

Students

Special Programs

The District may offer a variety of special programs for which students are required to meet specific entrance criteria and, once assigned, maintain minimum standards of performance and behavior. Examples include but may not be limited to: Gifted Academy, CAPA, Maria Montessori, Two-way Language Immersion, STEAM Academy, Jefferson Industrial Technology, East Sign Language and JROTC (collectively, "Special Program(s)").

These Special Programs are open to any student who is a resident student enrolled within the District or a transfer student who meets the entrance criteria established by the Special Program and this policy. Students may need to complete a program specific application and screening test as part of the entrance criteria. Students who qualify for a similar program in another school district, whether in or out-of-state, must apply to and be found eligible for the District's program; they may not be grandfathered into or given priority consideration for program entrance.

Once admitted and assigned to a Special Program, no student may be reassigned by the District absent individualized efforts by the Special Program to address factors identified as impeding the student's progress through a written, individualized intervention plan. Continuation in the Special Program is contingent upon sufficient improvement being made under the plan. No student may be removed from a Special Program for behavioral reasons alone, unless expelled in accordance with the District's Discipline Code.

However, voluntary transfers from a Special Program to the student's regular zone school, or other school as set forth in the District's Student Assignment and Intra District Transfer policy, may occur at any time upon completion of a an administrative transfer form available at the Welcome Center., Voluntary transfer requests will be considered in accordance with the District's school assignment plan provided a seat is available at the time of transfer.

Special Program entrance criteria, program expectations and supports are to be implemented in conformance with the District's policies ensuring nondiscrimination and equal educational opportunities for all.

Residents

Except as set forth below, in order to be tested and/or placed in the lottery or on a wait list for one of the District's Special Programs students must:

1. be enrolled as a resident student in one of the Rockford Public Schools; or
2. submit proof of *bona fide* residency prior to signing up for the test or prior to being placed in the lottery.

To the extent a Special Program admission criteria includes a requirement for students to submit to a specific screening test, such screening tests shall be made available to interested resident students periodically throughout the year. All screening test dates shall be advertised, including announcement

of test locations, dates and times. No student shall be screened or tested outside of the advertised testing dates and times.

Non-residents

A student who resides more than 25 miles from the District's outer boundaries and who is considering relocating his or her residence to the District may apply for admission to one of the District's Special Programs by contacting the principal of the Special Program and/or the Director of Special Programs. The District's administration shall establish criteria for considering such admissions, including without limitation the types of tests or screens to be accepted (which shall be comparable in nature to the tests and screens used with District residents) and the deadlines for submitting applications. Students who meet the entrance criteria may be placed in the lottery, but if selected must establish residency by the time of enrollment and registration/assignment. Seat space will not be held if a wait list exists.

Students who reside within 25 miles from the District's outer boundaries may apply for admission to one of the District's Special Programs provided that at the time of application they can present evidence of a genuine commitment to become District residents.

Any non-resident student admitted to any Special Program shall be required to submit proof of residency before assignment to the Special Program, in accordance with applicable District policies.

Transparency of-Entrance Criteria, Program Expectations and Support Procedures

Parents are to be provided with a copy of the entrance criteria, program expectations and support procedures at the time of application and prior to implementation of any significant change in the expectations or procedures. Program expectation and support procedures also are to be provided to parents when an intervention plan is initiated and upon request.

Administrative regulations enacting this policy shall be posted on the District's public website and made available on request to the principal of the Special Program or the Director of Special Programs. In addition, any waitlists for any of the special programs shall be maintained by the District's Welcome Center and posted on the District's public website, at the Welcome Center home page, with unique identifying numbers being assigned to each applicant-

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/10-20.5, 105 ILCS 5/10-20.12a, 105 ILCS 5/10-22.5a

CROSS REF.: 6.120, 6.130, 6.140, 6.145, 6.150, 6.160, 7.10, 7.30, 7.50, 7.60 ,

Adopted: October 8, 2013

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