

ADMISSION OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENTS

Academic Requirements

No exchange student will be admitted who has already graduated from the equivalent of the twelfth grade or who will reach the age of nineteen on or before September 15 of that school year.

Students must have average or above-average grades in school at home and must not require special education services in order to function in the regular academic program.

Students must have sufficient knowledge of the English language to enable effective oral and written communication and to function in a regular educational setting without special assistance. If an exchange student's English proficiency is found to be insufficient to function in the regular instructional program without special assistance, the exchange program must provide a tutor or make other educational arrangements for the student at their expense. If the program fails to do so, the student will be withdrawn and the representative of the exchange sponsoring organization will be notified.

The district will not provide exchange students with admission to special education programs, English as a second language programs, post-secondary options or other special programs.

Exchange students must enroll as full-time students and are expected to maintain passing grades in all classes.

General Requirements

Exchange students will be treated as regular students. They are responsible for complying with all district policies and regulations.

Exchange students are expected to pay for all lunches, books, athletics and student activity fees and other fees, yearbook costs and all other expenses normally borne by students in the district. Exchange students are not entitled to free or reduced lunch prices.

The eligibility requirements of the Colorado High School Activities Association will be followed. Accordingly, exchange students sponsored by an approved program may participate in organized sports.

The sponsor, host family and local program representative must maintain personal contact with the school, must be available and willing to meet with school personnel when problems or circumstances require and must assume full and final responsibility for resolving problems, including the early return of the student if personal, family or school difficulties cannot be resolved.

If a student's grades, attendance, conduct or discipline are deemed unsatisfactory by the school, the student may be withdrawn and the sponsoring exchange organization will be notified.

Admission Process

Approvals for admission must be obtained from the district between April 15 and May 31 for the following school year, or between October 15 and December 15 for the second semester, except under unusual circumstances.

All applications will be screened by the principal or designee of the school where admission is being requested.

The exchange student must attend the school in the attendance area in which the host family or sponsor lives, unless an appropriate transfer is approved by the district.

Upon the exchange student's arrival in the district, the adult sponsor (host family and/or local representative of the exchange program) and student must come to the school to complete the enrollment process. Exchange students must arrive in sufficient time for attendance on the first day of school.

Exchange students requesting admission must submit:

1. Birth certificate, passport or other proof of age.
2. Recent official transcript with English translation reflecting courses taken and grades earned.
3. Evidence of required immunizations.
4. The names, addresses and telephone numbers of the exchange student's own parents/guardians, the host family and the local and area exchange program representatives, as well as a 24 hour emergency telephone number for immediate assistance by the exchange organization.
5. Proof of English proficiency, including evidence that the exchange student has successfully completed a minimum of three years of instruction in English and a letter of recommendation from the English language teacher documenting the level of proficiency or evidence that the student has attained a minimum score on a test of English language proficiency, such as the SLEP (minimum score 52), TOEFL (minimum score 500) or MTELP (minimum score 75).

Conditions on Enrollment

Only exchange students who intend to complete at least a full semester of study in the United States will be admitted to the Thompson schools.

Participants in exchange programs may not graduate and receive a diploma from a district high school.

The fact that an exchange organization has located a host family within the district does not imply that the district will automatically enroll the student. While the organization may develop such an agreement with a host family, the family should be advised that enrollment is contingent upon admission of the exchange student to a district school.

Because the district believes it is educationally desirable to limit the number of exchange students attending a school, the number of exchange students enrolled in the district will

be limited in the following manner:

1. Each Thompson R2-J high school may accept up to five exchange students. If circumstances warrant a reduction in this number, an explanation will be provided to the exchange student program representative. Building principals may choose to accept additional exchange students.
2. Upon their annual approval by Council on Standards for International Exchange Travel (C.S.I.E.T.) or the United States Department of State, approved exchange organizations may submit the names of proposed exchange students.
3. No admission applications for the forthcoming school year will be accepted after June 1.

Exchange Students Sponsored by an Approved Program (J-1 Visa)

The district will consider only students participating in exchange programs designated by the United States Department of State or currently in good standing with the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel. No exchange organization may enroll an exchange student in the district without first being approved by the Student Achievement Services department.

After the exchange organization is approved by the Student Achievement Services department, they may obtain building approval for the placement of individual students.

The program must have a local representative who resides in or near the district and who will meet with the student, host family and school personnel on a regular basis.

Exchange students on J-1 visas do not need to pay tuition.

Foreign exchange students privately sponsored (F-1 visa)

The Thompson School District will only accept F-1 visa students if the District is certified by the U.S. Student and Exchange Visitor Program and at least one District staff member is certified to be the I-17B point person.

Pursuant to federal law, only high school students are eligible for F-1 visas. A student may receive F-1 status for no more than 12 months in a public school system. The student must have reimbursed the school district in advance for the full, unsubsidized cost of educating the student. This amount will be determined by the superintendent or designee.

Should a student not be able to obtain a visa or not attend for some other reason, the tuition will be refunded in full. Should a student attend for less than a full school year, tuition will only be refunded if a true hardship situation is demonstrated.

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