



Student Transfers

I) Introduction

Student transfers are accessible to all resident students in district schools and programs through a fair, equitable and consistent process. The district is committed to furthering student achievement, culturally relevant practices, and diversity in admissions that support the Racial Educational Equity Policy (2.10.010-P). The process includes a lottery cycle for transferring into some grades of focus option schools and programs, and a year-round petition request for all other schools and grade levels. This directive also includes transfers initiated by the district when necessary for students to access appropriate services.

The District will provide families and students with information that will enable them to make informed decisions about their choice of educational options. This directive does not apply to nonresident students, alternative education placements, pre-kindergarten admissions, or charter school admissions. All procedural handbooks and guidelines for this administrative directive are available at the district's Enrollment and Transfer Center (ETC) and schools.

II) Definitions

(1) School and program terms

- (a) Neighborhood school. A school serving a designated attendance area and as defined in 6.10.022-P.
- (b) Transfer school. The school to which a student has transferred.
- (c) Enrolled school. The school a student is currently attending.
- (d) Focus option. A school or program of a school structured around a unique curriculum or particular theme and as defined in 6.10.022-P.
- (e) Continuing program. A program that continues from one school grade grouping to the next, often in different school buildings. For example a K-12 language immersion program begins in an elementary school for the K-5 grades, and then continues to a middle school in a different building for the 6-8 grades. Students in continuing programs are pre-approved to continue to the next grade grouping.
- (f) Open Enrollment program. A new or growing focus option school or program that remains open to transfer after the lottery transfer cycle closes. The Superintendent or designee will approve all open enrollment programs, application processes and deadlines annually.



Student Transfers

- (g) School grade grouping. Refers to different school levels: elementary, middle and high school. Elementary schools may begin at PK or K and end at 5th grade or 8th grade. Middle schools contain grades 6-8, and high schools are grades 9-12.
 - (h) Direct Certification. A process conducted by states and by local educational agencies to certify eligible children for free meals without the need for household applications.
 - (i) Non-binary. A term that refers to people who identify outside of or beyond the gender binary of man and woman.
- (2) Student and family terms.
- (a) Siblings. Children with the same parent or supervising adult living together at the same address.
 - (b) Co-enrolled siblings. Siblings who will be enrolled in the same school at the same time. For students applying to focus option programs at schools with multiple programs, co-enrolled sibling status will be assigned at the program, not school, level.
 - (c) Linked siblings. Siblings applying for transfer to the same school and same grade for the same school year. Such siblings may be linked under one student/family number in the lottery so that families have the same outcome for their children who are requesting a transfer.
 - (d) Supervising adult. An adult in a parental relationship as defined in 4.10.047-AD. Supervisory adult status is confirmed by the ETC.
 - (e) Articulating students. Students transitioning from one school grade grouping to the next. For example, fifth graders in elementary school preparing for sixth grade in middle school; eighth graders in middle school preparing for ninth grade in high school.
 - (f) Transfer student. A district student attending a school other than his/her neighborhood school.
 - (g) Resident student. A student who is a resident of the Portland Public School District.
- (3) Admission and transfer terms.
- (a) Transfer. A formal request by a resident family for a student to attend a school or program other than his/her neighborhood school or to return to his/her neighborhood school from a transfer school. Lottery transfer requests must be submitted by the annual transfer deadline to be considered. Petition transfer requests may be submitted at any time. Transfers are approved to the highest grade of the school where the student transfers.



Student Transfers

- (b) Lottery transfer cycle. The period of time in which families may request a student transfer to a focus-option school or program for the following school year by submitting a Focus Option Lottery Application.
- (c) Lottery. A centralized computer software based system that determines student assignment and generates wait lists. The lottery process includes admission preferences and equity and diversity factors aimed at eliminating barriers to educational attainment and improving student achievement, as provided in Policy 4.10.051-P Student Enrollment and Transfers.
- (d) Petition transfer. A request by the student/family to transfer to a neighborhood school. Petitions are also used to request transfer to focus option grade levels not available during the lottery cycle and all focus option grade levels after the lottery transfer cycle has closed. Petition transfers are considered for students and families only if there are extraordinary circumstances.
- (e) Extraordinary circumstances. The basis for granting or denying petition transfers. They include urgent family situations or situations that pose imminent health, safety or serious educational concerns for the student. A list of typical reasons for petition transfer requests is available on the ETC website.
- (f) Weighted factors. Factors included in the lottery to ensure that all schools reflect the diversity of the district. Changes to weighted factors require school board approval.

III) Student Transfer Admissions

- (1) All resident families have the right to request a student transfer to a school or program other than their own designated neighborhood school.
 - (a) Students on transfer wishing to return to their neighborhood school must submit a petition transfer request. Requests received during the lottery transfer cycle will be granted for the following school year. Requests received at other times require a verified reason and space availability for approval.
- (2) The deadline for open enrollment at new or growing focus option schools or programs may be later than the standard Focus Option Lottery deadline.
- (3) Length of transfer. Transfer students may remain in a school or program to the highest grade of the school or program. Upon completion of the highest grade of the school or program, students are enrolled in their neighborhood feeder pattern school unless they apply for and are granted a transfer to a different school or program.



Student Transfers

- (a) Exception: Students enrolled in a program that continues from elementary to middle school and/or middle school to high school are pre-approved to continue without submission of a School Choice Application.
- (4) Alternative Education Options. If a transfer student leaves a school to enroll in an alternative school, they may return to the transfer school during the same school year. This applies to an expelled student who was placed in an alternative program for the period of expulsion.
- (5) Break in Attendance. If a student stops attending a school or is dropped for non-attendance after ten consecutive days (OAR 581-023-0006(4)(b)) during the school year without enrolling in another school or program, the student may return to the transfer school during that school year. However, if the student does not return to the transfer school during that school year, the transfer is no longer valid for the subsequent years and the student must return to the neighborhood school or request a new transfer. If the student completes a school year but does not return during the first ten days of the subsequent school year, the transfer is no longer valid and the student must return to the neighborhood school or request a petition transfer.
- (6) District-Initiated Transfers
 - (a) Special education. In order to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities, those students may be assigned to specialized program services outside of their neighborhood school.
 - (i) Students with disabilities who receive services outside of their neighborhood school due to a district-initiated transfer and no longer need those services will be allowed to remain at the transfer school through the highest grade.
 - (b) Students in special education and students eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may request a transfer to another school in the District. In order to be approved, the requested transfer must meet both of the following criteria:
 - (i) The requested transfer must meet District guidelines for student transfers including the lottery process, as described in this administrative directive; and
 - (ii) The requested transfer must not deny the student a free appropriate public education (FAPE)
 - (c) Placement by English as a Second Language (ESL) Department. Students who qualify for ESL services may be placed in schools outside of their neighborhood attendance areas.



Student Transfers

- (i) Students requiring ESL services may be offered placement in a school other than their neighborhood school by the ESL Department, based on student's needs and service availability at the neighborhood school.
- (ii) Students no longer requiring language services outside of their neighborhood school will be allowed to remain at the transfer school through the highest grade.

IV) Focus Option Lottery

- (1) Lottery Application. The ETC shall develop a lottery application for focus option school and program admissions that will be widely available to schools and families during the lottery transfer cycle.
 - (a) The Focus Option Lottery Application shall include space for families to provide the following:
 - (i) Student and family information
 - (ii) Sibling information
 - (iii) Up to three school or program choices
 - (iv) The application will also include a brief explanation of the required school-year commitment and the deadline.
 - (b) All students requesting a transfer to a focus option are required to submit a Focus Option Lottery Application by the deadline to be considered in the lottery. The deadline shall be posted on the district's web site and widely publicized in other district communications.
 - (c) Students enrolled in continuing programs such as language immersion programs who wish to continue to the next school grade grouping (middle or high school) of the program are not required to submit a Focus Option Lottery Application.
- (2) Admission requirements for focus options. Focus option schools and programs may have admission requirements for lottery applications, so long as the requirements are the same for all applicants.
 - (a) Requirements may include attendance at informational meetings, completion of statements of understandings or student essays and/or submission of school registration packets within a set timeframe after lottery results have been announced.
 - (b) Information about admission requirements will be available at schools and on the district website. Any focus option with admission requirements must provide multiple opportunities for families to complete the requirements.
 - (c) Families who do not meet requirements will forfeit approval to their requested focus option.



Student Transfers

V) Lottery Administration for Student Transfer Requests

- (1) When transfer requests exceed available spaces for focus options, the centralized lottery determines student assignment and generates wait lists. The ETC conducts all lotteries and notifies families of the results.
- (2) Lottery Information. A detailed description of all lottery preferences and weights will be available on the district's website during the transfer cycle.
- (3) Preferences. The lottery allows for preferences in the following order:
 - (a) Students continuing from their previous school grade grouping if required by the focus option plan of operations.
 - (b) Students required by state or federal law or other District policy to receive priority.
 - (c) A student whose sibling is enrolled at the same time in the student's first choice focus option.
 - (d) Students who qualify to receive free and reduced-price meals or attend a Head Start Pre-kindergarten program, in a proportion corresponding to a district-wide average. The preference will occur at focus options where the rate of enrolled students in the school who qualify for free and reduced-price meals through direct certification is lower than the district-wide average.
 - (e) Resident students who have submitted an on-time lottery transfer request.
- (4) Weighted factors. A weighted factor for gender is included in the focus option lottery. Gender balance is measured by a school's current percentage of boys and girls with the District's overall percentage. Students who improve the gender balance at their school and non-binary students are weighted in the lottery.
- (5) Linked siblings. Siblings applying for transfer to the same school and same grade for the same school year may link their names under one student/family number in the lottery.
- (6) Early Entry. Families requesting early entry into Kindergarten or first grade must follow all of the procedures outlined in the application process on the Talented and Gifted webpage. Kindergarten early entry applicants are eligible to apply for lottery transfer if they complete a cognitive evaluation before the close of the lottery application period. If a kindergarten applicant is found non-eligible for early entry, the lottery application will be withdrawn. First grade early entry applicants must apply for kindergarten in the lottery. If the child is approved through the lottery, s/he will enter kindergarten at the requested school and once enrolled, will contact the Talented and Gifted Office to begin the early entry process into first grade.



Student Transfers

- (7) Language Immersion Program Openings. A proportion of available spaces may be allocated for native language speakers and/or for students living in the neighborhood of the school in which the program is located or the regional high school serving the program.
- (8) Notification of lottery results. The ETC will send families a letter with the results of the lottery. Families must then contact the approved transfer school for enrollment information.
 - (a) Parents may withdraw their transfer request by contacting the ETC within ten calendar days of receiving their notice. After withdrawing a transfer request, students are assigned to their currently enrolled school or neighborhood school if the student is articulating to the next grade grouping.

VI) Wait List Management for Student Transfer Requests

- (1) The centralized lottery also generates the wait list for each focus option school and program that has more applicants than spaces. The wait list is based on the same weighted factors and preferences as the lottery. Outside of the lottery, students who petition may be placed on wait lists if the ETC has verified that they have a valid reason for transfer, but there is currently no grade-appropriate space available at the requested school.
- (2) The wait list generated by the lottery shall be limited to a designated number of transfer students. The number of students allowed on any given wait list is determined by the ETC and school principal using a standard formula. As a result, a student might not be drawn from the wait list for any school he or she requested. In that case, the student is assigned to his or her neighborhood school (if articulating to the next grade grouping) or currently enrolled school.
- (3) The ETC manages and maintains all wait lists for schools and programs.
 - (a) Wait lists remain active until the 20th day of school.
 - (i) Students are expected to attend their assigned school while remaining on a wait list.
 - (ii) Students may keep an approved choice and stay on the wait list of a higher choice until the wait list expires.
 - (iii) Should an opening become available beyond the 20th school day, school and program administrators will be consulted to determine whether the space should be filled at that time or held for the following transfer cycle. If the space is to be filled at the time, families will be contacted in the order last provided by the expired wait list.



Student Transfers

- (4) Immersion programs may prioritize applicants who are English-Language Learners when filling openings that occur during the school year.

VII) Petition Transfers

A petition transfer is a request to transfer to a school other than a student's neighborhood or currently enrolled school based on extraordinary circumstances.

(1) Process for Filing a Petition Transfer

- (a) Before a Petition Transfer Form is filed by the family, the family and school staff should discuss ways to resolve the concerns and help the student and the family recommit to the enrolled school.
- (b) When a family requests a transfer for health reasons, safety reasons or an urgent family situation the ETC will expedite the process.
- (c) Students and their families initiate a petition transfer.
- (d) Petition Transfer Forms are available on-line, in schools and in the ETC.
- (e) The ETC will make available information to assist families in completing petition transfer requests, including a list of frequent reasons for transfer and a scale used to evaluate petition reasons.
 - f) ETC staff will seek input from the principal and/or other staff at the student's assigned school before deciding whether a family has presented a valid reason for transfer.
- (f) g) Reassignment. Reassignment determines the school to which a student is assigned after being granted a petition transfer. The Petition Transfer Form includes a section which asks for information to enable the ETC to consider schools for reassignment based on the family's transportation needs, desired school characteristics, and if the student wishes to return to his/her neighborhood school. Families may list up to three schools and why they consider them appropriate; however, there is no guarantee that the student will be reassigned to any of the listed schools.

(2) Petition Transfer Notification

- (a) Students remain in their enrolled school until a decision is made by the ETC to grant or deny the petition transfer request.
- (b) If the family's petition transfer is granted, the ETC shall first facilitate communication among the principal of the enrolled school and potential receiving principals. The family will receive a letter with reassignment information. The school designated for reassignment by the ETC is final.



Student Transfers

If the family refuses the assigned school, the student is expected to return to the enrolled school.

- (c) If the family's petition transfer is denied, the ETC notifies the family with a letter that explains the reason for the denial. The student remains in the enrolled school unless an appeal is filed and granted.

VIII) Appeals Process

- (1) The family may appeal the ETC's decision to deny a petition transfer by submitting a letter explaining the reason for the appeal and any additional information or documentation. An appeal may be granted on two grounds:
 - (a) Failure of the school or ETC to follow the established petition process, or
 - (b) New substantial information related to the petition transfer request.
- (2) The ETC shall forward to the Senior Director (or designee) for the enrolled school all documents related to the petition transfer, including the reason for the denial, and documentation of extraordinary circumstances.
- (3) The Senior Director or designee for the enrolled school shall review the ETC decision. The Senior Director's or designee's decision is final.
 - (a) The appeals process shall be completed within ten working days from the time the appeal is received at the ETC. The Senior Director or designee sends the written decision to the family.

Policy reference: 4.10.051-P

History: This AD number formerly was assigned to Boundary Changes, which is now 4.10.055-AD. Amd 7/2004, Amd 10/2006, Amd 4/2007; Amd 3/2009; Amd 2/2015; Amd 7/2018