ELEMENTARY

Assignment Manual 2026

White Plains Public Schools
White Plains, New York

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This *Assignment Manual* contains background information about the Controlled Parents' Choice Program and explains the school assignment, transfer, and appeals procedures that are followed in the district. The policies and procedures described within these pages guide the placement of *all* students into one of the district's five elementary schools.

Staff at the Family Information Center, (914) 422-2038, would be happy to clarify any of the information in this manual.

BACKGROUND

On May 9, 1988, the White Plains Board of Education revised its diversity policy and established the Controlled Parents' Choice Program as the means of achieving the diversity dictated by the policy.

The Board's action was based on its belief that the balancing of the diversity of the schools' population promotes students' understanding, appreciation, and acceptance of persons of different racial, ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds.

The Board subsequently amended its diversity policy in 2011 and 2016. The district's goal is to achieve a diverse mix of students in each of the grade levels for Elementary School. The district believes this goal is also important since all students attending public school in the district ultimately go on to attend one district-wide Middle School (6th grade campus at Eastview Middle School and 7th and 8th grade campus at Highlands Middle School) and one district-wide High School.

STUDENT PLACEMENT POLICY

Under the Controlled Parents' Choice Program, a child's school assignment is not determined by where the child lives in White Plains, but rather by the rules of the program. Every year in the winter, a Formal Kindergarten Registration Period is held and parents of four-year olds are able to indicate their school preferences for the following year. School assignments are made based on space available, class size, parents' preferences, elementary school attended by sibling, gender, special education needs/services, language needs/proficiency, and socioeconomic factors. The district reserves the right to also use census data as a basis for student placement.

When possible, the preferences of parents of children who enter the school district at the elementary level at a time other than the Formal Kindergarten Registration Period are considered when assigning the children to a school.

TRANSPORTATION

The district provides transportation for all resident elementary students who live more than one-half mile from the school they attend.

ASSIGNMENT PROCEDURES

Various factors affect the placement of children in an elementary school. The following section describes the district's assignment procedures for children in grades K-5.

A. Entering Kindergartners Whose Parents Complete the Registration Process During the Formal Kindergarten Registration Period

1. The Registration Process

Children who will be five years old by December 31, 2026 are eligible for kindergarten in September of that same year. Parents who want their children to attend kindergarten in 2026 should register them during the Formal Kindergarten Registration Period that takes place from January 12, 2026 through February 27, 2026.

- Parents must apply online at www.whiteplainspublicschools.org and provide the required residency, birth and immunization documentation for their children as outlined in the registration process.
- Once an application is submitted, the Family Information Center will reach out to families to coordinate completion of the registration.
- Parents are invited to take part in Kindergarten Tours to learn about the different elementary schools January and Febraury.
- Parents then rank their top three school preferences on the online application. This application is due at the Family Information Center by Friday, February 27th.
- **Parents must submit an application and provide all the required documentation to the Family Information Center by February 27th. If any documents are missing, those applications will not be included in the Choice process.**
- Completed applications for kindergarten received during the Formal Kindergarten Registration Period (January 12th - February 27th) are batched together and processed as a group. Students are *not* assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Parents registering after February 27th risk losing any guarantee they may have for a school (see Section 3b)**. In addition, parents who register after February 27th may not have their school preferences factored into their child's school assignment.

2. Controlled Choice Process

The District administers the Controlled Parents' Choice Program for incoming kindergartners who are registered during the Formal Kindergarten Registration Period using a computerized lottery assignment system. A number is assigned to all children when they are registered; therefore, the identity of each student is unknown to the District when the lottery software makes the school assignments.

3. Decision Rules

The lottery software is programmed to make assignments based upon space available in the kindergartens of each elementary school, the size of each kindergarten class, parents' choices of schools, and the Board of Education's diversity policy. The following rules govern the assignment of students to the 2026-2027 kindergarten class:

a) Space Availability and Class Size: For planning purposes, the District first determines the number of youngsters who will be assigned to each school and then establishes kindergarten sections. No assignments are made that will overcrowd a class or a school.

b) Children Eligible for Sibling Guarantee: Youngsters entering kindergarten who have an older brother or sister may be eligible for Sibling Guarantee.

Under this rule, placement in the school of first choice is guaranteed if:

1. The older brother/sister *currently attends* the first-choice school.

   -or-

   The older brother/sister *had attended* that school for two or more consecutive years or, in the case of families who have lived in White Plains for less than two years, for the sibling's total time attending the White Plains schools.

   -and-

2. The parent *completes* the registration process and returns the Choice Form during the Formal Kindergarten Registration Period (January 12th - February 27th).

If a parent sends a child to kindergarten at a private school, or chooses a different White Plains Public School than the Sibling Guarantee school for kindergarten, **the parent loses the right to use that guarantee** in the future for that child (i.e., a Sibling Guarantee only applies for children being registered for kindergarten during the Formal Kindergarten Registration Period).

c) All Other Children: After assigning children with a Sibling Guarantee, all other youngsters are placed. These children are assigned in accordance with the student placement section on page 2 of this assignment manual

4. Waiting Lists

After assigning youngsters who have a Sibling Guarantee, the District follows these procedures when there are more students requesting a school than there are spaces.

a) Lottery: The lottery software is programmed to make assignments based upon space available in the kindergartens of each elementary school, the size of each kindergarten class, parents' choices of schools, and the Board of Education's diversity policy.

b) Waiting Lists: When a child is not assigned to her/his first-choice school, the child's name is placed on a waiting list for each of the parents' preferred school choices.

When a space becomes available at a parents' preferred school, the parent of the selected student is offered the space. A parent who rejects the offered space is removed from the waiting list for that school. As a rule, waiting lists remain active until the beginning of the school year in September. These lists are dissolved the Friday after the first full week of classes. Please note that, although the District strives to place all students in one of their top three preferred schools, this is not always possible due to available space at each school. Anyone who is not placed at their first-choice school will be put on a waiting list for each of their preferred schools, with preference given to those who did not receive any of their top three choices.

5. Assignment of Children Who Will Receive Special Education Services

The assignment of classified children who will be receiving special education services in September is made according to the rules of the Controlled Parents' Choice Program in the same way as the assignment of non-classified students. Occasionally, however, a classified student's school placement may have to be changed. This will only be done after a conversation with the student's family.

6. Incomplete Choice Forms

Parents indicate their choices during the Formal Kindergarten Registration Period by ranking their top three preferences of the schools they would most like their children to attend. When a parent indicates fewer than three choices of schools on the Choice Form and space is not available at the school(s) indicated, the District will make the school assignment. Please note that, although the District strives to place all students in one of their top three preferred schools, this is not always possible due to available space at each school. Anyone who is not placed at their first-choice school will be put on a waiting list for each of their preferred schools, with preference given to those who did not receive any of their top three choices.

7. Notification of Assignment

Following the Formal Kindergarten Registration Period, each family is sent a school assignment form by May that states the assignment.

8. Relinquishing a School Assignment and Waiting List Place

A family who gives up an assigned space and then requests reentry cannot be guaranteed that the same space will be available.

If a parent sends a child to kindergarten at a private school or decides to hold a child back after the assignment is made, the parent gives up the right to the assigned space in that district school, and the assignment is not held for the following year. In other words, a place is not saved from one year to the next, and a parent must go through the registration process again the following year. Additionally, the child's name is removed from the waiting list.

B. Entering Kindergartners Whose Registrations Are Completed after the Formal Kindergarten Registration Period

Incoming kindergartners whose registrations are completed after the Formal Kindergarten Registration Period (January 12th - February 27th) are assigned to a school based upon space availability at the time the registration process is completed and in accordance with the guidelines of the Controlled Parents' Choice Program. When it is possible, parents are offered a choice of schools. Sibling guarantee is not promised to those who register outside of the Formal Kindergarten Registration Period, though every effort will be made to ensure that siblings who are concurrently attending elementary school are assigned to the same school building.

C. Entering First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Graders

Incoming first, second, third, fourth and fifth graders are assigned to a school based upon space availability at the time the registration process is completed and in accordance with the guidelines of the Controlled Parents' Choice Program. When it is possible, parents are offered a choice of schools.

D. Families with Two or More Children Entering Grades K-5

When a registering family has two or more children entering grades K-5, the children are assigned to the same school. The placement of the children is based upon space availability at the time the registration process is completed and in accordance with the guidelines of the district's Controlled Parents' Choice Program. When possible, parents are offered a choice of schools.

E. Entering Children Who Reside Outside the District

Incoming students who reside outside the district (i.e., tuition-paying students and children of staff members who do not live in White Plains) are assigned to a school that best supports the Board of Education's Diversity Policy *after* the assignment of youngsters who reside in the district.

APPEALS PROCEDURES

A. Entering Kindergartners Whose Registrations Are Completed during the Formal Kindergarten Registration Period

Any parent whose child was assigned during the Formal Kindergarten Registration Period who did not receive her/his preferred school may appeal the assignment if she/he has a compelling reason (e.g., a medical necessity) for the child's assignment to that school. The appeal must be submitted in writing by May 8, 2026 to:

Ilka Marino, Coordinator – ilkamarino@wpcsd.k12.ny.us
Family Information Center
350 Main Street
White Plains, NY 10601

The parent should state the specific reason for the appeal and, if appropriate, should include any supporting material. Please note that proximity of school to home is not considered to be a compelling reason to make changes to school assignments.

An Appeals Committee (consisting of the district's School Health Coordinator, a school principal, and two parents) reviews the materials and makes a recommendation regarding the appeal to the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent then decides whether to grant or deny the appeal. The Superintendent's decision is final and is the end of the appeal process.

B. All Other Appeals

If, due to an extenuating circumstance, you would like to appeal your child's school assignment during any other time of the year, you may appeal the decision in writing to:

Ilka Marino, Coordinator – ilkamarino@wpcsd.k12.ny.us
Family Information Center
350 Main Street
White Plains, NY 10601

The letter should include the reason for the appeal and, if appropriate, any supporting material. The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction will review the materials and make a recommendation to the Superintendent who will decide whether to grant or deny the appeal. The Superintendent's decision is final and is the end of the appeal process.

Transfer Procedures

In April, parents of all children in grades K-4 can request their child's transfer to a different school for the following year. The district only accepts requests at this time for transfers beginning the next school year, and as a rule does not consider transfer requests made at any other time of the year.

According to the Board of Education's Transfer Policy, transfer requests are approved if:

1) There is space available at the appropriate grade level of the school the parent is requesting;

-and-

2) The transfer helps the district maintain the desired diversity of that grade level at both the requested school and the school the child is leaving.

Therefore, not all transfer requests will be approved. Regarding any denied transfer requests, the Superintendent's decision is final, and is the end of the transfer request process.

Reentering the Elementary Schools

If a child is enrolled in a school for at least one year, moves outside the district and then returns within six months, that child may attend the same school if class size allows. A re-enrollment that takes places after six months of leaving the district requires a completely new registration at the Family Information Center.

Family Information Center
350 Main Street
White Plains, New York
(914) 422-2038