



**SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Administrative Procedures**

<b>F – Students No. 51</b>	<b>F51</b>
<b>Revised:</b> October 29, 2021	
<b>Posted:</b> October 29, 2021	

**CHOICE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

The following administrative procedure guides the District’s policy for unified enrollment and the controlled choice framework according to Policy FDB(LOCAL).

*Choice schools and programs include, but are not limited to, in-District charters, magnets, and early college high schools. The Superintendent or designee shall develop regulations, procedures, guidelines, and time lines for enrollment into all choice schools and choice programs and shall ensure families have timely access to this information.*

*Choice schools are open-enrollment schools that offer schoolwide programmatic models and pedagogical philosophies that are aligned with national best practices. Different from choice programs, at choice schools all students participate in the model in its entirety. Examples of these models include, but are not limited to, the Montessori method, single-gender, STEM, and performing and visual arts. Some choice schools do not have attendance boundaries and are open to students living within and outside of the District.*

*Choice programs are offered at traditional neighborhood campuses whose implementation of specific themes and pedagogical philosophies align with national best practices. Unlike choice schools, choice programs are not schoolwide but are limited to a designated number of students per cohort. Examples of choice programs include magnet programs at comprehensive high schools offering engineering, International Baccalaureate, health and law professions and dual language programs at elementary schools. Typically, choice programs give priority to students residing within the established attendance boundary and may be open to students living outside of it.*

**I. DEFINITION OF CHOICE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS**

Choice Schools are open enrollment schools that offer schoolwide programmatic models and pedagogical philosophies that are aligned with national best practices. Different from Choice Programs, at Choice Schools all students participate in the model in its entirety. Examples of these models include, but are not limited to, the Montessori method, single-gender, STEM, and performing and visual arts. Some Choice Schools do not have attendance boundaries and are open to students living within and outside of San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD).

Choice Programs are offered at traditional neighborhood campuses whose implementation of specific themes and pedagogical philosophies align with national best practices. Unlike Choice Schools, Choice Programs are not schoolwide but are limited to a designated number of students per cohort. Examples of Choice Programs include magnet programs at comprehensive high schools offering engineering, International Baccalaureate, health and law professions and dual

language programs at elementary schools. Choice Programs give priority to students residing within the established attendance boundary and may be open to students living outside of it.

*In-District Charters.* When neighborhood campuses go through the Annual Call for Quality Schools process (see Administrative Procedure E27) and are authorized to become an In-District Charter, the neighborhood campus will be identified as a Choice School with an attendance boundary. In-District Charters are authorized in the spring and launch in the fall of the upcoming school year following all appropriate In-District Charter procedures and guidelines. For enrollment purposes, all students enrolled in the campus in the year it becomes authorized fall under Administrative Procedure F51 for the upcoming school year.

## II. ENTRY INTO CHOICE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS

Entry into Choice Schools and Programs occurs through an annual application and selection process that is centrally managed by the District through the OAES. The OAES uses two methods for selection. Campuses without academic entry requirements will utilize a blind, computerized lottery process. Campuses with academic entry requirements will utilize a holistic, rubric-based selection process.

The OAES will publicize selection criteria for all Choice Schools and Programs participating in the lottery or holistic, rubric-based selection process prior to the opening of the selection and application window. In select instances, entry into Choice Schools may occur through a district generated placement process, including the crisis transfer process (see *Transfers into Choice Schools with Attendance Boundaries*) or the bilingual education cluster procedure (see *Bilingual Education Students*). A student accepted and enrolled in a Choice School or Program may stay at the school for the duration of the grade levels offered for which the student qualifies without having to reapply.

After students receive and accept an offer to enter a Choice School or Program, they must complete the district registration process. Families have until the first day of school to register and finalize their enrollment into the Choice School or Program. Students who do not finalize registration and enrollment after the first day of school may forfeit their seat.

### Lottery Process

Choice Schools and Programs without academic entry requirements utilize a *controlled choice* lottery process for accepting students. All lotteries are blind, computerized, and conducted at the district level to control for bias.

Prior to the opening of the application window, the OAES will meet with the administration of all campuses without academic entry requirements to determine which grades will host a lottery, the number of seats available for the upcoming school year based on capacity, and finalize controlled choice parameters.

The OAES determines the percentage of seats allotted for each lottery according to the controlled choice parameters. Individualized lotteries for the campus are created based on the following considerations:

- Best practice of the programmatic model (i.e., Montessori, dual language, etc.)
- Prioritizing students living within campus attendance zones (if applicable) or priority area (if applicable)
- Ensuring equity and access for all students, regardless of academic abilities and where they live
- Prioritizing student demographics (i.e., socioeconomic status, at-risk status, English Language Learner status, etc.)
- Prioritizing siblings of students currently enrolled at the campus
- Prioritizing students attending and/or are zoned to Comprehensive and Targeted Support Schools (previously known as Priority and Focus Schools) when applicable

For example, lotteries created for the Advanced Learning Academy can include the following:

1. Priority Area
2. In District | Economically Disadvantaged
3. In District | Non-Economically Disadvantaged
4. Out of District

Bonham Academy enrolls all students living within their attendance zone, but has four different lotteries for students outside of their attendance zone:

1. In District | English
2. In District | Spanish
3. Out of District | English
4. Out of District | Spanish

The Jefferson High School International Baccalaureate program has two different lotteries:

1. Attendance Zone
2. Outside of Attendance Zone (in district and out of district)

Families complete an application on paper or online for their desired Choice School or Program(s). The application asks a series of questions to determine a student's demographic information. Each application is tagged with flags depending on the information entered. The flags include the following:

1. SAISD Employee (parent/guardian works for SAISD)
2. In District (address is zoned to SAISD)
3. Out of District (address is zoned to outside of SAISD boundaries)
4. Priority Area (address is zoned to an area within a circle radius close to the campus)
5. Attendance Zone (address is zoned to the campus's attendance zone)
6. Economically Disadvantaged (family qualifies for free and reduced-price lunch per federal guidelines)
7. Non-Economically Disadvantaged (family does not qualify for free and reduced price lunch per federal guidelines)
8. Sibling Attending (applying student has a sibling currently attending the campus)
9. Sibling Applying (applying student has a sibling also applying to enter the campus for the same school year)
10. Spanish (student answers "Spanish" to language questions or is considered Spanish proficient; see *Bilingual Education Students*)

11. English (student answers “English” to both language questions or is considered English proficient; see *Bilingual Education Students*)
12. CTSS (applying student currently attends or is zoned to attend in the upcoming school year a campus designated by the Texas Education Agency [TEA] as a Comprehensive and Targeted Support School when applicable)

Applications entered during application window are considered for the lottery. It is not a first-come, first-served system for filling seats. Applications submitted on the first day of the window will have equal consideration in the lottery as applications submitted on the last day of the window.

After the application window closes, students are sorted into the appropriate lotteries by the flags associated with their submission. The OAES will review the number of applications that were sorted into each lottery. If there are less applications than available seats, then no lottery is conducted and all students are accepted (i.e., 20 applications for 30 available seats). If there are more applications than available seats, then a lottery is conducted (i.e., 50 applications for 30 available seats).

1. The system randomly assigns all applications in each lottery a number.
2. The system then sorts the applications in numerical order from lowest to highest.
3. Students at the top receive the initial offer. The rest of the students are placed on a waitlist based on the order they were assigned by the system.
  - a. For example, the Priority Area Lottery for Advanced Learning Academy has 50 students for 30 available seats. All 50 students are randomly assigned a number from 1 to 50, then are sorted in numerical order. Students 1 through 30 receive the initial offers. Students 31-50 become the first students on the waitlist, numbered 1 through 20.
4. If students are assigned the SAISD employee flag, their application is considered In District regardless of their address as an employee benefit.
5. Order of the lotteries will be conducted as follows to fill available seats:
  - a. CTSS Flag (when applicable)
  - b. Sibling Flag
  - c. Priority Area Flag
  - d. General lotteries
6. If students are assigned the Priority flag, their application is first considered in the Priority Area Lottery. If they were not accepted through the Priority Area Lottery, then their application is placed into the In District Lottery and given another opportunity to be considered for acceptance.
7. If students are assigned the Sibling Attending flag, their application is noted for additional consideration during the Choice selection process, either through the Sibling Lottery Seats Limit for siblings of currently enrolled students or the Sibling Plus One priority. (see **III. SIBLING PREFERENCE**).

*Holistic, Rubric-based Selection Process*

Choice Schools or Programs with academic entry requirements will determine which applicants to accept through a committee that uses a holistic, rubric-based process. Criteria can include but not be limited to:

- Grade point average
- Attendance record
- Disciplinary record
- Standardized test scores
- Interview
- Assessment
- At-risk status
- Comprehensive and Targeted Support School enrollment (when applicable)

Selection committees are determined by campus leadership teams and can include but not be limited to the following representatives:

- Principal or other campus administrator
- Counselor
- Teacher
- District personnel

All selection criteria and rubrics must be approved by the OAES before implementation. Following approval, selection criteria will be made public prior to and during the application window. Campuses must conduct a norming meeting for all selection committee members about the finalized criteria and rubrics. Norming meetings must include explanation of the rubric, establishing an understanding of the profile of the ideal student based on criteria, and clarifying expectations of interviews and/or campus-administered assessments.

*General Guidelines for Lottery and Holistic, Rubric-based Selection Process*

Every year the OAES will designate the number of campuses to which students may apply. Students accepted to multiple campuses will only be able to confirm their seat at one school. Accepting the seat does not remove students from waitlists on which they are included unless the family requests removal. Guidelines for waitlists are described in section **VII. WAITLISTS AND BACKFILLING**.

Acceptance to the Choice School or Program applies only to the student listed in the application. Siblings wishing to enter the same school or program must complete their own application if they want to enroll. Sibling guidelines are described in section **III. SIBLING PREFERENCE**.

The OAES will assign priority status to students from campuses designated as Comprehensive and Targeted Support Schools (CTSS) by the TEA during the lottery and holistic, rubric-based selection process when applicable.

### Entry After Closing of Application Window

Families that did not participate in the annual application and selection process may follow the waitlist and backfilling procedure to enter a Choice School or Program (see section **VII. WAITLISTS AND BACKFILLING**).

Families moving into SAISD after the close of the Choice Schools and Programs application window may be considered for entry according to the following parameters:

- If entry is into a grade with an existing waitlist, the student may be added to the end of the waitlist.
- If entry is into a grade which is no longer backfilled (see section **VII. WAITLISTS AND BACKFILLING**), the OAES, in collaboration with campus leadership, will review the student's academic history regarding acceptance into the campus. For example, an incoming 11<sup>th</sup> grade student that previously attended an International Baccalaureate high school out of state may be considered for entry into an SAISD International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme pending evaluation of transcripts.

### Transfers into Choice Programs and Choice Schools without Attendance Boundaries

Students may not utilize the in-district transfer process to enter Choice Programs or Choice Schools without attendance boundaries. Enrollment at entry level grades occurs only through the lottery or the holistic, rubric-based selection process. Non-entry level grades will be filled according to the process outlined in section **VII. WAITLISTS AND BACKFILLING**.

### Transfers into Choice Schools with Attendance Boundaries

Choice Schools with attendance boundaries use the Choice selection process to accept students outside of their attendance zone. The District, through the OAES, may place a student requesting a crisis transfer into a Choice School with an attendance boundary per **SAISD Administrative Procedure F5**. The OAES will work with district and campus administration to facilitate the process. Students placed at the Choice School due to crisis placement still follow withdrawal/exit procedures according to **SAISD Administrative Procedure F51** (see section **VIII. EXITING OR EXPULSION FROM A CHOICE SCHOOL OR PROGRAM**).

### Transfers between Choice Schools and Programs Operated by a Network

SAISD Choice Schools and Programs that operate within a Network are approved by the Board of Trustees through the district's Annual Call for Quality Schools process (see *Administrative Procedure E27*). An SAISD Choice School or Program operated by a Network may accept students coming from a non-SAISD school or program operated by the same Network (i.e., Young Women's Leadership Academy). Additionally, In District and Out of District students accepted and enrolled into an SAISD Choice School or Program operated by a Network may receive priority in the Choice application process to enter another SAISD Choice School or Program within the same Network when applicable. Students must submit an application to enter a different Choice School or Program within the Network through the Choice process. Campus administration verify the students' enrollment in the Network campus, then submit a request to offer seats to Network students to the OAES. Students would be considered for enrollment above

the seat count allotted for grade levels with a lottery or for seat counts allotted for non-lottery grades with a waitlist. Consideration for enrollment may occur on an annual basis during the Choice Selection process.

### Bilingual Education Students

The District may designate dual language Choice Schools as cluster sites for neighborhood schools to provide bilingual education services to students identified as English Language Learners (ELL) or having limited English proficiency (LEP) per District guidelines (see **SAISD Administrative Procedure E1**). Cluster students do not have to apply for entry into the Choice School. They will have the option to attend the Choice School or their neighborhood campus. The Bilingual/ESL & Migrant Department will collaborate with the OAES to assign which neighborhood schools will be clustered to the dual language Choice Schools.

ELLs and LEP students from the cluster schools will fill seats set aside for Spanish speakers in the dual language campuses. They may be accepted for enrollment into the dual language Choice School at any point throughout the year, regardless of seat availability. A signed parent consent form must be completed at the home school prior to the student entering the cluster school. Parent consent forms should be placed in the student's Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) folder and a copy sent to the OAES.

**Language Identification.** To determine language dominance, all students applying for dual language Choice Schools and Programs will be administered language proficiency assessments. The assessments will not be used for admissions or to rank applicants by levels of language proficiency. Assessments will be administered by the Bilingual/ESL & Migrant Department and are required only to identify the applicant's dominant language to ensure appropriate language placement in the application process.

A student will be flagged as "Spanish dominant" using the following criteria:

1. The assessment score in Spanish is higher than the score in English (i.e., Spanish = 2/English = 1)  
OR
2. The assessment score in Spanish is 3 or higher, regardless of score in English (i.e., Spanish = 4/English = 5).

The application will be placed in the lottery according to the language dominance identified by the assessment. Students that have not completed the language assessment prior to the lottery will be flagged in the lottery according to the language identified on the application.

### Special Education Students

Special education students may apply for entry into Choice Schools and Programs during the designated application window. Students will not be asked to identify their needs until after acceptance into a Choice School or Program. Prior to confirming their enrollment into a Choice School or Program, families whose students have a 504 or an Individualized Education Program (IEP) are encouraged to schedule a meeting with campus leadership and the Special Education department to determine the level of support their student would have at the campus. For

example, for students accepted into an Early College High School, special education supports at the college level may differ from the District. Upon enrollment in a Choice School or Program, all students identified as having special needs will follow the District Special Education Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) process to identify needed services and appropriate campus to receive services. If the ARD committee identifies a campus other than the Choice School or Program as the appropriate SAISD setting, the family will have to complete the Special Education process formally denying services as outlined in the IEP if they wish to remain enrolled at the Choice School or Program.

Unfilled seats of special education units at Choice Schools and Programs, such as the Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD), will be filled through the waitlist and backfilling process (see section **VII. WAITLISTS AND BACKFILLING**). A separate waitlist will be maintained for the specialized unit. The District's Special Education Department may refer families to the OAES to be added to the appropriate waitlists.

#### *Entry into Alternative Choice Schools or Programs*

The OAES will collaborate with campus administration of alternative Choice Schools or campuses with alternative Choice Programs to determine guidelines and procedures for enrolling students into the alternative pathway. The enrollment procedure will be supervised by the OAES to ensure compliance with District policy and TEA guidelines. The procedure will include 1) how eligible students will be identified in collaboration with the Accountability, Research, Evaluation, & Testing Department and 2) how invitations and notifications will be sent. Students must accept the offer to be enrolled into the alternative pathway through the identified procedure; administrative placement and the in-district transfer process may not be utilized to enroll students into alternative Choice Programs or Schools. Alternative Choice Schools and Programs may have a rolling admissions process in order to maintain full enrollment at the campus and provide opportunity for qualifying students to enter the program as needed.

#### *Receiving an Offer*

When a student receives an offer, students cannot be denied enrollment after accepting an offer due to academic, behavior, or attendance record. If a student is academically behind, the Choice School or Program is obligated to provide supports and interventions to ensure the student's success within the program.

For offers made to students in high school grades, especially grades 10-12, the campus is obligated to provide the options available to the student regarding the specific programmatic, intervention, and acceleration components that can be completed based on previous credits earned. At minimum, students will be afforded the opportunity to obtain a diploma in the same way that any currently enrolled student considered at-risk or academically behind would be given. It is the family's decision whether or not to accept the offer for their student based on the opportunities and supports available. For example, in an early college high school program, it is possible that an at-risk student who enters the program behind on credits or an existing student who falls academically behind may not be able to attain an associate's degree. Such students should still be afforded the programmatic, intervention, and acceleration supports needed to obtain a diploma and attain some dual credit experiences through the early college program.



### III. SIBLING PREFERENCE

Siblings will be given preference during the annual application and selection process. Siblings are defined as brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother, or step-sister. Sibling status may also be assigned to students living with the same guardian if legal custodial paperwork is presented to the District.

#### *Siblings of Currently Enrolled Students*

Sibling Priority will be given to siblings of students currently enrolled in the Choice School or Program. The priority designation only happens at the entry grade level(s) of the school or program hosted through the lottery as follows:

- PK-5 elementary schools – incoming PK and kindergarteners
- 6-8 middle schools – incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders
- 9-12 high schools – incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders
- Other grade level configurations – priority designation determined by the OAES.

The siblings must be enrolled at the school at the same time to qualify for the priority designation. For example, an incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grader will not be given sibling priority if their sibling is currently an outgoing 8<sup>th</sup> grader and will not be attending the school or participating in the program the following year.

*Sibling Lottery Seat Limit.* Seats for siblings of existing students will not exceed 25% of the aggregate number of seats available through the lottery. For example, if a campus has 20 seats available in prekindergarten and 20 seats available in kindergarten, the aggregate number of seats is 40. The number of seats available for siblings is 10 ( $40 \times .25 = 10$ ). A minimum 10 siblings will receive an offer for available seats in the example provided (see *Lottery Process*).

After conducting the lottery, if the number of siblings receiving offers exceeds the Sibling Lottery Seat Limit, then additional offers will be extended to non-siblings. For example, if a campus has 40 seats available in the lottery, the Sibling Lottery Seat Limit is 10. If 15 siblings naturally receive an offer through the lottery process, then the number of sibling offers exceed the seat limit by 5. Therefore, 5 additional offers will be made to non-siblings to balance the excess seat offers to siblings.

Siblings of students at schools that use the holistic, rubric-based selection process will receive a preference as designated within the rubric. The rubric must be approved by the OAES prior to the start of the annual application and selection window (see section **II. ENTRY INTO CHOICE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS**).

*Sibling Plus One priority.* Siblings not accepted through the selection process at their campus may be considered for enrollment above the seat count allotted for their grade level through the lottery at the principal's discretion. For example, if 20 seats were available through the lottery, the sibling may become the 21<sup>st</sup> student accepted. Principals need to provide documentation of their preference for sibling acceptance to the OAES prior to the opening of the annual application and selection process window according to the designated timeline.

### Siblings Entering the Lottery at the Same Time

If siblings apply to enter the same Choice School or Program for the same school year, sibling preference will be given if one sibling is accepted through the lottery and the other is placed on the waitlist, regardless of grade level for which they are applying. Waitlisted siblings will automatically be pulled into the school only during the initial lottery. If both siblings are placed on the waitlist, when one student is accepted, the other sibling is not automatically accepted.

## **IV. STUDENTS OF SAISD EMPLOYEES**

Employees of the District are eligible to apply for all Choice Schools and Programs regardless of in-district or out-of-district residency status. District employees who identify themselves within the application will be categorized as “In District” for all selection processes unless otherwise requested by the employee.

Full-time employees at Choice Schools or at campuses with Choice Programs can enroll their students into the Choice School or Program at their campus of employment. A full-time employee is defined as a person who directly reports to the principal of the campus itself. If an employee is already working at the campus during the enrollment period, the employee should apply for entry through the established application and selection process. Employees’ students not accepted through the selection process for their campus may be considered for enrollment above the seat count allotted through the lottery at the principal’s discretion. This includes students of full-time employees hired after the annual application and selection process window closes. For example, if the employee’s student entered the lottery for a grade with 20 available seats and was not accepted, the student may become the 21<sup>st</sup> student accepted into the grade. Principals need to provide documentation of their preference to the OAES prior to the opening of the annual application and selection process window according to the designated timeline.

## **V. OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENTS**

Students residing outside of SAISD boundaries may apply for entry into Choice Schools and Programs through the annual application and selection process. The OAES, in collaboration with campus leadership teams, determines the percentage of seats set aside for out-of-district students prior to the opening of the application window. For neighborhood campuses with Choice Programs, no more than thirty percent (30%) of seats may be set aside for out-of-district students for each incoming cohort. For Choice Schools, no more than fifty percent (50%) of seats may be set aside for out-of-district students for each incoming cohort. If in-district waitlists have been exhausted, then the District will consider allowing additional out of district students to fill empty seats.

## VI. NOTIFICATION AND CONFIRMING/DECLINING OF SEATS

### Notification

The timeline for status notification will be established by the OAES prior to the annual application and selection process. After lotteries are conducted and selection committees make their final determinations, the OAES will notify applicants in the following ways: mail, email, text, and/or phone. Accepted families are notified at least three times regarding the deadline for confirming or declining their seat. All points of contact will be documented via the District's online enrollment platform. Families that do not confirm their seat by the designated deadline forfeit their seat. If they would still like the opportunity to attend the school, they may be added to the end of the appropriate waitlist by request.

### Receiving an Offer

When a student receives an offer, students cannot be denied enrollment after accepting an offer due to academic, behavior, or attendance record. If a student is academically behind, the Choice School or Program is obligated to provide supports and interventions to ensure the student's success within the program.

For offers made to students in high school grades, especially grades 10-12, the campus is obligated to provide the options available to the student regarding the specific programmatic, intervention, and acceleration components that can be completed based on previous credits earned. At minimum, students will be afforded the opportunity to obtain a diploma in the same way that any currently enrolled student considered at-risk or academically behind would be given. It is the family's decision whether or not to accept the offer for their student based on the opportunities and supports available. For example, in an early college high school program, it is possible that an at-risk student who enters the program behind on credits or an existing student who falls academically behind may not be able to attain an associate's degree. Such students should still be afforded the programmatic, intervention, and acceleration supports needed to obtain a diploma and attain some dual credit experiences through the early college program.

### Confirming/Declining of Seats

Families may confirm or decline their seat via the online platform, phone, email, or text message to the OAES. A student may elect at any time to attend their home campus instead of the Choice School or Program. The parent/guardian should notify the OAES of their decision as soon as possible to allow the vacated seat to be filled by the waitlist (see section **VII. WAITLISTS AND BACKFILLING**).

Families may reclaim their declined seat for a Choice School or Program prior to the confirmation deadline. After the confirmation deadline, families may not reclaim their declined seat but may request to be added to the end of the waitlist.

## VII. WAITLISTS AND BACKFILLING

### Waitlists

A waitlist for each entry level grade will be generated by the same online platform conducting the lottery. Families wishing to enter the school through non-entry level grades should submit an application through the online platform and will be accepted pending space availability. The OAES will make acceptance notifications on an ongoing basis up to the closing of the enrollment window.

When a seat becomes available, families will be contacted multiple times to accept or decline their seat (see section **VI. NOTIFICATION AND CONFIRMING/DECLINING OF SEATS**). These points of contact are combined efforts of the OAES and the campus and will be documented via the online platform.

Families accepted from the initial lottery will be provided a designated period of time to make a decision. Families accepted from the waitlist after the initial round of offers will be given a more limited number of business days to decide. Students accepted from the waitlist to a Choice School or Program after the start of the school year need to complete the district withdrawal process from their current school in order to complete registration at the Choice School or Program.

Waitlists for campuses with multiple entry level grades (i.e., PK3, PK4, and kindergarten) will only begin to roll over at the final entry level grade. For example, for a campus that accepts new students at both PK4 and kindergarten, the PK4 waitlist will not roll over, but the kindergarten waitlist will. After kindergarten, families do not apply for entry through the lottery process but through the backfilling procedure.

### Backfilling

Choice Schools and Programs must be financially sustainable and maintain staffing formulas. Therefore, to maintain enrollment levels, the OAES will backfill grades each year as needed through one week prior to the PEIMS snapshot. Backfilling occurs across grade levels pending model academic needs. For example, dual language programs may only backfill seats for English-dominant speakers through second grade in light of best practice and research associated with language acquisition for third grade and beyond, but will continue backfilling seats for Spanish speakers for every grade level. Early college high schools may only backfill through 10<sup>th</sup> grade due to the college requirements that need to be fulfilled prior to 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Seats becoming available for backfilling will be filled utilizing the waitlists generated by the entry grade level's lottery. The waitlist rolls over each year with the cohort until either all students on the list are offered a seat or it reaches the grade level at which backfilling will be closed. Families wishing to enter the campus at a non-entry grade level submit an application through the online platform to be added to the waitlist on a first-come, first-served basis.

If a waitlist needs to be generated for a Choice School or Program outside of the lottery process for a non-lottery grade, the OAES will create a new list according to the following guidelines:

1. The OAES will establish a window within which siblings of current students can receive priority placement on the waitlist on a first-come, first-served basis.
2. Following the designated sibling window, waitlists will be opened to the general public on a first-come, first-served basis.

### Receiving an Offer

When a student receives an offer from the waitlist, the campus is obligated to provide the options available to the student based on what can be completed academic record. At minimum, students will be afforded the opportunity to obtain a diploma in the same way that any currently enrolled student considered at-risk or academically behind would be given that opportunity. It is the family's decision whether or not to accept the offer, based on the opportunities available. Student cannot be denied enrollment after accepting an offer due to academic, behavior, or attendance record. If a student is academically behind, the Choice School or Program is obligated to provide supports and interventions to ensure the student's success within the program. For example, in an early college high school program, it is possible that a student may not be able to attain an associate's degree, but they will be able to obtain a diploma and dual credit experiences.

## **VIII. EXITING OR EXPULSION FROM A CHOICE SCHOOL OR PROGRAM**

Students accepted to Choice Schools and Programs through the application and selection process become part of the school community at their respective campuses and have the same expectations as neighborhood students. They are not considered transfer students and should not be evaluated according to the district transfer procedure.

### Voluntary Family-Initiated Exit

Students may self-select to leave the Choice School or Program through voluntary circumstances if the family determines the program offerings are not the best fit for their student. An exit form must be completed by the family and submitted to the campus and OAES documenting the reason for exit. Students may leave at the end of the grading period but are encouraged to complete the year and return to their home campus for the following academic year. Students exiting a Choice Program at a neighborhood school may return to their home campus or complete the year at the host campus. High school students leaving Choice Schools or Programs will not be eligible to participate in UIL varsity competition upon returning to their home campus for one calendar year (see section **X. UIL ELIGIBILITY FOR VARSITY PARTICIPATION**). Families wishing to re-enter the Choice School or Program after self-selecting to leave may follow the procedures according to section **II. ENTRY INTO CHOICE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS**.

### Non-Voluntary Family-Initiated Exit

Students may self-select to leave the Choice School or Program through non-voluntary circumstances which includes but is not limited to removal by a state agency, assigned military orders, or medical restrictions of the immediate family. An exit form must be completed by the family or the campus and submitted to the campus and the OAES documenting the exit. Families may request to re-enter the Choice School or Program if their non-voluntary circumstances

change. The OAES will determine if students may be considered for enrollment above the seat count for the students' appropriate grade.

*School-Initiated Exit by Campuses without Academic Entry Requirements*

For campuses without academic entry requirements, a student shall not be exited from the Choice School or Program unless the student commits an offense requiring mandatory expulsion according to the *SAISD Code of Conduct*. The campus needs to notify the OAES immediately if following ***SAISD Administrative Procedure F-41*** for expulsion of any enrolled student. In the case of mandatory expulsions, principals have the discretion to allow the student to return to the Choice School after fulfilling their consequence. Students that return to their home school may apply for entry into another Choice School or Program through the annual application and selection window for which he or she fits the criteria. For example, a student exited by a campus from a middle school Choice Program will still be eligible to qualify for entry into a high school Choice Program.

*School-Initiated Exit by Campuses with Academic Entry Requirements*

For Choice Schools and Programs with academic entry requirements, a student may be exited from the Choice School or Program if the student commits an offense requiring mandatory expulsion according to the *SAISD Code of Conduct*. The campus needs to notify the OAES immediately if following ***SAISD Administrative Procedure F-41*** for expulsion of any enrolled student. In the case of mandatory expulsions, principals have the discretion to allow the student to return to the Choice School after fulfilling their consequence. Students that return to their home school may apply for entry into another Choice School or Program through the annual application and selection window for which he or she fits the criteria. For example, a student exited by a campus from a middle school Choice Program will still be eligible to qualify for entry into a high school Choice Program.

A student at a Choice School or Program with academic entry requirements may also be exited if not fulfilling established academic and/or behavioral expectations. School-initiated exits occur at the end of the academic year; campuses may not initiate exits during the school year. Campus leadership teams must establish academic and/or behavioral expectations upon enrollment, as approved by the OAES, prior to the annual application and selection window. Expectations must comply with District policy and TEA guidelines, and families must be made aware of expectations prior to enrolling at the campus. If the student does not maintain the established criteria for academic or behavioral performance, documented interventions must be provided by the campus to build the capacity of students to reach their full potential. Campuses must provide documentation to the OAES at the end of the third nine weeks regarding which students may potentially be exited. At the end of the school year, students who do not fulfill the expectations and have received appropriate interventions may be exited and returned to their home campus for the next school year. Final determination of student exit must be approved by the OAES by the last day of school.

## IX. TRANSPORTATION

Students living within SAISD boundaries that are accepted into Choice Schools and Programs are eligible for transportation according to District guidelines (see *SAISD Policy CNA(Legal)*). Out-of-district students accepted into Choice Schools and Programs are not guaranteed transportation per District guidelines.

## X. UIL ELIGIBILITY FOR VARSITY PARTICIPATION

Students enrolling into Choice Schools and Programs outside of their home school according to their address of residence, but live within SAISD boundaries, are eligible for varsity athletics if the student enters at the first opportunity. First opportunity is defined as the entry point the student could have entered the Choice School or Program. For example, for a Choice Program that begins at ninth grade, the ninth grade year is considered the first opportunity. Out-of-district students are not eligible for varsity athletics for their first year.

Waitlisted students will be eligible to participate in varsity athletics for the upcoming school year if they were accepted by the last day of school according to the District's calendar. Students accepted from the waitlist after the last day of school will not be eligible to participate in varsity athletic competitions for one calendar year. For example, a student who resides within SAISD boundaries and was accepted from the waitlist on May 30 is still eligible to participate in varsity athletic competitions for the upcoming academic year. A student who was accepted from the waitlist to enter the Choice School on August 1 will be ineligible to participate in varsity athletic competitions for one year. The OAES will submit all Choice Schools and Programs enrollment lists to the Athletic Department on the first business day after the last day of school.

If a student exits a Choice School or Program and returns to their home school or transfers to another SAISD school, the student is ineligible for varsity athletic competition until the student has been enrolled and regularly attended that school for at least one calendar year.

## XI. EQUITY AUDIT

After families confirm acceptances, the OAES may conduct equity audits to ensure that enrollment within Choice Schools and Programs have balanced representation as required by an academic model and to ensure that historically disadvantaged students are proportionately represented. This can include factoring for demographics such as gender, language, at-risk status, or socioeconomic status. If specific thresholds are not met after confirmed acceptances are received from families, the OAES may add seats and/or pull waitlisted students from the underrepresented group(s) to establish the necessary representation.

Equity audit categories include but are not limited to the following:

- **TEA Criteria:** Criteria refers to specific guidelines issued by the Texas Education Agency associated with particular academic models and schools, such as Early College high school, P-Tech, or students attending or zoned to Comprehensive and Targeted Support Schools. Equity audits will be conducted to ensure TEA Criteria are fulfilled. For

example, all Early College high schools must follow the TEA Blueprint for enrollment which outlines required demographic levels for each campus.

- ***District Criteria:*** In SAISD, equity audits are conducted to ensure two socioeconomic criteria are maintained: 1) particular Choice Schools enroll a minimum of 25% Block 3 and Block 4 students and 2) all Choice Schools maintain enrollments of 50% or more economically disadvantaged students.
- ***Model Criteria:*** Equity audits may be utilized to fulfill best practice recommendations of academic models. For example, dual language campuses will strive to follow an enrollment of 50% English-dominant speakers and 50% Spanish-dominant speakers.

### *Socioeconomic Blocks*

Equity audits that balance for socioeconomic status will utilize Socioeconomic Blocks to ensure students from the most disadvantaged neighborhoods are represented at Choice Schools and Programs. The OAES will collaborate with the Accountability, Research, Evaluation, & Testing Department to establish Socioeconomic Blocks through the following formula:

1. Four socioeconomic factors taken directly from Census data will be identified for each Census block group level in the District and outside the District. All identified factors correlate with student achievement:
  - a. Median Household Income;
  - b. Percent of Home Ownership;
  - c. Percent of Single-Parent Households;
  - d. Adult Educational Attainment.
2. Block groups will be ranked in each category to obtain a score, and the scores from each category will be added to create a Socioeconomic Score. Socioeconomic Block 1 will represent the most affluent areas in the District; Socioeconomic Block 4 will represent the least affluent areas in the District.

### **References: Board Policy(ies) [FDB](#)**

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*Questions regarding this procedure should be addressed to:*

**Office of Innovation**

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