



## **SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **Administrative Procedures**

#### **CHOICE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS ADMISSIONS & 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 timelines 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.

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 the application window are considered for the lottery. It is not a firstcome, 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 11th 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 F-51: CHOICE SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Page 7 of 16 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.