



**Controlled Open Enrollment (COE)
Public School Parental Choice Plan
2026-2027**

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the Baker County School District is to prepare individuals to be lifelong learners and responsible citizens of good character.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Baker County School District is committed to meeting the needs of all students in a safe, nurturing, and encouraging environment.

The Baker County School District involves parents, students, teachers, and community members in the process of determining goals that meet student needs.

*Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, each school district's controlled open enrollment process allows a parent/guardian from any school district in the State of Florida to apply to enroll his or her child and transport his or her child to any public school that has not reached capacity.

Understanding Public School Parental Choice

The Florida Legislature enacted Section 1002.31, Florida Statutes, which directs each school district to develop a controlled open enrollment plan.

According to 1002.31, F.S., controlled open enrollment is defined as “a public education delivery system that allows school districts to make student school assignments using parents’ indicated preferential educational choice as a significant factor.”

Eligibility Requirements

- Parents/guardians from any school district in the state whose child is not subject to current suspension or expulsion.
- The Baker County School District is charged by 1002.31, F.S., to maintain socioeconomic, demographic, and racial balance in all schools when implementing controlled open enrollment. The goal is to ensure that this process selects families for enrollment in a non-biased manner. A random-selection lottery procedure will help to ensure that this goal is achieved. In addition, data from the October and February surveys will be reviewed to ensure the targets for each school will be proportionate to the community as a whole.
- The requested school must be on the list of Controlled Open Enrollment (COE) Available Schools.
- If the student has an IEP or Section 504 plan, a district team will convene to determine whether the student’s needs can be adequately addressed and implemented at the chosen school. If not, the student will not be accepted for Controlled Open Enrollment. Students who reside in a different county and whom the District is not able to serve will be expected to enroll in their home county or apply for Controlled Open Enrollment in another district.
- Academies and other academic programs requiring an application for admission shall be processed at the school level, based upon program qualifications and space availability in the program. This Controlled Open Enrollment Plan will not alter any current application process or programs of academic/career academies eligibility criteria.
- Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) students are allowed out-of-district enrollment. VPK students are served by the state through the Early Learning Coalition of North Florida and are not a part of this COE Plan. For VPK students, contact the VPK Coordinator at 904-259-3014.
- Charlton County, Georgia students are served by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and may be allowed out-of-district enrollment. For students living in Charlton County who wish to attend school in Baker County, contact the Title I and Special Programs Office at 904-259-6776 for additional requirements.

Student Expectations

Students approved through the Controlled Open Enrollment process must adhere to the following expectations:

- Follow all rules and procedures applicable to in-county/in-zone students, including the Student Code of Conduct
- Maintain academic eligibility criteria for public school choice programs
- Remain in good standing at the chosen school. Academic, attendance, and behavior/discipline records determine good standing.

Application Process

The window for submitting a COE application is **Monday, March 30, 2026 – Friday, May 1, 2026.**

- Applications received in the above-stated window will be considered for COE.
- An application should be submitted for each child applying for COE.
- Parents/guardians may obtain applications from any of the public schools in Baker County or from the Title I and Special Programs Office, 312 South Boulevard East, Macclenny, Florida 32063. Applications will also be available on the school district's website (www.bakerk12.org).
- The submitted application with all required supporting documents must be submitted to the requested school by Friday, May 1, 2026.
- Out-of-county requests to attend a Baker County Public School will require a letter from the home county that indicates whether the student is subject to current suspension or expulsion. The letter must be received within the Controlled Open Enrollment window.
- When applying, parents/guardians should indicate if they are requesting consideration at more than one school.
- Students previously approved for Controlled Open Enrollment have to reapply annually.
- Out-of-county and/or out-of-zone students previously approved for Controlled Open Enrollment who have withdrawn from the school district will have to reapply for COE before re-enrolling at the school.
- Students may only receive one choice assignment within a school year.

Residency Fraud

Parents/guardians are committing residency fraud if they submit an address during the enrollment process and/or the Controlled Open Enrollment process that is not the parents' homestead address and/or is not the address where the student resides. If there is reasonable suspicion that the student is not residing at the claimed address, the following procedures may be implemented at the discretion of the Superintendent or his/her designee.

- A letter may be sent to the parents/guardians requesting that the parent verify and update enrollment information. This may be followed by a phone conversation or home visit.
- The school staff may examine the Property Appraiser's website to determine the parents' homestead (permanent residence) location. The homestead address of the parent will be a factor to determine the student's zoned school. A conflicting address indicates that further investigation is needed.

If it is determined that the parent and/or student has committed residency fraud, the student shall be withdrawn from the school. **In all cases, the Superintendent or designee reserves the right to make an independent investigation and to make the final determination as to the residence of a student.**

Home Purchase/Construction Requests

Students shall be assigned to a school based on their current permanent residence. If purchasing or constructing a home in a school zone other than the zone of the current residence, a Controlled Open Enrollment application must be submitted and approved prior to attending school in the zone of the new residence.

Preferential Treatment

Per 1002.31, F.S., preferential treatment is provided in the Baker County School District Controlled Open Enrollment Plan to the following:

- Children from Baker County who have siblings already attending the chosen school
- Dependent children of active duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders
- Children who have been relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone
- Children who move due to a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent
- Children residing in the district
- Children previously approved as an out-of-county student under our non-resident plan
- Out-of-county children who have a sibling already attending school in the Baker County School District.

Parents/guardians should indicate on the application under the Preferential Treatment section which of the above preferential treatment items apply to the COE request.

Hardship Preferential Treatment

Hardship preferential treatment is provided in the Baker County School District Controlled Open Enrollment Plan to the following:

- Employees of the Baker County School District may request a hardship for out-of-county approval for immediate family members.
- Employees working in Baker County may request a hardship for out-of-county approval for immediate family members.
- Students who previously lived in county and are in good standing but whose residence changed to an out-of-county location. To determine good standing, academics, attendance, and discipline records will be reviewed.

Parents/guardians should indicate on the application that a hardship preferential treatment is requested and state the reason from the list above.

Provision for Siblings

The COE application allows parents/guardians to request placement of siblings within the same school. Parents/guardians should indicate on the application the names of all siblings to be considered for the same school. Sibling is defined as “brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother, or step-sister that lives in the same household.” Verification will be made by the district. Applications indicating a request for siblings to attend the same school will be placed in the random-selection lottery as one unit, and if selected, all will be accepted provided there is capacity at the requested grade level(s).

Lottery Procedure

If the number of Controlled Open Enrollment applications is greater than the number of seats available for a particular grade level, preferential students will be admitted first. The remaining slots will be filled using a lottery procedure to determine student assignment. The lottery procedure will help maintain socioeconomic, demographic, and racial balance in all schools.

Transportation

Transportation is to be provided by the parent/guardian for out-of-zone students. Transportation is **NOT** provided by the Baker County School District for out-of-zone students except as required by law for foster care and homeless students.

Capacity Determination

The school district will determine capacity for its schools with maximum class size, by grade level, every 12 weeks and will post capacity determinations on the district’s website. In determining the capacity of each school, the district will incorporate the specifications, plans, elements, and commitments contained in the school district educational facilities plan and the long-term work programs. Additionally, the capacity determination will be based on projected class size numbers for each grade level to ensure each school has the permanent program capacity to sustain the additional out-of-zone students over time.

Once the capacity determination is made, the names of the schools that have capacity for public school choice will be posted on the district's website (www.bakerk12.org) with the application, so that parents/guardians may apply accordingly.

Students residing in the district may not be displaced by a student from another district seeking enrollment under the Controlled Open Enrollment process.

The district will establish a 90% capacity determination for each school, by grade level, in the district. Schools having a projected enrollment of less than 90% of capacity for the following year will be available for Controlled Open Enrollment. Projected enrollment will be calculated by taking the number of students zoned to the school and adding the number of students with continuing zoning exceptions.

Schools having a projected enrollment equal to or greater than 90% capacity, by grade level, will not be available for Controlled Open Enrollment, and any applications submitted will be placed on a waiting list.

Students accepted through the Controlled Open Enrollment process and in good standing (determined by academic, attendance, and behavior/discipline records) may remain at the chosen school until they complete the highest grade level at the school.

Notification Process

- Parents/guardians will be notified by mail of the approval or denial of the Controlled Open Enrollment application by May 29, 2026.
- Upon approval, a parent/guardian must complete enrollment paperwork at the chosen school for the 2026-2027 school year within 10 days of being notified of the approval.
- Positions at a school that were assigned to a student under Controlled Open Enrollment will be monitored at the beginning of the school year. Students who have been approved but who are not in attendance by the tenth (10th) day of school will have their assignments revoked.
- Upon obtaining approval for Controlled Open Enrollment, the approved student will be required to remain in good standing (determined by academic, attendance, and behavior/discipline records).
- Students who are not approved to attend the school to which they applied due to capacity restraints will be notified by the district and placed on a waiting list. Those students must register at their zoned school.
- The status of school capacity, by grade level, will be updated every 12 weeks. If capacity becomes available at a grade level within a school, parents/guardians of students on the waiting list will be notified of the opening and permitted to enroll throughout the school year.
- If a student is denied acceptance through Controlled Open Enrollment, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to enroll the student in his/her zoned school or seek Controlled Open Enrollment within another school district.

Revocation of Assignment

If a student is granted a school choice assignment and displays issues with attendance, grades, or disciplinary actions, the principal may make the decision to have the student returned to their zoned school. Prior to revoking a school choice assignment, the school will document a minimum of three (3) good faith efforts to provide interventions and enlist parental/guardian support for the identified areas of concern.

If a student is being returned to their zoned school due to a revocation, communication should occur between the schools to establish supports for the student. Revocation of a school choice assignment within ten (10) school days of the end of a nine (9) weeks or semester grading period will be effective the first day of the following grading period. No requests for revocation will be considered during the final twenty (20) days of the school year.

Civility Policy

The Baker County School District believes that a safe, secure, nurturing and civil environment is essential. This policy promotes mutual respect, civility, and orderly conduct. Aggressive behavior will not be tolerated. This includes volatile, hostile, or aggressive action and words including physical abuse, abusive language, verbal harassment, and threats or intimidation. Individuals who engage in these activities may face penalties up to, and including, criminal prosecution. Additionally, a Controlled Open Enrollment approval may be revoked due to actions that violate the district's Civility Policy.

Hardship Appeals

If an application indicating a hardship request is denied, the parent/guardian may request an appeal within ten (10) calendar days of notification. The appeal must be made in writing and submitted to the Superintendent's Office located at 270 South Boulevard East, Macclenny, Florida 32063. The appeal must include a statement, other than what was initially submitted on the application, as to why the decision should be reconsidered. The Superintendent will convene a committee meeting consisting of a school administrator, a district director, and the Superintendent or designee to review the appeal and make a recommendation. Decisions made by the Superintendent on the appeal are final.

Hardship appeals may be made during the school year if a new employee is hired in the district outside the window for COE and desires for immediate family member(s) to attend Baker County School District while residing outside of the county. Former in-county students whose family relocates to a residence outside the school district may also apply for a hardship appeal.

School Athletics

Student athletes who transfer to another school must comply with the Florida High School Athletic Association Rules of Athletic Eligibility in order to be eligible to participate in inter-scholastic athletics and intra-scholastic extracurricular activities.

A school district may not delay eligibility or otherwise prevent a student participating in Controlled Open Enrollment from being immediately eligible to participate in inter-scholastic and intra-scholastic extracurricular activities.

A student may not participate in a sport if the student participated in that same sport at another school during that school year unless the student meets one of the following criteria:

- Dependent children of active duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders
- Children who have been relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone
- Children who move due to a court-ordered change in custody due to separation, divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent.
- Authorized for good cause in district.