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STUDENT ASSIGNMENT/SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS

5.20+

- I. The School Board is committed to providing quality educational opportunities for all students regardless of background characteristics by providing each student an educational environment that enhances that individual's educational success. The School Board also is committed to encouraging all parents, as defined by Florida Statutes, to play an active role in their children's education and to increasing the educational choices available to parents and students in the public schools. The School Board further is committed to educational settings that promote understanding of diversity, tolerance, fair play, and the positive tenets of our democracy so that students may be successful citizens in our pluralistic society.

The School Board supports the establishment of a diverse array of schools and programs as tools for achieving these goals for three major reasons:

- A. The School Board believes that all schools and programs should promote educational excellence and offer students with different interests, talents, and aptitudes distinct choices that may enhance their educational success.
 - B. The School Board believes that all schools and programs should be used to develop innovative instructional practices and promote systemic reform.
 - C. A variety of schools and programs are tools for the promotion of diversity.
- II. The School Board shall establish residential attendance zones for each school. All students, unless otherwise provided by School Board policy or authorized by the School Board's order, shall attend the school serving the student's residential attendance zone. A student's residence is defined as the residence of his/her parent(s). Any student residing in the School District shall be assigned to a school for attendance by the Superintendent or designee.
 - A. If a student has been expelled from another school district, the Superintendent may recommend to the School Board either that the final order of expulsion be waived, and the student admitted to the District or that the final order of expulsion be honored, and the student not admitted to the District.
 - B. A student may be permitted to attend a school in another residential attendance zone pursuant to the *Controlled Open Enrollment Policy* (Board Policy 5.23) or under the provisions for School Reassignment. Student reassignments shall be granted based on the requested non-districted school having physical and programmatic available space.

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- C. Controlled Open Enrollment is an educational choice that allows the District to make student school assignments using parents' and legal guardians' preferential school choice selections as a significant factor. Pursuant to F.S. 1002.31, a student residing in any Florida County may be permitted to attend a school in another residential attendance zone using Controlled Open Enrollment (Regular School Choice) and the Choice guidelines adopted by the School Board.
1. The Controlled Open Enrollment process shall be implemented following the School Board approved Controlled Open Enrollment (COE) Plan that is outlined in School Board Policy 5.23.
 2. Students who are residents of Sarasota *and* impacted by the Student Exchange and Transportation Agreement between the School Board of Sarasota County and Charlotte County School Board may participate in the District's Controlled Open Enrollment (Regular School Choice) cycle as outlined in the *Controlled Open Enrollment Plan*.
 3. Students assigned to a school through COE shall not automatically be entitled to enter a school's magnet program such as International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), Visual and Performing Arts (VPA), Math and Science & Technology (MaST), Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Arts & Agriscience (STEM A + 2), and the Young Marines. Students seeking admission to these or any other magnet program shall be required to meet the eligibility criteria, guidelines, and timelines specified by the magnet program of interest.
 4. Magnet schools such as Bay Haven School of Basics Plus, Pine View for the Gifted and Suncoast Polytechnical High School shall not be open through the COE process. Students seeking admission to these schools shall be required to meet the eligibility criteria, guidelines, and timelines specified by the magnet school of interest.
 5. Students residing in Sarasota County shall not be displaced by a student living in another Florida school district and seeking admission to a District school.
 6. Transportation will not be provided to students who accept a school assignment COE.

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- D. The Reassignment process is available to those students who meet special circumstances for attending a non-districted school. The Reassignment process is separate and apart from Controlled Open Enrollment. Reassignment requests are granted/not granted by a committee which may consist of the Supervisor of Student Assignment, school-level Executive Directors and content/program area administrators. Individual School board members and the Superintendent shall not be involved in decisions concerning a student's reassignment. Until the reassignment process is complete, district and/or school-based staff may not enroll the student or inform a student or parent of the likelihood of a reassignment approval.
1. A parent/guardian may apply for a school reassignment if the student is moving into an assigned attendance zone within the next 60 school days and would like to attend the new school prior to the move, when a student is moving out of an assigned attendance zone but wants to remain at the school he/she is currently attending, or if a student is experiencing a hardship due to severe/special extenuating circumstances.
 2. Applying for a reassignment does not guarantee approval. The requested school's enrollment, available space and programmatic capacity shall be considered before a reassignment can be granted to a student living outside its assigned attendance zone.
 - i. To be considered for a first semester assignment, the parent/guardian is required to submit the reassignment application to the Office of School Choice by the last day of school in the prior academic year.
 - ii. To be considered for a second semester assignment, the parent/guardian is required to submit the reassignment application to the Office of School Choice by December 1.
 3. The Office of School Choice shall accept a reassignment application throughout the school year whenever there is a change in a student's residence and a school reassignment is required.
 4. Students residing in Sarasota County who seek a reassignment to a Florida public school outside the District shall be responsible for meeting the reassignment requirements mandated by the district in which he/she is interested in attending.
 5. Students residing outside District boundaries who seek a reassignment into a Sarasota County public school shall be required to follow the District's reassignment application deadlines and guidelines. Applying

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for a reassignment does not guarantee approval.

- i. The parent/guardian shall be responsible for following the reassignment guidelines of his/her current school district.
 - ii. The requested school's enrollment, available space and programmatic capacity shall be considered before a reassignment can be granted.
 6. Students residing in Sarasota County shall not be displaced by a student living in another Florida school district and seeking admission to a District school.
- E. Magnet programs/schools are educational choice options that promote diversity and academic excellence. Students seeking admission to a magnet program/school shall be required to meet the eligibility criteria, guidelines, and timelines specified by the magnet school of interest.
1. Each magnet program/school shall have pre-established admissions criteria timeline/deadlines and procedures which may vary by program and/or school.
 2. Any magnet program/school identified with available programmatic and/or space capacity shall be open to students who reside with their parent/guardian in Florida.
 3. Students residing in Sarasota County shall not be displaced by a student living in another Florida school district and seeking admission to a District magnet program/school. Sarasota County's students will be awarded available seats before students living outside the district can receive a magnet program/school assignment.
 4. Bay Haven School of Basics Plus, Pine View School for the Gifted and Suncoast Polytechnical High School are magnet schools with specific eligibility criteria for admission. Students seeking admission to these schools shall be required to meet the eligibility criteria, guidelines, and timelines specified by the magnet school of interest. Magnet schools shall not be open through COE.
 5. Magnet programs such as International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), Visual and Performing Arts (VPA), Math and Science & Technology (MaST), Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Arts & Agriscience (STEM A + 2), and the Young Marines are magnet programs with specific eligibility criteria for admission. Students

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seeking admission to these and any other magnet program shall be required to meet the eligibility criteria, guidelines, and timelines specified by the magnet program of interest. Magnet programs shall not be open through COE.

- F. The John McKay Scholarship Program provides the educational choice for parents to send their eligible student with special needs to either a private school or a public school other than their assigned school based on attendance zone.
1. The McKay Scholarship public school option is subject to the availability of space capacity and required services for the individual student at the requested school.
 2. Parents/guardians shall access the McKay Scholarship through the Florida Department of Education website.
 3. The Florida Department of Education determines deadlines, eligibility, award amounts and payment distributions under the provisions of F.S. 1002.39 and State Rule 6A-6.0970.
 4. The District shall provide assistance as required by the Florida Department of Education.
- G. The Gardiner Scholarship is an educational choice option designed to help a parent better meet the individual needs of his or her student with a disability. Under the provisions of F.S. 1002.385, the Gardiner Scholarship provides eligible students with funding to purchase approved services or products for a customized educational program. A parent/guardian selecting this choice shall access the scholarship program through the Scholarship Funding Organization identified on the Florida Department of Education website.
- H. Virtual Instruction is a school choice option available to students under the provisions of F.S. 1002.321, F.S. 1002.45, F.S. 1002.455 and Board Policy 4.65. A parent/guardian selecting this option may register his/her student in the District's full-time virtual instruction program or part-time course offering program.
- I. Home Education is an educational choice option that is defined as the sequentially progressive instruction of a student directed by his or her parent or guardian to satisfy the requirement for compulsory education (F.S. 1002.20). The parent/guardian may elect to register his or her student in home school in accordance with School Board Policy 4.70.
- J. Charter Schools are available in addition to the other educational choice options found within a traditional school. A parent may select this choice option and have his/her student attend a charter school that is approved and sponsored by Sarasota County School Board. Charter schools operate independently with their own governing board. Parents who select this option shall communicate directly with the charter school to resolve questions and

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concerns.

- K. High school students (grades 9 – 12) who attend a nontraditional school may annually designate a traditional high school for the purpose of participating in Interscholastic Athletic Programs sanctioned by the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA). Students who participate in athletics shall meet eligibility requirements established by FHSAA and the School Board.
- L. If for any reason a student leaves a choice school or academic program prior to completing the highest-grade level within that particular school or academic program, he or she will be required to return to his or her assigned District school. A choice school or program includes a charter school, virtual school, home school, magnet school, magnet program or special school.
- M. In accordance with Florida Statute 1006.15, eligible students who are attending a charter school, virtual school, or home school may participate in athletics and extracurricular activities at his or her assigned District school or designate a traditional high school outside the attendance boundary of the assigned district school through athletic choice. Students who participate in athletics shall meet eligibility requirements established by Florida High School Athletic Association, Inc. (FHSAA) and the School Board (Policy 5.80). All students shall be subject to all School Board rules and to the *Code of Student Conduct* while attending athletic events and practices.
- N. A student whose legal residence is outside the boundaries of the County may be enrolled in a District school under the provisions of Florida Statutes and the *Controlled Open Enrollment Plan*. The assigned school for an out-of-district student shall be designated on the basis of space available. Such transfers shall be on a nondiscriminatory basis and shall not result in reducing desegregation in either school district or in reinforcing the dual school system.
- O. A student may be permitted to cross district lines for the purpose of attending school outside the School District under the provisions of Florida Statutes and the Student Reassignment process.
- P. A student eighteen year of age or older who has interrupted his or her education and who subsequently desires to enter Sarasota County Public Schools shall physically enroll either in the adult day school or an adult evening school. The student may not enroll in a regular high school. In extenuating circumstances, a principal may recommend an exception to this policy to the Executive Director of High Schools.

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- Q. Students may not be enrolled in a regular high school for more than 10 semesters, unless the principal approves the enrollment beyond 10 semesters. The principal will consider the reason the student wants to continue high school, the educational progress to date, and the commitment to education. Semesters begin when the student first enrolls in ninth grade in any public or private school.
 - R. Students may not enroll in a regular high school if they cannot earn the number of required credits to graduate by their 20th birthday, unless enrollment is approved by the principal.
 - S. For students with disabilities who have not graduated with a standard diploma, the district will provide services until the end of the school year in which the student turns 22 years old.
 - T. The Superintendent or designee is authorized to assign a student to any program or school as deemed to be in the best interest of the student or School District.
- III. The purpose of this policy shall be to establish the School Board's expectations when it becomes necessary to reorganize the School District's school attendance boundary lines. The changing of school attendance boundary lines may be necessary due to growth, change or shift in the distribution of student population, the construction of a new school, or any other occurrence which takes place in the community which makes it necessary to redistribute the student enrollment population to assure the most appropriate housing of students within the district's operating school buildings.

The School Board remains committed to the establishment and operation of school attendance boundaries which assure availability of program, staff and facilities to meet student educational needs and to assure wise and prudent use of staff, facilities and finances. In so doing, however, it may be necessary, from time to time, to call for the redrawing of attendance boundary lines of specific school attendance areas, or even system-wide, to capture the most efficient educational and economical benefit to students, parents, taxpayers and the community.

On the occasion when such action is deemed necessary, the School Board and the Administration will be guided by the following standards of expectation.

- A. No later than the first Board meeting in December of each school year, the Superintendent shall determine whether there is a need for any new or revised attendance boundaries based on the facility being over-crowded or under-utilized or because the District is opening a new school.
- B. Where the Superintendent has identified the need for a boundary change, the District shall form a Boundary Advisory Committee to assist in the

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development of proposed changes. The Office of Planning will organize and work directly with this group. The Boundary Advisory Committee shall be formed with the following membership:

1. Director of Planning,
2. Principal of each affected school,
3. School Advisory Committee (“SAC”) Chair* from each school potentially affected by the boundary changes,
4. Four (4) parent representatives from different geographic areas from each school (selected jointly by the SAC Chair and principal), and
5. A teacher from each school selected jointly by school administration and the Sarasota Classified/Teacher Association (SCTA).

*If the SAC chair is a teacher, this will be the teacher representative; if the chair is a parent, this will represent one parent member from that school.

C. When drawing attendance boundaries, the School Board will use the following guidelines whenever possible:

1. Attendance areas will be designed to incorporate entire neighborhoods, keeping neighboring children together and contributing to an efficient, effective and economic transportation configuration.
2. Redistricting shall strive to assure that schools are left with a capacity that allows for growth from new neighborhoods.
3. Every attempt will be made to move the minimum number of students necessary to accomplish the goal, and to try to minimize the number of families affected by redistricting.
4. Every effort will be made to not require the moving of students who were moved due to previous redistricting. However, in the event such students must be relocated, they shall, upon request, be given priority consideration for out of designated attendance area placement.
5. When attendance boundaries are changed, elementary and secondary students with one (1) year remaining in their present school will have the option of remaining at that school. This shall not automatically entitle the student to district transportation. When considering attendance boundary adjustments, the Board by its own discretion may extend the option to other students with more than one (1) year remaining.
6. The Boundary Advisory Committee in order to create fair and equitable attendance zones and enrollments may develop additional criteria.

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NOTES: