

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



SCHOOL CHOICE ENROLLMENT PROGRAM *SCHOOL YEAR 2020-2021*

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Definitions

“Receiving Local Education Agency” (Receiving LEA) is defined in 14 Del.C., §402(5) and includes all Delaware public school districts, charter schools, and career and technical education schools.

“Receiving District” is defined in 14 Del.C., §402(4) and includes only the 16 reorganized Delaware public school districts (charter schools and career and technical education schools are not included).

School Choice Timeline

Public Information Meeting

By October 31st – The receiving district, no later than October 31st each year, shall hold at least one public information meeting outlining choice opportunities available for the coming school year within their receiving district’s schools and programs.

Capacity Meeting

By November 30th – The receiving district board is required to notify the DDOE no later than November 30 of each year the capacity of each school in the receiving district for the following academic year along with the projected enrollment for the following academic year. Receiving districts have until January 30 each year to revise the notice of capacity and projected enrollment originally report to the DDOE.

Open Enrollment Period for Application Submission

On or after the first Monday in November and on or before the second Wednesday in January a parent of a school age child may apply to enroll that parent’s own child in a school or program in an RECEIVING LEA by submitting a written application, on a standard form provided by the DDOE, to the DDOE and/or RECEIVING LEA and to the district of residence for enrollment during the following school year. Charter schools, vocational-technical school districts, and magnet schools may continue to accept applications after the second Wednesday in January to fill remaining availability; however, those holding a lottery, will include applications received by the second Wednesday in January.

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Before second Wednesday in January – The receiving district shall adopt and make available their choice policy prior to the applicable application deadline. The receiving district's policy shall seek to eliminate discrimination against choice students by: (1) allowing the receiving district to request supplemental application information from choice students only to the extent it requires the same information from attendance zone (resident school) students; (2) limiting the supplemental criteria a receiving district may use to evaluate choice applications—after that, a lottery system must be used; and (3) removing the provision that allows an receiving district to reject applications of students with special needs.

Enrollment After the Deadline

Good Cause - The parent of a school age child may submit the standard application form after the deadline if “good cause” as defined in 14 Del.C., §402(2) exists. The Receiving LEA and district of residence shall accept and consider the application in the same manner as those application submitted by the deadline. The board of the receiving local education agency shall take action to approve or disapprove the application filed in accordance with the provisions of 14 Del.C., §403(b) no later than 45 days after receipt thereof, unless the application is received prior to a lottery conducted as outlined in a local education agency's enrollment policy in the case of over-enrollment.

Up until the first day of the school year – A parent enrolling their child in kindergarten may submit the standard application form to the receiving LEA up until the first day of the school year for enrollment in kindergarten during that school year.

Charter schools, vocational-technical school districts, and magnet schools may accept applications after the second Wednesday in January to fill remaining availability.

Withdrawing an Application

A parent of a school age child may withdrawal their application at any time prior to action taken by the receiving LEA board. The parent shall give written notice to the board(s) of the receiving LEA and the child's district of residence.

Standard Application Processing

Applications received by the DDOE

The DDOE shall disseminate all standard written application forms to receiving LEAs no later than 10 working days after the application deadline of the second Wednesday in January.

Applications received by a receiving LEA

The receiving LEA has 10 working days after the application deadline of the second

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Wednesday in January to inform the applicant's district of residence that an application has been received.

No later than the last day of February of the school year preceding enrollment

The receiving LEA board will approve or disapprove applications for admission to a program in grades 1 through 12.

No later than June 15 of the school year preceding enrollment

The receiving LEA board will approve or disapprove applications for admission to kindergarten. Charter schools, vocational-technical school districts, and magnet schools may act on applications accepted in accordance with the provisions of 14 Del.C., §403(a) to fill remaining availability.

No later than 45 days after receipt of the applicable application

For standard written applications received by a receiving LEA after the deadline of the second Wednesday in January with "good cause", the receiving LEA board shall approve or disapprove the application no later than 45 days after receipt of the application unless the application is received prior to a lottery conducted as outlined in the receiving LEA's enrollment policy in the case of over-enrollment.

It is recommended that a parent should not sign a first year charter school agreement until the parent has made a final decision to accept the receiving LEA's offer and notified the receiving LEA board in writing pursuant to 14 Del.C., §404(e).

After receiving LEA Board meets

The receiving LEA board within 5 working days shall notify the parent and the child's district of residence the board's final decision.

No later than the third Friday in March – A parent who applied for the child shall notify the receiving LEA board in writing no later than the third Friday in March whether the offer is accepted or rejected.

Receiving LEA Policy Adoption

Pursuant to 14 Del.C., §404(c), each receiving LEA shall accept applications, in a manner consistent with the policy adopted until there is a lack of capacity in each school and program. Students who meet the receiving LEA's criteria for acceptance in the policy but who are not selected due to a lack of capacity in the school or program shall be placed on a ranked waiting list maintained by the receiving LEA until the first day of the receiving LEA's school year for which they applied. A receiving LEA may disapprove an application due to lack of capacity in accordance with 14 Del.C., §404(d).

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A receiving LEA shall adopt and make available a policy regarding the order in which standard applications for enrollment pursuant to 14 Del.C., Chapter 4 shall be considered and the criteria by which such standard applications shall be evaluated.

Application Selection

Each district/charter establishes their own policy for accepting or rejecting applications, but include priorities for acceptance established by Delaware Law.

- First priority – Returning students to a school or program
- Second priority – Students in the feeder pattern
- Third priority – Siblings of reenrolling students

Districts/charters MAY then prioritize:

- Students who live within the district, but are not within the feeder pattern
- Students who are children of school employees

Remaining student applications are picked by a lottery process.