

Lower Merion School District

Policy No.: 206
Section: STUDENTS
Title: ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS WITHIN THE DISTRICT
Date Adopted: 1994
Date Last Revised: 3/16/2020; 2/16/16; 12/18/06; 6/14/99; 1998

206 ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS WITHIN THE DISTRICT

The Board adopts this policy to assign students to schools within the District consistent with the appropriate education of the students and with the best use of the resources of the District.

This policy reflects the current practice of the District. Residents, present and future, need to be aware that attendance area boundaries, as well as all other aspects of this policy, are subject to change by the Board at its sole discretion, such as whenever the Board undertakes a comprehensive review of attendance areas as the result of material improvements or alterations to District facilities or when made necessary by physical constraints of District facilities.

In order to ensure that this policy continues to reflect the changing conditions within the District, the Board shall review this policy no less frequently than every five (5) years.

“Attendance areas” shall mean those sections of the District which have been established by the Board to be served by an elementary, middle or high school. The Superintendent shall promulgate administrative regulations which identify the boundaries for attendance areas. Students shall attend the schools which serve the attendance area of the District in which the student and at least one parent/guardian resides.

Attendance Area Exceptions

Students may attend a school other than the school which serves the area of the District in which they reside for the following reasons:

1. To provide an appropriate educational program for a student with disabilities when required by a student’s identified needs under federal law.
2. Except as may be necessary to maintain class size guidelines and to avoid unnecessary partner school assignments, to permit students whose parents have moved their residence to another attendance area of the District to continue in the original school for the remainder of the school year as recommended by the Superintendent or designee. Additionally, District resident students who have been in continuous attendance at a District high school may continue to attend that high school through the twelfth grade provided they continue to qualify as residents of the District. For students who qualify for an attendance area exception under this subsection, transportation to and from school shall be provided by the parents/guardians.

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3. To permit a change in attendance area for children with emotional, social, behavioral problems when recommended by a clinical team, chaired by the Superintendent's designee, based on established criteria, as reflected in Administrative Regulation, Assignment of Students Within The District- Attendance Area Exceptions, which clearly demonstrates that a change in assignment is in the best interest of the District and student. For students who qualify for an attendance area exception under this subsection, transportation to and from school shall be provided by the parents/guardians.
4. At the discretion of the Superintendent to maintain class size targets. Within ten (10) days after receiving notification from the Superintendent or designee of an assignment made pursuant to this regulation, the parent/guardian of the assigned student may appeal the decision in writing to the Board. The Board may, at its discretion, hold a conference with the parent/guardian. If such a conference is held, the parent/guardian may be present at the conference. Any decision of the Board is final and, unless specifically stated otherwise, will not constitute an adjudication under the Local Agency Law. If the Board fails to overturn the Superintendent's decision within 30 days, the Superintendent's decision shall be deemed final and, unless specifically stated otherwise, will not constitute an adjudication under the Local Agency Law. The Board shall not overturn an assignment unless it finds that the decision was exercised in an arbitrary or capricious manner. During the pendency of any consideration under this paragraph, the student will be assigned to the school assigned by the Superintendent.

High School Choice Area

Prior to the annual date set forth in Administrative Regulation, Assignment of Students Within The District- Attendance Area Boundaries, students in eighth grade who reside in the High School "Choice Area," as defined in accompanying Administrative Regulation 206-1, will have a one-time choice to attend either Harriton High School or Lower Merion High School. This choice must be made before this annual date and cannot be reversed unless the reason complies with the provisions of the "Attendance Area Exceptions" section of this policy. Students new to the public high schools and residing in the High School "Choice Area" may also exercise a one-time choice at the time of registration. Transportation to and from both high schools will be provided for students residing in the "Choice Area." Transportation to and from Harriton High School will be provided for students residing in the Choice Area.

Superintendent Responsibility

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- A. The Superintendent shall prepare and present to the Board of School Directors elementary, middle and high school attendance areas to be set forth in the Administrative Regulation, Assignment of Students Within The District- Attendance Area Boundaries.
- B. The Superintendent shall periodically review existing attendance areas and recommend to the Board of School Directors such changes as may be justified to make certain:
 1. That the students should be distributed among the elementary schools and middle schools so that the education program offerings are comparable.
 2. That the students from each elementary school should move to the same middle school.
 3. That the transportation of students to and from school can be efficiently routed and scheduled.
 4. That no illegal discrimination shall occur.
- C. The Superintendent is authorized to assign new residential communities to an attendance area or areas outside of, or otherwise different than, the attendance area boundaries established pursuant to subsection A. above. The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that the stakeholders affected by such an assignment are notified of this assignment in as timely a manner as practical under the circumstances. For purposes of this policy, "new residential communities" means communities located on properties that, as of the latest review date of Administrative Regulation, Assignment of Students Within The District- Attendance Area Boundaries, were either (1) zoned by the applicable municipality as other than as "Residence" or, (2) if zoned as "Residence," were unimproved.

Legal references:

24 P.S. §§1310, 1301, 1302
Borough of Narberth Code
Township of Lower Merion Code