

Enrollment in the school system generally is limited to those students who meet the domicile or residence requirements outlined in policy 4120, Domicile or Residence Requirements. However, on occasion, special circumstances may warrant a student's enrollment in a different school system. The board, in its discretion, may admit non-domiciled students into the school system and may release domiciled students to another school system in accordance with this policy.

In circumstances where the board grants a discretionary admission, the permission to attend a school in the system may be granted for up to one full school year with a review process required for meeting the standards of admission. The board will make good-faith effort for out-of-district students to complete all grade levels granted in their requested school, however, no guarantee of future admission, specific school request, nor sibling requests will be given.

All discretionary admissions decisions will be made in a manner that is not arbitrary, capricious, discriminatory, prohibited by state or federal law, or for personal or political reasons.

A. ADMISSION CRITERIA

The board may choose to admit a non-domiciled student only if the following conditions are met.

1. The parent, legal guardian, legal custodian, or other adult meeting the requirements of Board policy 4120, section C.6, explains in writing why, in the opinion of the parent, legal guardian or legal custodian, the student needs to attend school in the school system. An out-of-county reassignment/transfer request form must be submitted with a clear, compelling, and specific explanation indicating why the request is being made to attend a school in the Watauga County school system.

Any reason having to do with athletics or participation in athletics is not a valid or sufficient explanation of need.

2. The Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") must have determined that space is available in the school system and in the particular school, grade level or program in which the student seeks to enroll. In addition, consideration will be given to whether significant additional resources, such as additional personnel, will be required in order to provide educational services to the student who is applying for out-of-district admission.
3. The student must demonstrate that he or she was in good standing in the previous school attended by that student, in terms of academics, discipline, and other measures of standing and progress in the school system. The student also must satisfy the requirements in policy 4115, Behavior Standards for Transfer Students. Be advised that failure to remain in good standing may result in revocation of admission.

4. The student must furnish pertinent student records, showing grades, attendance, behavior, and other student record data, including evidence of compliance with the North Carolina immunization requirements.
5. If the student is transferring from another school system in North Carolina, the student must submit a release approved by the board of education of the school system from which the transfer is being made. If the student's discretionary admission request is granted, the admission will be subject to the terms and conditions agreed to in writing between the board and the board of education of the other school system.
6. If the student does not reside within the assignment area of the school the student will attend, the parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian must agree to provide transportation to and from school.
7. If the student is asserting residency in the geographic area served by the school system, sufficient evidence, such as a copy of utility bills, must be provided.
8. The parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian may be required to pay tuition.

B. DISCRETIONARY ADMISSION DECISIONS

1. Application and Decision

Non-domiciled students who meet the admission criteria may submit a written application for discretionary admission to the superintendent or designee. The reassignment/transfer application must be accompanied by all required supporting documents, as described above in Section A. Applications from students who are residents of the geographic area served by the school system will have first priority. After reviewing the application and supporting documents, the superintendent or designee shall make a recommendation to the board to approve or deny the discretionary admission request. The board may grant admission for up to one full school year. Students who are admitted based upon false or misleading information on their application will have their application voided and acceptance rescinded.

Final decisions regarding discretionary admissions may be delayed until the board has determined whether space is available in the requested school.

2. Renewals

A review of each admitted student from out-of-county admission will be completed reviewing compliance with standards and space available at the school or program attending. For the renewal of admission in subsequent school years, the student must continue to meet all admission criteria and be in good standing in terms of

academics, attendance, and behavior/discipline. New siblings of previously approved out-of-county students must have their own application submitted.

3. Revocations

Admission may be revoked at any time during the school year if the student is not in good standing in the school system. Good standing is determined by academics, attendance, timely arrival each day, behavior, and other standards as deemed by the school. Good standing may be reviewed each grading period at the school, but admission may be revoked at any time deemed necessary. Although conditional admission may be revoked at any time deemed necessary, every effort will be made to make changes only at the end of a grading period or at a time that makes good use of the school calendar, such as before or after a holiday or scheduled break.

C. RELEASE TO ANOTHER SCHOOL SYSTEM

A student domiciled in the school system may request a release from the board to attend a school in a different school system in North Carolina. The student must have both approval of the board to release the student and approval of the receiving board of education to admit the student. The decision whether to admit the student is made under the policies of the receiving board of education.

The superintendent or designee may develop and administer a procedure to implement this policy.

Legal References: G.S. 7B, art. 35; 35A, art. 6; 50-13.1 to 13.3; 115C-47(69), -231, -364 to -366.1

Cross References: Behavior Standards for Transfer Students (policy 4115), Domicile or Residence Requirements (policy 4120)

Adopted: April 13, 2015

Replaces: Policy 5.02.60, Tuition for Discretionary Admission (in part)

Revised: May 8, 2023; December 11, 2023 (Legal references only); May 13, 2024; November 17, 2025 (Legal references only)