

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: PETITION TRANSFER PROCESS**

Recently the School Board modified the Enrollment & Transfer policy (4.10.051-P) changing the transfer process between neighborhood schools from a lottery to a petition process. The Enrollment and Transfer Center (ETC) manages petitions and can answer questions at 503-916-3205. Here are some of the most common questions and answers regarding the petition process. Additional information is at [www.pps.net/schoolchoice](http://www.pps.net/schoolchoice).

1. **Q:** I want my child to transfer to a different school. Should I use a petition request form or lottery application?

**A:** You should use a lottery application if you are interested in transferring your child to a focus option, that is, a school or program structured around a unique curriculum, such as language immersion. Learn about focus option requirements, lottery preference and space availability [here](#).

If you are interested in transferring your child to a neighborhood school, or into a focus option grade level not available through the lottery, you should use the petition request form.

If you are interested in applying to more than one school, please indicate your order of preference on your petition request form. If you do not indicate a preference, we will consider your petition request as your first choice.

2. **Q:** Lottery applications have to be in by a deadline. What is the deadline for petitions?

**A:** Families can petition at any time if they feel their student is experiencing an extraordinary circumstance that could be improved through transfer to another school. However, since space is limited at most schools, families seeking transfer for the 2015-16 school year should petition as soon as possible. Petitions received during the lottery cycle will be answered at the same time as lottery applications.

3. **Q:** Siblings have preference in the focus option lottery. Do siblings also receive preference for petition requests to neighborhood schools?

**A:** Yes. Co-enrolled siblings are considered a high priority reason for transfer through the petition process. However, approval is subject to space availability and is not guaranteed.

4. **Q:** Are there other priority reasons for transfer?

**A:** ETC staff will consider all reasons for transfer. Some students are guaranteed a transfer, such as those requesting to return to their neighborhood school or who have been given guaranteed-status by the school board. Students transferring due to overcrowding at their current school are likely to be approved, so long as there is space at the grade level they are requesting.

Additional reasons most likely to be approved (if space is available) including evidence of a threat or hardship affecting the student's health, safety or educational development. Family

convenience issues, such as enrolling students close to childcare providers and workplaces are considered, as well. Reasons that are least likely to be approved are those that cannot be verified by school staff, and those that are based on generalized impressions of a school's curriculum and environment.

5. **Q:** Who decides if my petition will be approved?

**A:** All petitions are reviewed by at least three staff members in the ETC and at the schools in question. The ETC director decides whether or not to grant a petition. If your petition is denied, you can appeal the decision to a Senior Director in the Office of School Performance.

6. **Q:** Do I need to submit letters of recommendation and other evidence of my child's hardship?

**A:** Generally, supporting documentation is not needed as part of a petition request. ETC staff will contact you or school staff directly if additional information is needed.

If you are requesting transfer for a co-enrolled sibling, you only need to provide the name and student number of the attending sibling. ETC staff will confirm the child attends the requested school, and will contact you with any questions.

For other reasons, ETC may ask you to provide additional documentation. ETC staff will also contact school staff, including principals, counselors and teachers, for feedback. Depending on the reason for transfer, we may consult staff from other departments, such as Special Education or Dual Language Immersion, as well as caseworkers, court-appointed advocates, parole officers and other public agency staff with information about the student.

7. **Q:** How do you determine space availability for petition requests?

**A:** Once a petition reason is verified, ETC staff works with the principal of a requested school to determine whether space is available for transfer. Generally, if class-size at the requested grade level is below the district average the request will be granted. However, there are other considerations that weigh into the decision, such as the overall enrollment of the school, the capacity to support students with special needs or the distribution of students in language immersion programs by native language.

8. **Q:** How long does it take to decide a petition transfer request?

**A:** The answer depends on the volume of petitions and the complexity of the situation. Some petitions can be decided within one week, while other may take several weeks. ETC placement specialists will provide regular updates to families who have petitioned for mid-year transfer when the request is not resolved within one week of submission.