine student assignments to include an appeals process for hardship cases.

Notification Process for Acceptance: June 28, 2019

- Parents will be notified by mail of the student school assignment (or notification of denial) by June 14, 2019.
 - A parent must accept or decline the opportunity to enroll within 10 business days of being notified and complete enrollment paperwork at the specified COE School for the 2019-2020 School Year.
 - If a student is not approved for COE, it is the parent's responsibility to enroll the student in the appropriate school in the district that corresponds with their residence or seek COE with another school district.
 - Upon obtaining approval for out-of-county enrollment, the approved student(s) will be allowed to remain at that school until he/she completes the highest grade level at that school and remains in good standing. The application process would have to be repeated when a student is due to transfer to a new school.
 - Students previously approved as an out-of-county student will have to reapply for COE when the following occurs:
 - At the end of Pre-K prior to entering Kindergarten
 - At the end of Grade 5 prior to entering Grade 6
 - After withdrawing from the school district.
- For example, if a student is approved to enter an elementary in 1st grade, the student may remain at that elementary school without having to annually reapply through the 5th grade. If the parent would like the student to transition to the middle/high school, then the parent would have to go through the controlled open enrollment process again for approval to enter the new school.
- If the lottery is used, all applications submitted will be numbered in the event that all approved for COE do not enroll (becomes a waiting list).
 - Final determinations of additional approval will be made by August 12, 2019 at which time all applications submitted for 2019-2020 will become void.

Hardship Appeal Process:

- If an application indicating a hardship request is denied, the parent may request an appeal within 10 calendar days of notification.
- The appeal must be made in writing and submitted to the Superintendent's Office located at 310 NW 11th Avenue, Trenton, Florida 32693.
- The appeal must include a statement, other than what was initially submitted on the application, as to why the decision should be reconsidered.
- The Superintendent will convene a committee consisting of the School Principal, District Director of Instruction, and Superintendent/Designee to review the appeal.
- Decisions made by the Superintendent on the appeal are final.

Hardships Appeals may be made during the school year for the following circumstances:

- New employee is hired to the district outside the window for COE and desires for family to attend GCSD while residing out-of-county.
- Former in-county student whose family relocates to a residence outside the school district may apply for a hardship appeal.

Important information about what is expected of an out-of-county, public school parental choice student:

- The student(s) must follow all rules and procedures applicable to in-county students to include the Student Code of Conduct, Bus Code of Conduct (if applicable) and Student Handbook.
- Maintain existing academic eligibility criteria for public school choice programs.
- Consideration for continued attendance for following years will be made on an annual basis to ensure students remain in good standing (academics, discipline and attendance) while enrolled in a Gilchrist County School.

Determining Capacity

When determining capacity for Controlled Open Enrollment, each school is evaluated for **core facility capacity** first. A core facility is a building on the campus that is shared by all students at the school (cafeteria, media center, administration, etc.).

If it is determined that the school does not have the core facility capacity to serve additional students, then the school does not open for COE. However, if the school is not at capacity with its core facilities, then the number of permanent student stations in compared with current enrollment numbers to determine if the school becomes open for COE.

Steps to determine capacity of a school:

1. Determine if the school has the core facility capacity to accept additional students based on size of the cafeteria, media, etc. using the FDOE formula for adequate core facility space by comparing the size of the core facility buildings and the school's enrollment size.

If Core Facility Capacity has been met, using the Florida Department of Education guidelines/calculator for square footage needed to serve the number of students enrolled at the school, record (Y) for yes indicating the school has met or exceeded its core facility capacity of 80% and the school will not be open for COE.

If Core Facility Capacity has not been met, using the Florida Department of Education guidelines/calculator for square footage needed to serve the number of students enrolled at the school, record (N) for no indicating that school has not met or exceeded its core facility capacity of 80%. Proceed to Step 2.

2. Determine the Percent Capacity of the school by comparing (dividing) the number of students enrolled with the number of permanent student stations existing at the school. If less than 80%, the school is open for COE. If 80% or greater, the school's percent capacity has been met or exceeded and the school would not be open for COE.

GCSO Capacity Table for 2019-2020: There will be no schools open for COE.								
All (4) GCSO schools are at, or exceeded, their core facility capacity.	Step #1: Core Facility at Capacity- Yes (Y)- school will not be open because school has already reached core facility capacity. No (N)- proceed to Step #2				Step # 2 (if step #1 is N): Student Station Capacity- (Capacity has been met when the percent capacity is 80% or higher)			Number of Seats available at school
	Is the school at capacity?	2018-2019 % Capacity (Capacity has been reached if 80% or higher)	2018-2019 Student Enrollment on our date certain of 03/08/19	2018-2019 Core Facility Capacity	2018-2019 Permanent Student Stations	2018-2019 Student Enrollment on our date certain of 03/08/19	2018-2019 Percent Capacity as calculated on 03/08/19	
GCSO Elementary Schools								
Bell Elementary	Y	80%	656	821				0
Trenton Elementary	Y	110%	837	757				0
GCSO Middle / High Schools								
Bell Middle/High	Y	81%	610	751				0
Trenton Middle/High	Y	131%	661	501				0

GCSD Controlled Open Enrollment (COE)- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Q. What is Controlled Open Enrollment (COE)?

A. According to 1002.31, F.S., controlled open enrollment is defined as a public education delivery that allows school districts to make student school assignments using parents' indicated preferential educational choice as a significant factor. It allows a parent from any school district in the state whose child is not subject to current expulsion or suspension to enroll his or her child in and transport his or her child to any public school that has not reached capacity in the district.

2. Q. When does COE go into effect?

A. Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, each district school board must adopt a controlled open enrollment plan that allows a parent from any school district in the state to enroll his or her child in and transport his or her child to any public school that has not reached capacity.

3. Q. Do I have to reapply if my child is already attending out-of-county and is in good standing?

A. Students previously approved as an out-of-county student will not have to reapply for COE unless the student is making the following grade level transitions at which time they will be required to complete the COE application process:

- At the end of Pre-KK prior to entering Kindergarten.
- At the end of Grade 5 prior to entering Grade 6.
- After withdrawing from the school district.

4. Q. What does it mean to be in good standing?

A. A student's academics, attendance and discipline record is reviewed when determining if a student is in good standing.

- Grandfathered students will continue to be required to remain in good standing while in the Gilchrist County School District.
- All out-of-county students are reviewed annually (at a minimum) for good standing.

5. Q. What can happen if my child is not in good standing?

A. If at any time an out-of-county student is not in good standing in the area of academics, discipline or attendance, out-of-county approval may be revoked.

6. Q. How is school district defining capacity for COE?

A. When determining capacity for Controlled Open Enrollment, each school is evaluated for core facility capacity first. A core facility is a building on the campus that is shared by all students at the school (cafeteria, media center, administration, etc.). The Florida Department of Education has determined the square footage needed in core facility building in order to service varying school enrollment sizes. The student enrollment numbers on the date certain (March 10, 2017) were compared with the core facility capacity to determine the Percent Capacity of the school. If the percent capacity is at 80% or higher, then the school is not open for COE. However, if the school is not at capacity with its core facilities, then the number of permanent student stations is compared with the current enrollment numbers to determine if the school becomes open for COE. A school is considered open for COE when the school's projected enrollment (date certain) is less than 80% of the determined capacity of permanent student stations at the school.

7. Q. How do I obtain an application?

A. Parents may obtain applications from any of our four public schools in Gilchrist County or from the district office. Applications will also be available on the district's website (www.gilchristschools.org).

8. Q. How do I apply for COE?

A. Only applications received in the COE application window (May 8-May 31, 2019) will be considered for COE. Parents wishing to request public school parental choice must submit a completed application to the district office ONLY. School staff is not allowed to accept or collect COE applications. They must be submitted to the district office located at 310 NW 1st Avenue, Trenton, FL. 32693. The application will be stamped and a copy will be provided to the parent to serve as a receipt that it has been turned in.

9. Q. Is there any information I need to make sure I state on the COE application?

A. Yes. It is called preferential treatment in the COE Plan.
Circle your school preferences in the "School Choice Options" section of the application.
Also, indicate any preferential treatment situations in the "Special Consideration" section of the application, as well as any siblings you are requesting approval to attend the same school.
Finally, indicate if the student's family member is an employee of the Gilchrist County School District.

10. Q. Can I submit an application outside of the COE window?

- A. No. All COE applications for out-of-county approval must be received in the application window (May 8-May 31, 2019). The only COE applications that will be processed outside of the application window will be Hardship Appeals made during the school year when a new employee is hired to the district outside the window for COE and desires for family to attend GCSD or when a former in-county student's family relocates to a residence outside the school district.

11. Q. How does the lottery described in the COE plan work?

- A. If the number of public school parental choice student applications is greater than the number of seats available for a particular school, prioritized/preferential students will be admitted first and a lottery procedure will be utilized to fill the remaining slots.

12. Q. Will siblings be provided preferential treatment in the COE application process?

- A. Yes. Applications indicating a request for siblings to attend the same school will be placed in the lottery as one unit and, if selected, all will be accepted provided the grade level(s) needed are within the class size limits.

13. Q. How will I find out if my child has been approved as a COE student?

- A. Parents will be notified by mail of the student school assignment by June 30, 2019. A parent must accept or decline the opportunity to enroll within 10 business days of being notified.

14. Q. If my child is selected in the lottery to attend a COE school, do I have to complete enrollment paperwork at the new school?

- A. Yes. Completing enrollment paperwork at the specified COE school is a required component of accepting COE for the 2019-2020 school year. Our enrollment paperwork is completed online. Please contact the school to make an appointment to complete the enrollment paperwork. If you visit the district website at www.gilchristschools.org and scroll down on the home page until you see the Registration Gateway Online Registration Site for New Students link to begin the enrollment process.

15. Q. Do I have to apply every year for COE approval?

- A. No. Upon obtaining approval for out-of-county enrollment, the approved student(s) will be allowed to remain at that school until he/she completes the highest grade level at that school and remains in good standing.

The COE process would have to be repeated when a student is due to transfer to a new school:

- At the end of Pre-prior to entering Kindergarten
- At the end of Grade 5 prior to entering Grade 6
- After withdrawing from the district

16. Q. If I was unable to apply in the window or have a unique situation, is the principal allowed to approve a waiver request?

- A. No. Only applications received during the COE application window (May 8-31, 2019) will be considered for COE for the 2019-2020 school year. The only exceptions are hardship appeals.

17. Q. Is transportation provided by the school district for COE students?

- A. Yes. GCSD will provide transportation when there are seats available on the appropriate route for the out-of-county student as decided by the Transportation Department. Out-of-County COE students may ride Gilchrist County School buses provided the student boards at the nearest, in-county, public bus stop (voting precinct, etc.) and the bus is not overcrowded).

18. Q. Can an out-of-county student's "approved to attend" status be rescinded?

- A. Yes. Student(s) must follow all rules and procedures applicable to in-county students to include the Student Code of Conduct, Bus Code of Conduct (if applicable) and Student Handbook. Consideration for continued attendance for following years will be made on an annual basis to ensure students remain in good standing (academics, discipline and attendance) while enrolled in a Gilchrist County school.

19. Q. Does out-of-county approval for Pre-K allow my students to remain at the elementary school through grade 5?

- A. No. Even students who are approved as out-of-county students for Pre-K must enter COE for approval into Kindergarten. Pre-K is outside of the Controlled Open Enrollment Plan since it is not a requirement for a student to attend Pre-K. Therefore, a student would have to receive approval as out-of-county to attend Pre-K and then enter COE prior to Kindergarten.

20. Q. Why are there no schools in the Gilchrist County School District open for COE?

- A. Trenton Elementary, Trenton Middle/High and Bell Middle/High were found to have met their core facility capacity. Bell Elementary is the only school that has not met core facility capacity. However, Bell Elementary has exceeded the 80% threshold of permanent student stations when compared with enrollment numbers on the date certain of March 08, 2019. Therefore, there are no schools in the Gilchrist County School District open for COE for 2019-2020 school year.

21. Q. When will the next calculations be run to determine if any GCSD schools will be open for 2020-2021 school year?

- A. Pending legislative changes, the capacity calculations would be determined in March 2020 with an advertised application window similar to this year's May window.