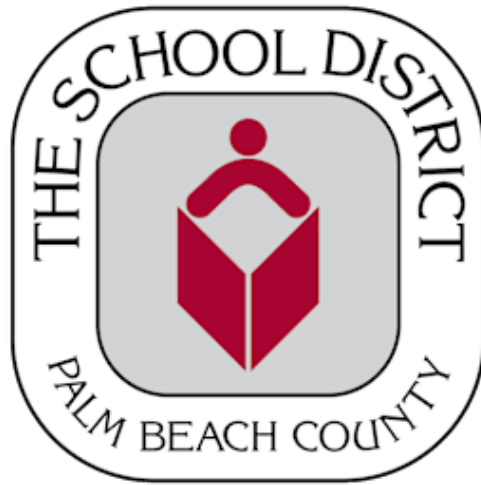


THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF
CHOICE AND CAREER OPTIONS



Procedures Manual for
Choice Programs and Schools

Adopted: July 15, 2026

Non-Discrimination Statement

The School Board of Palm Beach County, Florida, prohibits discrimination in admission to or access to, or employment in its programs and activities, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, age, religion, disability, genetic information, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic prohibited by law. The School Board also provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

The School District of Palm Beach County offers the following career and technical programs, including career academies wherein students may earn industry certification, visit the [Programs of Study](#) page for more information as well as a list of classes.

Lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation. The district may assess each student's ability to benefit from specific programs through placement tests and counseling, and, if necessary, will provide services or referrals to better prepare students for successful participation.

The persons listed below have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies, reports of alleged violations, concerns about compliance, and/or the grievance procedures, etc.

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Reporting & Grievances

To report sex discrimination or harassment, submit a complaint to the Title IX Coordinator. The School will promptly respond to complaints according to its grievance procedures.

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1. Introduction and Overview

The School District of Palm Beach County is dedicated to empowering students through a diverse array of choice and career options tailored to their individual talents, interests, and educational aspirations. This manual serves as a guide for the policies and procedures governing these programs while maintaining compliance with federal and state law. It is designed to establish a clear framework that guarantees a fair, transparent, and consistent application and enrollment process for all district families, schools, and staff. The board has delegated to the superintendent or his designee, authority to implement procedures for efficient implementation of these programs. For further guidance, internal operating procedures are detailed in Appendix F. The superintendent or designee will inform the School Board of any significant updates to the choice program procedures and choice program booklet through either a board report, workshop and/or meeting, at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee.

2. Program Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the district's choice and career education programs is to provide equitable access to diverse, high-quality educational pathways that engage students' unique interests and foster academic excellence. By empowering students to take an active role in designing their own educational journeys, these programs aim to bridge the gap between traditional classroom learning and real-world application. The district is committed to eliminating barriers to educational opportunity, ensuring that every student, regardless of their geographic zone, has access to specialized learning environments tailored to their individual passions. Our objective is to equip all students with the industry-relevant skills, professional certifications, and experiential learning opportunities necessary to ensure their seamless transition into post-secondary education and success in the modern workforce.

3. What Are Choice Programs?

At its core, a **choice program** gives your family the power to select an educational environment that perfectly matches your child's unique talents, interests, and learning style. Traditionally, students are assigned to a public school based solely on their home address. Choice programs expand your options, allowing you to apply to specialized thematic schools or career-focused academies located anywhere across the school district, regardless of your neighborhood zone.

Whether your child is a budding engineer, a gifted artist, or someone looking to jumpstart a career, choice programs provide customized pathways from elementary through high school to help them thrive.

3.1 Types of Choice Programs

The District offers total-school choice and program-within-a-school options at all grade levels for both in-boundary and out-of-boundary students. Types of programs include **in-house programs**, **choice programs**, **full-choice school programs**, and **K-8 school middle grades programs**.

- An “in-house” program is offered at a student’s zoned school and is available only for students who reside in the attendance boundary for the school.
 - Choice programs are available for all students throughout Palm Beach County. All students are eligible to apply for a choice program, regardless of their attendance zone.
 - Students residing within the attendance boundary for the school will be considered an ‘in-boundary applicant.’
 - Students residing outside of the attendance boundary for the school will be considered an “out-of-boundary applicant.”
-

- Full choice schools and programs are schools within the district that do not have a designated attendance boundary. Students must participate in the choice process for an opportunity to attend a full-choice school or program.
- A K-8 school is a district school offering education in kindergarten through 8th grade. Students assigned to the attendance boundary for the K-5 grade level do not automatically continue to the middle grades. Since the middle grades in a K-8 school are considered full-Choice, students must participate in the choice process for an opportunity to attend or continue in the middle grades program in a K-8 school.

A complete listing of choice and career programs, including full choice schools, will be available on the [district website](#) and in the Choice and Career Academy Booklet. The process for applying to a program is further identified within this document.

4. Eligibility

Eligibility for a choice program is contingent upon satisfying three essential requirements. First, applicants must maintain District residency or an eligible out-of-county exception. Second, they must meet program-specific criteria, such as GPA minimums, auditions, or language proficiency tests designed to ensure academic success. Finally, students must satisfy re-application protocols if they are returning to a choice school they previously exited. All three components must be met in full to be considered for the choice lottery. Only applicants who submit a properly completed application and satisfy both the residency and the program specific requirements will be considered for the lottery selection process.

4.1 Eligibility Part 1: District Residency Requirements

Per school board policy 5.011, residence and/or address shall mean the home location where the student and parent, legal guardian or persons acting as parents are primarily living. Prior to completing an application or auditioning for a choice school or program, residency criteria must be established. As a standard policy, the student and parent or guardian must be full-time residents of Palm Beach County unless the superintendent designates specific schools and programs as open for enrollment by out of county residents. See section 4.1.3 below. Non-residents are ineligible, with the exception of qualifying District employees who reside out-of-county, families verified moving into Palm Beach County prior to the start of the new school year, and if available, out-of-county families applying under the provision outlined on section 4.1.3. Applications submitted with unverified or incomplete residency information will be deemed ineligible.

- Choice program opportunities are determined by the student's residential address listed in the Student Information System (SIS). Parents/guardians must ensure the address on file at your current school is accurate and up to date at the time you submit your application.
 - Applicants who are not actively attending a district school, yet possess an existing student ID number, are required to upload residency verification within the application portal.
 - All applicants must have a School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC) student ID number. If your student has never been assigned an ID number, you must apply for one *before* submitting your choice application. Step-by-step instructions for requesting a Student ID can be found on the [Choice Department's website](#).
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- Proof of full-time residency for any student and their parent, guardian or person acting as a parent may be requested at any time. Please note that the evidentiary standards required for choice program eligibility are stricter and may exceed the standard documentation accepted for general school enrollment. The Department of Choice and Career Options reserves the right to request additional documentation to determine full-time residency within the county.
- Submitting altered or falsified documents to bypass residency requirements will result in immediate disqualification of an application or awarded seat. This policy is strictly enforced and will be applied at any point during or after the student is enrolled if fraudulent address verification documents are submitted.
- Either custodial parent may apply in accordance with their parenting agreement. However, if the agreement does not designate a parent with final decision-making authority and the parents disagree, they must mutually resolve the dispute before the application deadline. If an agreement is not reached by the application deadline, the application will be withheld from processing.
- If a family cannot provide standard address verification due to foster care placement, homelessness, or similar extenuating circumstances, please email a detailed summary of your situation to **choice@palmbeachschools.org**. The Choice Department evaluates these cases individually to ensure applications are processed in compliance with the protections outlined in Board Policies 5.74 and 5.011.

4.1.1 Future Residents with Verifiable Documentation

Families currently living outside of Palm Beach County who plan to relocate may apply for a Choice Program by the deadline, provided they meet specific residency documentation requirements. Future resident applicants will be considered after all current District students are assigned. Once enrolled, all students must comply with school board policy 5.011 regarding student residence enrollment.

4.1.2 Eligibility and Required Proof of Residency

To be eligible to apply during the standard application window, future residents must provide validated and verifiable proof that their relocation to Palm Beach County will take place prior to the start of the new school year. Proof of residency in Palm Beach County, as outlined in school board policy 5.011, must be provided to the school prior to the start of the school year.

- **Accepted Documentation:** We require legally binding, verifiable proof of future residency that reflects a specific residential/physical address. Acceptable documents include a finalized home purchase contract or fully executed, legally-binding contracts to include supporting documentation.
- **Unaccepted Documentation:** To protect the integrity of the choice lottery, all residency documents are subject to strict verification to identify and reject fraudulent submissions. Informal private lease agreements and notarized letters from individuals will not be accepted as valid proof of an upcoming relocation.

4.1.3 Out-of-County Applicants Annual Provision

While Choice programs are primarily reserved for Palm Beach County residents, the superintendent may accept out-of-county applicants for select schools or programs on a year-by-year basis. If the

superintendent elects to allow applications for out-of-county students for a given school year, the following procedures will apply:

- **Geographic Restrictions:** The option to apply for a Palm Beach County choice program as an out-of-county resident is strictly limited to students whose primary, verified residence is in a bordering county (Broward, Martin, Okeechobee, Hendry, or St. Lucie). Students residing in non-contiguous counties are ineligible to apply.
- **Annual Determination:** The decision to accept out-of-county applications will be determined annually by the superintendent, based on overall enrollment needs and programmatic capacity at each school site. Capacity determinations are made on a yearly basis, the district makes no guarantee that out-of-county applications will be accepted in any consecutive year.
- **Program Criteria:** Out-of-county applicants must meet all program-specific eligibility requirements, including but not limited to academic benchmarks, language assessments, or performance-based auditions.
- **Prioritization and Seat Allocation:** To ensure local students are served first, eligible Palm Beach County residents (and students whose parents or guardians are qualifying out-of-county District employees) will receive priority placement in the choice lottery. Out-of-county applicants will only be considered for placement if seats remain available after all eligible in-county applicants have been processed.
- **Transportation:** The School District of Palm Beach County does not provide transportation for out-of-county students. Families applying under this provision must agree to provide their own transportation to and from the choice school.

4.1.4 District Review and Authority

Please note that the Department of Choice and Career Options thoroughly reviews all out-of-county residency claims. The Department reserves the right to request additional documentation to determine eligibility and accept or decline applications based on incomplete or insufficient documentation to determine eligibility.

4.2 Eligibility Part 2: Academic and Programmatic Eligibility

Eligibility must be verified for all students applying to choice programs that require academic or related criteria. Upon completing an application, it is the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian to ensure the transcripts or academic records needed to determine eligibility are uploaded to the application portal. Specific eligibility requirements for each program are published in the annual “Choice Program Booklet.” Incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible.

For programs utilizing academic or related criteria, a selection committee must review applicant records to determine who qualifies for the random lottery. The school principal or their designee is responsible for appointing this committee. The names of all proposed committee members must be submitted to the Department of Choice and Career Options annually by the published deadline.

- **General Eligibility:** Students must meet all published eligibility criteria for their chosen program to be included in the choice lottery. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not be

considered. Eligibility criteria will be published annually in the **Choice and Career Academy Program Booklet** and posted on the [Department of Choice and Career Options website](#).

- **Program-Specific Requirements:** Admission to select programs is contingent upon the successful completion of performance auditions, language proficiency assessments, or prerequisite coursework. Each host school is responsible for defining its annual assessment procedures and evaluation criteria, ensuring these are communicated to the Department of Choice and Career Options for inclusion in both the Choice and Career Academy booklet and the formal application.
 - **Prerequisite Coursework:** Some programs require the completion of specific courses (such as upper-level mathematics). Students must successfully complete these requirements by the school's published deadline, which is always prior to the start of the new school year. Because this deadline often falls *after* the lottery is conducted, students may be awarded a seat conditionally; however, their placement will be revoked if the required coursework is not successfully completed on time.
 - **Grade-Level Eligibility Requirement:** Acceptance into a choice program is contingent upon the student meeting all state and district requirements for promotion to the specific grade level for which they applied. Failure to meet these promotion requirements will result in the forfeiture of the assigned seat. Students placed on "Academic Conditional Promotion" are ineligible to retain a seat awarded through the lottery process for a grade level they have not successfully attained before the beginning of the next school year.
 - **Ascending Grade-Level Requirements:** To ensure students are prepared for advanced curricula, certain programs may require higher audition scores or additional prerequisites for applicants entering at higher grade levels. Any grade-specific eligibility criteria will be outlined in the annual Choice and Career Academy Program Booklet.
 - **9th Grade Applicants GPA Calculation:** For incoming freshmen, eligibility is determined using the unweighted average of all classes taken during the 4th quarter of 7th grade, plus the 1st and 2nd quarters of 8th grade. For applicants attending schools on a trimester schedule, the corresponding trimester grades will be used.
 - **10th through 12th Grade Applicants GPA Calculation:** For upperclassmen, eligibility is based on the student's cumulative earned unweighted GPA through and including the first semester of each school year. For applicants attending schools on a trimester schedule, the corresponding trimester grades will be used.
 - **Submitting Academic Records:** For current School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC) students, GPAs are automatically pulled from the district's Student Information System (SIS). Non-SDPBC applicants (such as private, charter, or out-of-district students) are entirely responsible for submitting official transcripts or report cards by uploading them to the application portal no later than the published or requested deadline date.
 - **Fraudulent Academic Documents:** Submitting altered or falsified academic records to satisfy eligibility for a choice or in-house program will result in an immediately ineligible application or the revocation of any awarded seat and assignment back to the student's zoned school even if the student is attending the choice program. The school shall follow the notification and appeal procedures outlined in school board policy 5.011 upon discovering the family submitted fraudulent information.
-

4.3 Eligibility Part 3: Post-Exit and Withdrawal Eligibility

This section defines the criteria for re-application and future eligibility for students who have exited or withdrawn from a choice program. Eligibility for future lottery cycles is determined by the student's standing (academic and discipline) at the time of their departure.

4.3.1 Disciplinary Ineligibility

Students who are involuntarily exited for disciplinary concerns, or who voluntarily withdraw while on disciplinary probation or out-of-school suspension, are permanently ineligible to reapply to any choice program at that specific school in future application cycles.

4.3.2 Academic and Standard Transfers

Students who leave a program under other circumstances may maintain limited eligibility for future applications:

- **Academic Probation/Exit:** Students who are exited or withdraw while on academic probation are ineligible for their *previous* program but may apply to a **different** Choice program at the same school in future cycles.
- **Good Standing:** Students who voluntarily withdraw while in good academic and disciplinary standing remain eligible to reapply to their **original program or any other program** at the school, subject to standard lottery procedures.

5. Auditions

Admission to certain arts programs requires a successful, school-specific audition. To be eligible for the choice lottery, applicants must meet the minimum qualifying score set by the respective school. Because arts education builds on prior experience, expectations increase as students get older. The minimum qualifying score is higher for upper grade levels to reflect the advanced skills and technical proficiency needed to succeed in those classes. Any choice program that requires an audition is clearly marked throughout the annual Choice and Career Academy Program Booklet.

5.1 How Auditions are Scheduled: The individual schools, not the district office, are responsible for scheduling auditions. After you submit your application, the school(s) you applied to will contact you directly to schedule the date and time. You will be notified of your audition details via the email address listed on your application. Auditions may only be rescheduled if alternative dates have already been established and space is available as determined by each individual school. It is the parent, guardian or a person acting as parent's responsibility to ensure the student attends the audition. Please monitor your email inbox (and junk/spam folder) closely for this important communication.

5.2 Standard Procedures: Audition platforms, guidelines, and rubrics will be published annually by the respective Choice schools. In-person attendance is mandatory for all auditions unless an alternative format is expressly authorized by the school.

5.3 Medical Event on Audition Day: If an applicant misses a scheduled audition due to illness or a medical emergency, written verification from the treating physician must be submitted to the school within three

(3) school days of the original audition date. While the school will attempt to accommodate the student, rescheduling is subject to the availability of audition slots and is not guaranteed. If a makeup audition occurs after the lottery and the student is deemed eligible, the applicant will be placed in the waitpool if no seats remain available in the program.

5.4 IEP and 504 Plan Documentation Accommodation Requests: To ensure appropriate accommodations can be provided during the audition or assessment process, a copy of the student's active IEP or 504 Plan must be uploaded to the application portal by the published deadline. **Please note:** Appeals based on a lack of accommodations will not be considered if those accommodations were not requested in advance or were refused by the student or parent during the audition process.

5.5 Audition Appeals

Parents/guardians who believe their child was not allowed an equitable opportunity to a choice program during the audition or eligibility process as a result of a technical problem may request an appeal. The application can be found on the district website at <https://www.palmbeachschools.org/choiceprograms>. The application must be submitted within five (5) school days of the audition date to the Department of Choice and Career Options at Choice@palmbeachschools.org. Refer to section 17.2 Submitting an Appeal.

5.5.1 Definition of a Technical Error

A "technical error" refers to an unforeseen malfunction or calculation mistake that negatively impacts the outcome of a student's audition or eligibility status. Valid technical errors are generally outside of the family's control and may include:

- **Facility Disruptions:** Unforeseen building issues, such as a power failure during an audition or assessment.
- **Equipment Malfunctions:** Defective equipment or technology provided by the school or District.

5.5.2 Definition of Administrative Error

An administrative error is defined as a verifiable mathematical, calculation, or data-entry mistake occurring during the eligibility determination or scoring process. This definition also encompasses procedural inequities, including the failure to provide mandated testing or application accommodations for students with an active IEP, 504 Plan, or English Language Learner (ELL) plan during the choice assessment or lottery process. Applicants are required to submit a copy of their active IEP, 504 or ELL plan at the time of application to ensure mandated support is provided during the audition process.

5.5.3 Exclusions: Non-Valid Grounds for Appeal

Technical or logistical issues resulting from an applicant's lack of preparation do not constitute valid grounds for an appeal. This includes, but is not limited to, a parent or student's failure to ensure the participant is properly prepared, appropriately attired, or equipped with the necessary materials or instruments required for a specific audition. Furthermore, individual scoring results and artistic evaluations are final and cannot be appealed at any time.

6. Application Process

6.1 Application Window and Timelines

The application submission timeframe, encompassing all critical dates and submission deadlines, shall be established and published by the beginning of each school year by the Department of Choice and Career Options. These details can be accessed on the district website at

<https://www.palmbeachschools.org/choiceprograms>.

6.2 Multilingual Application Support

The district is committed to providing equitable access for all families. To accommodate our community, the online choice application can be translated into English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and several other languages. Individuals requiring supplemental translation or assistance may contact the Department of Choice and Career Options for dedicated support.

6.3 Student ID Number Requirement

A valid School District of Palm Beach County student ID number is a mandatory prerequisite for all choice program application submissions. Applicants who have not been previously issued a District ID number must complete the “**Request for a Student ID**” application and provide all verifiable documentation. The application and important information can be accessed on the Department of Choice and Career Options website at <https://www.palmbeachschools.org/choiceprograms>. Student ID numbers generated through this process are authorized strictly for choice application submission purposes. The Department of Choice and Career Options retains the authority to decline any ID number request due to invalid or missing documentation or a failure to provide the requested records.

6.4 Online Application Portal and Account Security

The District utilizes a secure online choice application platform that is developed and managed by an independent third-party vendor. The system is accessible via computer, tablet, or mobile device.

- **The Family Dashboard:** To begin, parents/guardians must set up an account on the Application Dashboard. All school-aged children in the household should be added to this single account.
 - **Single Account Policy:** For security purposes, each student may only be attached to **one** family dashboard. Either custodial parent is eligible to create the account and add the student.
 - **Shared Custody Recommendation:** For divorced or separated families, the District strongly recommends creating a shared email address exclusively for the choice application portal. This ensures both parents receive all critical status updates and lottery notifications simultaneously. The District advises parents to jointly select their preferred programs well in advance of the application deadline. If the court awards shared parental responsibility without specifying a particular parent as making educational decisions, and the parents can't agree on a Choice Program application, the application will not be accepted. District staff will not act as a mediator between parents under any circumstances.
-

6.5 Paper Application Requests

Hard copy applications on district form number 1537, are available for reference upon request; however, families must still submit their final application through the online lottery system to be eligible for the choice lottery. The district will assist families in need of additional technical support with the online choice application.

6.6 Program Selections

Only one application may be submitted per student. Applicants may select a maximum of two programs, including choice and/or in-house options. How you rank your selections is important, so please review the following guidance to make the best decision for your child. Your first choice should always be the program your child is most interested in attending. You may make changes to your choice selections until the deadline date. No changes will be accepted after the deadline.

The lottery will attempt to place your student in their first-choice program before considering any other option. Adding a second choice is optional but recommended as it may increase the likelihood of receiving a program assignment. Importantly, selecting a second choice does not affect or decrease your chances of being assigned to your first choice. The lottery considers all first-choice applicants for a program before it considers any second-choice applicants for that same program.

Your two selections can be any combination of programs and schools. For example, you can choose

- Two separate programs at the same school
- The same program type at separate schools
- Two separate programs at two separate schools

6.7 Academic Record Requirements

Upon submission of the choice application, an additional responsibility applies to the parents or guardians of applicants who are not currently enrolled in a traditional district school, or who were not enrolled during the specific grading periods required to evaluate program eligibility. If the student is or was enrolled in home education, a virtual education program, a charter school, a private school, or a school outside of Palm Beach County, and has applied to a program requiring specific academic criteria, the parent, guardian or person acting as a parent must upload the student's academic history by the published deadline to the application so eligibility can be determined. Failure to submit all required records by the deadline date will result in an ineligible application.

Required documents may include:

- Official transcripts
 - Report cards
 - Progress reports
 - Portfolio (Home Education)
 - Annual evaluation (Home Education)
 - Complete academic records (including all information related to virtual school classes)
-

7. Choice Lottery

7.1 Lottery Selection Platform

To ensure a fair and equitable assignment process for all families, the choice program lottery selection process is hosted on a secure, online platform managed entirely by an independent, third-party software developer. The software is configured to execute the School Board's approved policies and preference categories. The automated lottery fills each program up to its allocated number of available seats. The process is designed to honor student preferences by first considering every applicant's first choice program. Only after all first choice assignments have been attempted will the system consider an applicant's second choice for any remaining open seats. This method ensures that one student's second choice never takes priority over another student's first choice.

7.2 Eligibility and Lottery Execution

To qualify for the computerized random selection lottery, students must submit their choice program application by the published deadline and meet all applicable eligibility criteria. The lottery is driven by the program preferences selected by the parent or guardian on the application. The director of the Department of Choice and Career Options oversees this annual process, ensuring all established procedures are implemented for the School District of Palm Beach County.

The annual choice program lottery is executed only after all applicant eligibility determinations have been finalized. Only applications that successfully meet all program-specific requirements will be authorized for inclusion in the computerized lottery. To guarantee a completely fair and impartial process, the automated lottery system is programmed and operated by an independent, third-party software developer. This system is activated when a program has more first choice applicants than available seats.

During the lottery, the system uses a student's verified home address to determine their boundary status:

- **In-Boundary:** The student is zoned for the requested school.
- **Out-of-Boundary:** The student is not zoned for the requested school.
- **Consecutive Lotteries:** Because the number of seat allocations differ for these two groups, the system actually runs two consecutive lotteries for each program—one specifically for in-boundary applicants and another for out-of-boundary applicants.

7.3 Seat Allocations

When planning your application, it's helpful to understand how program seats are determined. The largest number of available seats is for students entering the main school transition years: kindergarten, 6th grade, and 9th grade. While the main entry grades offer the most openings, seat availability in other grade levels vary. The number of open seats depends on factors at each school, such as current enrollment, staffing, and course scheduling, and are not guaranteed. Please note that student withdrawals or exits do not automatically guarantee that seats will become available for new applicants; seat availability is determined by overall grade-level capacity and instructional staffing.

7.4 Seat Assignments

If a program receives fewer eligible applications than there are available seats, all eligible applicants will be offered admission through the automated assignment process.

7.5 Lottery Selection

If a program receives more eligible, on-time applications than available seats, the District utilizes a computerized, random lottery system. This ensures a fair, unbiased, and equitable assignment process for all students.

7.6 Lottery Placement Preferences

The automated lottery system is programmed to factor in board-approved hierarchy of preferences during the random selection process and applied to a student's first choice program selection, only.

7.7 Board-Approved Preference Hierarchy

Eligible applicants are assigned seats according to the preference hierarchy listed below. Specific seat percentages are allocated to each preference tier based on the student's grade level (elementary or secondary). Because preferences are applied in strict order, each category's percentage limit is calculated using the **remaining** pool of applicants left after the higher-priority groups have already been assigned.

1. Principal's 20%
2. School District of Palm Beach County Employee
3. Military
4. IB/IB MYP Continuum
5. FAU Biomedical
6. K-8 Continuum
7. Priority SAC
8. Sibling Attending
9. Strand

Note: Students who do not qualify for any of the specific preferences listed above will be included in the general lottery only after all preference-eligible students have been considered.

7.8 Annual Lottery Assignment Provision for Out-of-County Applicants

Depending on capacity, the District may establish a provision to consider out-of-county applicants. Please note the following regarding this process:

- **Annual Determination:** This provision is evaluated on a year-to-year basis and may not be offered every year.
 - **Processing Order:** If the provision is active, out-of-county students are considered for a seat assignment only after all eligible in-county (Palm Beach County) students have been considered.
 - **No Preferences or Guarantees:** Applicants residing outside of the county do not qualify for the lottery preferences listed above. Assignment is not guaranteed unless the applicant meets the
-

specific eligibility criteria mandated by the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3).

8. Understanding Lottery Preferences

8.1 Principal's 20%

Principals may optionally grant a preference to a limited number of first choice applicants who meet pre-established, measurable criteria. Criteria eligibility does not guarantee selection. Students selected by the principal are still assigned seats via the random lottery, and total assignments under this category are strictly capped at 20% of the available out-of-boundary seats for that program and grade level.

8.2 Employee

Students whose parent or guardian is a full-time employee at the requested choice school may receive a higher priority in the lottery. To qualify, the program must be designated as the student's first choice. Please note that while this preference improves the chances of an assignment, placement is never guaranteed and remains entirely contingent upon available seats.

8.3 Military

Lottery priority based on military status is granted to verifiable dependents of full-time, active-duty U.S. Armed Forces personnel (excluding Reserve/National Guard in training). To secure this preference, applicants must upload official active-duty orders and proof of DEERS dependency (such as a student military ID) concurrently with their application. As with all preference categories, final seat assignment is not guaranteed and remains subject to programmatic capacity.

8.4 IB/IB MYP Continuum

Students continuing the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) from a designated partner middle school receive priority assignment to the corresponding high school program. To qualify, applicants must be on track to complete the 7th and 8th grade MYP levels and meet all high school IB eligibility criteria. Please note that placement is contingent upon available seats. The approved continuum pathways are:

- Carver Middle School to Atlantic Community High
- Conniston Middle School to Forest Hill Community High School
- John F. Kennedy Middle School to Suncoast Community High School
- Pahokee Middle-Senior High School to Pahokee Middle-Senior High

8.5 FAU Biomedical

Students completing the Biomedical programs at Lake Worth Middle or Roosevelt Middle schools receive priority assignment to the Lake Worth High School FAU Biomedical program. To qualify, applicants must satisfactorily complete their middle school program, meet all high school eligibility requirements, and list Lake Worth High School as their first choice. All other applicants may still apply if they meet the standard program eligibility criteria, but they will not receive this priority status.

8.6 K-8 Continuum

The K-8 continuum preference allows current 5th grade students to continue to 6th grade at their K-8 school. To qualify, students must list the school as their first choice, meet any applicable program requirements, and either reside in the school's attendance zone or have attended the school for both 4th and 5th grade. If the number of priority applicants exceeds available seats, a lottery will be conducted exclusively among this priority group. If sufficient seats exist, all eligible priority applicants will be assigned.

8.7 Priority SAC

The priority SAC preference grants localized lottery priority to applicants residing within the established attendance boundaries of six designated sites: Morikami Park, Northboro, Poinciana, and S.D. Spady elementaries; Bak Middle School of the Arts; and Suncoast High School (with the exception of Commercial Digital Photography, Drafting & Design, and Game Simulation and Animation Programming). This preference is executed sequentially, applying only after all higher-tier priority assignments are fulfilled. Seat allocations for this cohort are mathematically capped at 50% of the remaining available capacity for elementary programs and 25% for secondary programs. (See Appendix A)

8.8 Sibling

The sibling preference provides lottery priority to applicants with a sibling currently enrolled in, and returning to, the requested choice or in-house program. Eligible siblings include brothers, sisters, half-siblings, and stepsiblings residing at the same household, and must be linked via the application dashboard. The requested program must be the applicant's first choice, the enrolled sibling may not be in an exiting grade (5th, 8th, or 12th), **and the enrolled sibling's placement must have originated from a prior choice lottery assignment.**

Note on Sibling Applicants: Siblings applying concurrently to the same program for the first time do not receive elevated preference. Co-assignment is not guaranteed, though exceptions may be made for twins/multiples strictly subject to programmatic capacity. Sibling preference assignments are executed sequentially and capped at 50% of the remaining elementary capacity and 25% of the remaining secondary capacity.

8.9 Strand

The strand preference facilitates the matriculation of students within established programmatic pathways. Eligibility mandates that 6th grade applicants successfully complete grades 4 and 5, and 9th grade applicants complete grades 7 and 8 within the prerequisite program. The strand preference is executed sequentially, applying only after all higher-tier priority assignments are fulfilled. Seat allocations are mathematically capped at 25% of the remaining available capacity for secondary programs.

9. Lottery Results and Notification

9.1 When to Expect Results

The anticipated timeframe for the release of choice lottery results will be published when the application opens. Upon finalization of the lottery, results will be accessible exclusively via the application

dashboard. An automated email notification will also be sent to the account creator's email address, as the application is directly linked to the profile used during setup. To maintain data security and student privacy, District personnel are strictly prohibited from disclosing lottery assignment results via telephone.

9.2 Important Notice Regarding Delays

The scheduled release timeline is subject to change due to unforeseen events, such as emergency school closures or district operational delays. If adjustments to the release window are necessary, updates will be published promptly on the school district website.

10. Understanding Your Results & Making a Decision

10.1 Responding to a Seat Offer

After the lottery results are posted, your application will show one of the three possible outcomes listed below:

10.1.1 Accepting or Declining Your First Choice: If your child is offered a seat in their first choice program, you must officially accept or decline the offer by the published deadline. If you do not respond by the deadline, the system will automatically decline the seat on your behalf, and it will be immediately offered to another student. If automatically declined, your child will automatically be placed in the waitpool for their second-choice program, if applicable (provided they met the eligibility requirements for that program). **This action is final and cannot be reversed.**

If you actively decline your first choice assignment, or if the seat is automatically declined due to a missed deadline, your child will automatically be placed in the waitpool for their second choice program (provided they met the eligibility requirements for that program). If space becomes available in your second choice program later on, a new seat offer will be made.

10.1.2 Accepting or Declining Your Second Choice: If your child is offered a seat in their second choice program, you must officially accept or decline the offer by the published deadline. You may choose between two options:

Option 1: Accept the Assignment: This secures your child's seat in the second choice program. Please note that accepting this offer will automatically remove your child from the waitpool for their first choice program.

Option 2: Decline the Assignment: You may decline the second choice seat if you prefer to keep your child in the waitpool for their first choice program.

Important Risk to Consider: If you choose to decline the second-choice seat, a future assignment to your first choice program is not guaranteed. Once you decline a seat, the decision is final and cannot be reversed later.

10.1.3 If Your Child Is Placed in a Waitpool: This status means your child's application met all requirements and was successfully included in the lottery. However, because there were more

eligible applicants than available seats, they were not selected for an immediate assignment and have been placed in the waitpool for their eligible program(s). If a student is not selected to attend a choice program in the lottery process, a new application must be submitted for the following application cycle.

10.1.3.1 Understanding the Waitpool Process: If your child is not initially assigned a seat, they will be placed in a waitpool. Here is what you need to know:

- **Future Seat Offers:** If a seat becomes available, assignments from the waitpool can occur at any time through the first 10 days of the new school year, at the discretion of the Department of Choice and Career Options. If your child is assigned, you will be notified automatically.
- **Timeline and Expiration:** A student's waitpool status is valid only for the current application cycle. If your child is not offered a seat before the school year begins, their status will expire, and you must submit a brand-new application to be considered for the following school year.
- **Waitpool Designation:** Students who are in a waitpool as an out of boundary applicant and move into the schools boundary, will not be moved to the in-boundary waitpool or assigned automatically.
- **Waitpool Position & Numbering:** The department does not track or provide updates regarding a student's specific position within the waitpool. However, please note that the superintendent or designee may switch from a waitpool system to a numbered waitlist at their discretion and before the annual lottery is conducted.

10.2 Processing of Ineligible Applications

Any program selection for which an applicant fails to meet the published eligibility criteria will be categorically excluded from the lottery processing algorithm. Furthermore, the disqualification of a first choice selection does not elevate a second-choice selection; all subsequent choices retain their originally designated priority ranking during the lottery process.

10.3 Under-enrolled Choice Programs

If a student is not placed in their requested program, the superintendent or designee may offer them a spot in a similar program that has available openings.

11. Finalizing Your Enrollment

11.1 What to Expect After Accepting a Seat

Once you have officially accepted your seat assignment, the next step is to complete the registration process directly with the school. Here is what will happen next:

- **Initial Communication:** The school's choice coordinator will contact you within **two (2) school days** of your assignment notification.
- **Enrollment Paperwork:** While you will hear from the school quickly, please note that coordinators reserve the right to wait until the district's accept/decline window has fully closed before sending the official enrollment documents to students who have accepted the seat offer.
- **Finalizing Enrollment:** Once the documents are sent, the coordinator will outline the final registration steps and inform you of any strict deadlines required to fully secure the seat.
- **Residency Verification:** In-house and in-boundary program assignments require proof of residency within the designated attendance zone. Continued enrollment is dependent upon maintaining an in-zone address
- **Important Enrollment Deadline:** Students must be registered and in attendance at their assigned school within the first ten days of the school year. Failure to meet this requirement will result in the loss of the choice seat, and the student will no longer be eligible to attend the program for the current school year.

11.2 The Choice Program Contract

Your enrollment packet will include several program-specific documents, most notably the Choice Program Contract. While the common expectations remain consistent across the district to ensure equity, schools may supplement these with program-specific criteria relevant to their unique theme or curriculum. (See Appendix B)

- **Initial Agreement:** Please be aware that the act of accepting your seat assignment online serves as your initial acknowledgment of this agreement.
- **Official Signature:** To finalize enrollment, the contract will require your formal signature or recorded acknowledgment. This confirms that both you and your child agree to meet the program's ongoing expectations regarding:
 - Academic performance
 - Attendance
 - Behavior
- **Implied Consent:** Please note that failure to return a signed contract does **not** exempt the student from these program expectations. All enrolled students are held to the exact same standards, regardless of whether the physical document was signed and returned.

11.3 Finalizing Enrollment and Seat Forfeiture

To secure an assigned choice seat, parents/guardians are strictly required to complete, sign, and remit all enrollment documentation directly to the assigned school site. Compliance with the deadline established by the school's choice coordinator is mandatory; failure to remit paperwork by this deadline may result in the forfeiture of the assignment.

- Parents who wish to decline an accepted lottery assignment prior to the start of the new school year may do so by sending a detailed email to the Department of Choice and Career Options, at choice@palmbeachschools.org.
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- Students must be officially enrolled in and attending the Choice program no later than the tenth (10th) day of the academic year, or the choice seat assignment will be forfeited and the student will be assigned to attend his/her zoned school.
- Students who applied for a specific grade level and were subsequently retained, are not eligible to take the seat assignment at the lower grade level. No additional seat allocations will be made to accommodate retention-related changes in grade placement.

11.4 Physical Attendance and Full-Time Enrollment

Physical attendance is mandatory for all choice program students. Participation requires full-time enrollment in a choice program; students may not attend on a part-time basis or visit campus solely for theme-specific courses. Full integration into the daily school schedule is a non-negotiable condition of enrollment.

11.5 Dual Enrollment and Early Admission

Choice program students who enroll in Dual Enrollment or Early Admission must return to their zoned school if their new schedule conflicts with attending or completing required Choice courses.

12. Late Applications

If you missed the on-time deadline and have not yet submitted a choice application for the upcoming school year, a late application window will be available. (specific dates will be published on the district website). Please review the following strict limitations for late applications:

- **Existing Applications:** Students who already submitted an application during the on-time window may **not** submit a second application. However, if you only selected one program on your original application, you may use the late window to log in and add a second choice.
- **Not in the Lottery:** Late applications are not included in the initial on-time application lottery.
- **Waitpool Priority:** Following an eligibility review, late applicants are placed directly into the waitpool. They will only be considered for an assignment *after* all eligible on-time applicants have been offered seats.
- **Auditions and Assessments:** For programs requiring an audition, language assessment, or other special criteria, late applicants will only be invited to test or audition under very limited circumstances (for example, if a music program has a critical need for a specific instrument). Even then, this will only occur if the on-time waitpool is completely exhausted and open seats still remain.

13. Reciprocity

Students who relocate to the district after the initial lottery has concluded may be considered for program placement if they satisfy the following three conditions:

- **Eligibility:** The student must meet all established program criteria.
 - **Prior Enrollment:** The student must provide evidence of transferring from a similar themed program which they attended at their last school.
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- **Capacity:** Enrollment is subject to seat availability within the specific program or school.

13.1 Performing Arts Special Conditions

Placement in a Performing Arts program is subject to additional requirements:

- **Audition Requirement:** For programs requiring an audition, placement is only considered upon the successful completion of that audition. The district does not guarantee the availability, timing, or location of auditions for late-entry students.
- **Program-to-Program Transfers:** To transfer between different arts programs, a student must pass a new audition and/or demonstrate satisfactory completion of the specific arts pathway course sequence.

14. Continuing Enrollment

Once your child is assigned to a choice program, they do not need to reapply every year to remain in that specific program. A new application is required when a student is transitioning between school levels (e.g., moving from elementary to middle school, or from middle to high school), applying for a new program at the current school or applying to a new program at a different school.

14.1 Choice Program Contract Adherence

Continued participation is contingent upon meeting the academic, attendance, and discipline standards outlined in your signed Choice Program Contract. Students are also responsible for meeting specialized program requirements. Failure to meet these standards, such as adhering to strict JROTC grooming codes or submitting to and passing a background check and other screening required by a partner agency for medical program clinicals, may result in a change of program status or exit from the choice program.

14.2 How a Change of Address Affects Continuation

Once assigned to a program, students must continue to meet all residency requirements. For address changes outside the school attendance boundary, continuation rules depend on your specific program type:

14.2.1 In-house Programs: If a recent move out of the school's attendance zone is verified, the student's enrollment status must be reviewed. A student may be permitted to remain at the choice school on a reassignment basis provided they meet all of the following conditions:

- **Prior Lottery Assignment:** The student must have been originally assigned to the current school through a prior choice lottery assignment with a valid application.
 - **Minimum Enrollment Time:** The student must have been enrolled in the program for at least two years prior to the relocation taking place.
 - **Good Standing:** The student must currently be in compliance with their choice program Contract, meeting all academic, attendance, and discipline expectations.
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- **Verified Documentation:** Official proof of the move date out of the zone for the school, along with proof of the move to the new address, must be submitted to and verified by the Department of Choice and Career Options.

14.2.2 Choice Programs (In-Boundary Assignments):

If a student was offered a seat based on an in-boundary designation, that assignment will be revoked if it is discovered they do not reside within the attendance boundary for the school. An in-boundary student who relocates may request to remain in their current Choice program as an Out-of-Boundary (OOB) student, provided they meet all of the following conditions:

- **Prior Lottery Assignment:** The student must have been originally assigned to the current school through a prior Choice lottery assignment with a valid application.
- **Good Standing:** The student must currently be in compliance with their Choice Program contract, meeting all academic, attendance, and discipline expectations.
- **Minimum Enrollment Time:** The student must have been enrolled in the program for at least two years prior to the relocation taking place.
- **Verified Documentation:** Official proof of the move date out of the zone for the school along with proof of the move to the new address must be submitted to and verified by the Department of Choice and Career Options.

14.2.3 Choice Programs (Out-of-Boundary Assignments): Students who are already attending a Choice program as an out-of-boundary student may relocate to another address and continue in their current program. The student must have been assigned through a Choice lottery assignment.

15. Choice Program Probationary Period

Students enrolled in a choice program are strictly required to adhere to the academic, attendance, and discipline expectations of their choice program contract. Should a student fall below these standards, the school will initiate a formal probationary period for 30 school days. During this period, the school will follow mandatory district protocols to address the specific area of concern through targeted support and documented corrective strategies.

During this time, the student is primarily responsible for demonstrating a return to program standards by actively utilizing the documented school-based corrective strategies provided. This mandatory monitoring period provides a consistent window for the student to meet their performance targets and for all parties to track progress through a probation agreement. The school must make at least three (3) documented attempts to contact the parent or guardian to invite them, along with their child, to participate in a meeting to discuss the terms of probation. These attempts may be made through the Student Information System (SIS), email, phone call, or text message.

15.1 Academic Probation

Within the full marking period, the student must work to meet the terms of the probationary agreement to bring their academic grades and/or gpa to the agreement terms.

Failure to satisfy the requirements of the probation agreement within the designated marking period will result in a Continuation Determination Meeting. During this formal review, a committee will evaluate the documented support alongside the student's adherence to the plan to determine if the student remains eligible for the program or will be exited and reassigned to their zoned school.¹

15.2 Attendance Probation

Students enrolled in a Choice Program are expected to maintain exemplary attendance to ensure full engagement with the specialized curriculum. In alignment with Florida Statute §1003.26, the school will monitor patterns of non-attendance and implement the following protocols:

Upon a student reaching five (5) unexcused absences within a 30-calendar-day period, or ten (10) unexcused absences within a 90-calendar-day period, or excessive tardiness or early releases that result in a loss in instructional time, the student will receive a probation agreement, subject to the provisions of school board policy 5.09 including a referral to the district's **Attendance Review Committee** and possible referral to Truancy Court.

This agreement serves as the formal strategy to address patterns of non-attendance. If an additional (5) unexcused absences are accumulated within the probationary period, the student will be referred to a Continuation Determination Meeting. During this formal review, a committee will determine if the student remains eligible for the program or will be exited and reassigned to their zoned school.¹

15.3 Disciplinary Probation

Students enrolled in a choice program are expected to adhere to the discipline expectations outlined in the choice program contract and the School District of Palm Beach County's Student Code of Conduct. A student who receives two (2) or more level 2 disciplinary referrals within a single marking period, or a single level 2 referral if it is SESIR-related, will receive a probation agreement for 30 school days. During this time, the student has the opportunity to improve their behavior through documented corrective strategies and interventions as required.

The agreement is considered breached if the student receives one (1) or more additional level 2 (or higher) referrals after mandatory district protocols to address the specific area of concern were implemented including but not limited to strategies and actions outlined in the School District of Palm Beach County's Student Code of Conduct. If this occurs, the student will be referred to a Continuation Determination Meeting. During this formal review, a committee will determine if the student remains eligible for the program or will be exited and reassigned to their zoned school.²

Students who receive an out of school suspension for a level 3 or level 4 offense as defined by the School District of Palm Beach County's Student Code of Conduct, are subject to an immediate Continuation Determination Meeting, without a probationary period and can be exited at any time. Due to the gravity of these infractions, the committee will determine if the student remains eligible for the program or will

¹ For students with an IEP or active 504 plan, see section 16.5

² For students with an IEP or active 504 plan, see section 16.5

be withdrawn to attend their zoned school or an alternative placement, as deemed appropriate by the district.

16. Choice Program Continuation Meeting Procedures

After consultation with their regional office, schools may only exit students at the end of a marking period. The Choice Program Continuation Meeting is governed by a structured timeline and a formalized process designed to thoroughly evaluate whether a student should be considered for exit from their current program. This comprehensive procedure ensures that all decisions are data-driven, collaborative, and fair. The process begins with the convening of an objective review committee, followed by a mandatory meeting to discuss the student's progress and ability to meet the expectations outlined in the Choice Program Contract and the School District of Palm Beach County's Student Code of Conduct. Every meeting follows a strict, specific protocol to ensure consistency, transparency, and full documentation, guiding the committee through the final determination regarding program continuation.

16.1 Committee Composition

To ensure a balanced and comprehensive review, the school-based committee may be composed of at least three (3) members of the school's instructional and administrative staff including but not limited to:

- **Administrator:** School and/or regional office
- **Student Support Staff:** The student's guidance counselor
- **Advocacy & Instruction:** One teacher familiar with the student
- **Impartial Representative:** One teacher not currently instructing the student to provide an objective perspective
- **Specialized Support:** Representatives from the **ESE** or **ELL** departments, as applicable to the student's educational plan

16.2 Parental Notification & Participation Requirements

The school is committed to ensuring parental involvement in the exit process. Parents are provided an opportunity to share any exculpatory or mitigating information related to the recommendation to exit the student from the choice program. To facilitate this, the following communication protocols apply:

- **Documented Outreach:** The school must make at least three (3) documented attempts to contact the parent or guardian to invite them, along with their child, to participate in the meeting.
- **Required Methods:** These attempts may be made through the Student Information System (SIS), email, phone call, or text message.
- **Non-Response Clause:** If the parent or guardian fails to reply within **24 hours** of the final contact attempt, the committee meeting may proceed without parent participation to ensure a timely resolution.

16.3 Meeting Protocol

The meeting follows a structured agenda to maintain professional standards and ensure all parties are heard:

1. **Presentation of Infractions:** The school outlines the specific student infractions and the resulting implications for the choice program.
2. **Parental Discussion:** Provided they are in attendance, parents and guardians are granted an allotted time (no more than 10 minutes) to discuss the circumstances and present reasons why the student should not be exited.
3. **Inquiry Phase:** Committee members may ask clarifying questions of the student, parents, or staff to ensure a full understanding of the situation.
4. **Conclusion:** Once all information has been shared, the family and student will be excused from the meeting to allow for private deliberation

16.4 Deliberation and Final Decision

- **Recommendation:** The committee will discuss the information shared at the meeting and make a recommendation regarding the student's continued enrollment in the choice program.
- **Notification of Decision:** The Principal or designee will communicate to the parent or guardian via email by the conclusion of the following school day. However, for students with an IEP or 504 plan, the committee's recommendation is contingent upon the results of a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR).

16.5 Mandatory Manifestation Determination Review (MDR)

Students with an active 504 Plan or IEP may not be exited from a choice School or program due to disciplinary, academic, or attendance issues without a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR).

If a Program Continuation Meeting committee recommends an exit, the MDR must be completed prior to the student's exit. This process ensures that any disciplinary, academic, or attendance issue was not caused by, or did not have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability.

17. Appeals

17.1 Involuntary Exit Decisions

Parents or guardians may appeal an involuntary exit decision from a choice school or program on behalf of the student. Please note, if a student's out-of-school suspension results in a recommendation for severe incident assignment or expulsion pursuant to Board Policies 5.1814 or 5.1817, the student will be required to follow the procedures for appeal outlined in those policies and will not be entitled to a choice exit appeal. To ensure a fair and consistent review, the following procedures must be observed:

17.2 Submitting an Appeal

A formal request for an appeal must be submitted in writing using PBS Form 2418 (Choice Appeals Application). This application must be received within five (5) school days of the date on the school's written notice of the decision to exit your child from the choice program. Applications should be submitted to the Department of Choice and Career Option via:

- Email: choicequestions@palmbeachschools.org

- Mail: 3300 Forest Hill Boulevard, C-124, West Palm Beach, FL 33406-5869
- Fax: 561-434-8843

17.3 Appeals Committee

Upon receipt of a timely appeal, the director or designee of Choice and Career Options will convene a formal appeals committee. To ensure a comprehensive and objective review, the committee will consist of both members and advisory participants. Advisory participants are present to provide specialized data, context, or responses to committee inquiries, but do not participate in the final determination.

17.4 Committee Members

The committee members shall be composed of district-level administrators selected for their comprehensive knowledge of the Choice Program Procedures Manual and their expertise in district-level policy implementation. In addition to the review of documented evidence, the committee is responsible for actively listening to the parent or guardian's appeal presentation. The committee will evaluate the testimony to determine if it carries sufficient information to justify overturning the initial exit decision.

To maintain a balanced and multi-disciplinary perspective, the committee may include administrative representation from:

- **Department of Choice and Career Options:** Administrators specializing in program-specific requirements and contractual compliance.
- **Regional Leadership:** Administrators with oversight of school-site operations and administrative procedures.
- **Department of Student Support Services:** Experts in the implementation of tiered interventions and student success plans.
- **Exceptional Student Education:** Experts in the oversight of IEP and 504 plans.
- **Elementary or Secondary Leadership:** District-level administrators familiar with grade-level specific academic and discipline expectations or school site administrators familiar with choice programs.
- **Safe Schools:** Administrators focused on the consistent application of the School District of Palm Beach County's Student Code of Conduct and federal/state regulatory standards.
- Various Departments within the School District of Palm Beach County

The committee maintains the authority to uphold, modify, or overturn the school's decision based on the combined strength of the written record and the information provided by the family and the school provided. If the committee finds that the parent's appeal presents a compelling case for reinstatement, they may choose to return the student to the choice program, potentially with an updated or extended support plan.

17.5 Advisory Participants

While the voting panel renders the final decision, advisory participants may be called upon to provide context required for a thorough review. These individuals do not participate in the final deliberation. Advisory participants may include:

- **School Administration (Principal or Designee):** The referring school may supply a chronological account of the disciplinary or academic incidents and details the specific school-level resources offered to the student prior to the exit recommendation.
- **Specialized District Representatives:** Includes experts from district departments in areas including but not limited to Exceptional Student Education (ESE), English Language Learners (ELL), Section 504 Compliance, Safe Schools, or the School-Based Team (SBT) to verify that all mandated procedures, accommodations and behavioral supports were implemented with fidelity.

17.6 Meeting Format and Platform

To facilitate a timely and efficient review, the Department of Choice and Career Options will hold these appeal meetings virtually via the district's approved virtual conferencing platform.

17.7 Appeal Meeting Protocol and Notification of Decision

The family shall be granted a maximum of ten (10) minutes to present their case. This is the opportunity to provide evidence, explain mitigating circumstances, or address why the student should remain in the choice program. The committee chair will monitor the time to ensure the meeting remains on schedule.

Following the presentation, the School Principal (or designee) will have the opportunity to provide additional context, clarify the school's position, or respond to specific inquiries from the committee regarding the grounds for the exit. Committee members may ask questions of either party to ensure a complete understanding of the case.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the committee members will enter into a private deliberation. The committee will reach a consensus and report its final recommendation to the Director of Choice and Career Options or designee who shall make a final decision regarding the student's continued enrollment in the Choice program.

17.8 Notification and Finality of Decision

The final decision will be communicated to the parent or guardian via email by the conclusion of the following school day. Should the committee require additional time to gather necessary information, the committee chair or a designee will notify the family of the revised expected notification date. The Director of Choice and Career Options (or designee) will issue a formal notification via email to the parent or guardian denying the appeal. There is no further administrative recourse or internal appeal process within the School District of Palm Beach County regarding this final decision.

17.9 Arts Audition Appeals

For appeals specifically related to arts auditions, the Department of Choice and Career Options will take one of the following actions within five (5) school days:

- **Approval:** The Director of Choice and Career Options or designee will issue a formal notification via email to the parent or guardian approving the appeal. The affected school will then be notified to contact the family and schedule a second audition.
- **Denial:** The Director of Choice and Career Options or designee will issue a formal notification to the parent or guardian denying the appeal.

18. Choice Program Transportation: Operational Procedures

18.1 Departmental Alignment and Authority

The Department of Choice and Career Options shall adhere to all guidelines, routing protocols, and safety mandates established by the District's Transportation Department. The superintendent, or their designee, maintains sole discretion over the establishment of transportation routes and bus stop locations.

18.2 Eligibility and Jurisdictional Zones

Choice transportation is restricted to students in grades K–12 who reside within the school's Choice Transportation Zone.

- **Verification Protocols:** Staff shall direct families to the official transportation zone maps located on the Department of Choice and Career Options website to determine eligibility. These boundaries are subject to modification at any time at the discretion of the Transportation Department to meet operational requirements.
- **Out-of-Zone Limitations:** Transportation services are not extended to students residing outside the designated zone. For these cases, the responsibility for school transit rests entirely with the family.

18.3 Standardized Bus Stop Protocols

Given the expansive geographic areas served by choice programs, the District utilizes a centralized bus stop model rather than neighborhood-specific routing.

- **Placement Standards:** Assigned bus stops may be located at a significant distance from the student's residence and are not required to be within walking distance.
- **Assignment Logic:** Students will be assigned to the nearest existing bus stop based on their primary home address of record. No new stops will be created outside of the transportation department's established routing logic.

18.4 Parental Responsibility

Parents or guardians are solely responsible for the safe transport of the student to and from the assigned centralized bus stop or to the choice school if district transportation is not used or provided.

18.5 Updates

District staff is responsible for referring families to the main school district website for the most current transportation information, as these are managed by the Transportation Department.

APPENDIX A
Choice Programs and School Choice Priority SAC Areas

SCHOOL	PROGRAM	CHOICE PRIORITY SAC	NOTE:
Morikami Park Elementary	International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years	296B, 296C, 306A, 306B	On time, first choice applicants, only
Poinciana Elementary	Math, Science and Technology	257, 406A, 406B A	On time, first choice applicants, only
Northboro Elementary	Montessori	099B, 105A, 105B, 115A, 115B, 389A, 389B	On time, first choice applicants, only
S.D. Spady Elementary	Montessori	288, 290, 294	On time, first choice applicants, only
Bak Middle School of the Arts	Visual, Performing, Communications Arts programs	102, 103, 097C	On time, first choice applicants, only. Audition required.
Suncoast High	Commercial Digital Photography, Drafting & Design, & Game, Simulation, & Animation Programming	081A, 081B, 081C, 081D, 081E, 081F, 081G, 081H, 081J, 082, 083, 084, 093C, 093D, 093E, 094A, 094B, 094C, 094D, 094E	On time, first choice applicants, only

APPENDIX B
Choice Program Contracts
ELEMENTARY CHOICE CONTRACT TEMPLATE

Student Name _____ **Program** _____ **Date** _____

I understand that participation in the **(Program)** at **(School)** requires my child to behave in ways that contribute to their academic achievement, support a safe school environment and promote the overall success of the school. This opportunity may be revoked if my child fails to meet the program's standards for individual effort and student behavior.

As a choice program student, I acknowledge the following:

Academic Expectations (refer to the Procedures Manual for complete guidelines):

A. I understand that my child must complete the choice program's requirements and make every effort to succeed in all subject areas.

Program

Expectations:

A. I understand I am required to meet the following program expectations:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Attendance Expectations (refer to the Procedures Manual for complete guidelines):

- A. I understand that my child can be placed on probation if they have five (5) unexcused absences within a 30-day period or ten (10) unexcused absences within a 90-day period, or excessive tardiness or early releases that result in a loss in instructional time. Students who continue to accrue excessive unexcused absences while on probation may be considered for an exit from the Choice Program.

Behavioral Expectations (refer to the Procedures Manual for complete guidelines):

- A. I understand that my child must follow school rules as well as the Palm Beach County School District's Code of Conduct and behave in ways that contribute to their academic achievement and that of other students at the school.
- B. I understand that if my child receives two (2) or more level 2 disciplinary referrals within a single marking period, or a single level 2 referral for a SESIR-related offense, he/she will receive a probation agreement for 30 school days. A violation of the terms of probation may result in a dismissal from the choice program and if applicable, assignment back to their zoned school.
- C. I understand if a level 3 or 4 offense, as defined by the School District of Palm Beach County's Student Code of Conduct, violation occurs, my child will be referred to an immediate Continuation

Determination Meeting that will meet to determine whether they will be dismissed from the choice program.

Choice Probation and Exit Process (refer to the Procedures Manual for complete guidelines):

Students may be placed on probation if they fail to follow the choice program's academic, attendance or conduct expectations. The terms and conditions of probation will vary depending on the individual needs of each student and will be fully outlined in a probation contract between the student, the student's parent, guardian or person acting as a parent, and the school's administration.

1. I understand that failure to correct the cause(s) of probation by the end of the designated timeframe may result in dismissal from the choice program and, if applicable, the school.
2. I understand that if the student is dismissed from the program and is not zoned to attend this school, they must immediately register at their residential zoned school.
3. I understand that if we choose to voluntarily exit the choice program and do not reside within the attendance boundary for this school, the student must return to their zoned school, regardless of their current grade level.
4. I acknowledge that all choice and program continuation procedures will strictly follow the most recently adopted school board policy 5.016.

I have received and reviewed this student contract and understand the academic, attendance and conduct expectations of students participating in choice programs.

Parent, Guardian or Person Acting as a Parent Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX C

SECONDARY CHOICE CONTRACT TEMPLATE

Student Name_____ **Program**_____ **Date**_____

I understand that participation in the **(name of program)** at **(name of school)** requires me to behave in ways that contribute to my academic achievement, support a safe school environment and promote the overall success of the school. This opportunity may be revoked if I fail to meet the program's standards for individual effort and student behavior.

As a choice program student, I agree to adhere to the following:

Academic Expectations (refer to the Procedures Manual for complete guidelines):

A. I understand I am required to meet the following academic expectations:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B. I understand I will be placed on academic probation if I fail to meet these requirements.

Program

Expectations:

A. I understand I am required to meet the following program expectations:

4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Attendance Expectations (refer to the Procedures Manual for complete guidelines):

- A. I understand that my child can be placed on probation if I have five (5) unexcused absences within a 30-day period or ten (10) unexcused absences within a 90-day period, or excessive tardiness or early releases that result in a loss in instructional time. Students who continue to accrue excessive unexcused absences while on probation may be considered for an exit from the choice program.

Behavioral Expectations (refer to the Procedures Manual for complete guidelines):

- A. I understand that my child must follow school rules as well as the Palm Beach County School District's Code of Conduct and behave in ways that contribute to my academic achievement and that of other students at the school.
- B. I understand that if my child receives two (2) or more level 2 disciplinary referrals within a single marking period, or a single level 2 referral for a SESIR-related offense, he/she will receive a probation agreement for 30 school days. A violation of the terms of probation may result in a dismissal from the choice program and if applicable, assignment back to my zoned school.

- C. I understand if a level 3 or 4 offense, as defined by the School District of Palm Beach County's Student Code of Conduct, violation occurs, my child will be referred to an immediate Continuation Determination Meeting that will meet to determine whether I will be dismissed from the choice program.

Choice Probation and Exit Process (refer to the Procedures Manual for complete guidelines):

Students may be placed on probation if they fail to follow the choice program's academic, attendance or conduct expectations. The terms and conditions of probation will vary depending on the individual needs of each student and will be fully outlined in a probation contract between the student and the school's administration.

1. I understand that failure to correct the cause(s) of probation by the designated timeframe may result in the dismissal from the choice program, and if applicable, the school.
2. I understand that if I am dismissed from a choice program, I will forfeit the right to apply for a choice program at this program in the future. If I am not zoned to attend **(name of school)**, I must register at my zoned school.
3. If I wish to exit the choice program voluntarily and do not reside in the attendance boundary for the school, I must register at my zoned school, regardless of my grade level.
4. All choice and program continuation procedures will follow the most recently adopted Board Policy 5.016.

I have received and reviewed this choice student contract and understand the academic, attendance and conduct expectations of students participating in choice programs. Refusal to enter into this agreement may result in dismissal or exit from the program.

Parent, Guardian or Person Acting as a Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX D

Choice Program Probation Agreement

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Choice Program: _____

1. Notice of Probation

The student named above is being placed on **administrative probation** due to a violation of the choice contract terms regarding:

- ☐ Academic Expectations (GPA/Grades)
- ☐ Program Expectations
- ☐ Attendance Expectations (Absences/Tardiness)
- ☐ Behavioral Expectations

Specific Violation Details:

2. Probationary Period

The student will remain on probation for 30 school days, ending on _____.

3. Conditions for Continuation

To return to good standing during the probationary period, the student must meet the following criteria:

- ☐ Achieve a minimum GPA of _____ and/or no grade lower than a ____ by _____
- ☐ Program Expectations _____

- ☐ Accumulate less than _____ additional unexcused absences. (*Note: 5 additional absences trigger a Continuation Meeting*).
- ☐ Receive **zero (0)** additional Level 2 or higher disciplinary referrals
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

4. School-Based Actions

The school will provide the following support to assist the student in meeting these conditions:

1. _____

2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5. Acknowledgement and Agreement

Student Statement: (Grades 6-12) I have reviewed this choice program probation agreement and understand the terms of this probation. I/we recognize failure to satisfy the requirements of this probation agreement within the designated time frame will result in a Continuation Determination meeting. During this formal review, a committee will evaluate the student's progress and adherence to this contract to determine if he/she remains eligible for the program or be exited and reassigned to the zoned school.

Note: For disciplinary probation, any Level 3 or Level 4 offense results in an immediate continuation meeting without a probationary period.

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent, Guardian or Person Acting as a Parent Signature _____ **Date:** _____

6. Administrative Authorization

Principal/Designee Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

APPENDIX E


 THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY
 CHOICE AND CAREER OPTIONS

Choice Program Application for Appeal

School Year

Parents or guardians who believe an inequity occurred during the audition, eligibility, or program exit process may request an appeal. Before submitting this form, please review the Appeal Procedures found in the Procedures Manual for Choice Programs and Schools. Once completed, send this form to the Department of Choice and Career Options via email at choicequestions@palmbeachschools.org or by mail to:

Department of Choice and Career Options
 3308 Forest Hill Boulevard, C-124
 West Palm Beach, FL 33406
 Attn: Appeals.

Student ID# (REQUIRED)	Student First Name	MI	Last Name	Date of Birth	Grade
Name of Parent or Guardian			Home Phone	Day Phone	
Email Address		Address of Parent or Guardian (street, apt. #, state, zip code)			

Choice School (name) _____

Choice Program _____ Date of Audition _____

What is the school attendance area in which the student now lives? _____

What is the reason the student is requesting an appeal? (Choose all that apply)

☐ Administrative Error ☐ Technical Error ☐ Involuntary Exit

Briefly explain the reason for your appeal. Be specific:

I have read and I understand this form and agree to the following:

I have reviewed the Choice Procedures Manual in district policy 5.016 and reviewed the procedures and time-frame for submitting an appeal. My signature below verifies that all the above information on this application is correct.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Date _____

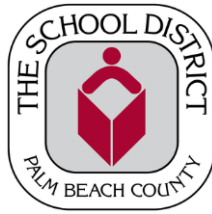
DO NOT WRITE BELOW -- CHOICE AND CAREER OPTIONS ONLY

☐ APPROVED ☐ NOT APPROVED ☐ VOID

Signature of Director or Designee _____

Date _____

Appendix F



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CHOICE AND CAREER OPTIONS

Choice Programming Operational Procedures Manual

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1. Administrative Operational Procedures

This guide functions exclusively as internal guidance for district use and is not to be used as an outside resource. While this guide is intended to outline current procedures, it does not create legal obligations for the district. The superintendent or designee will inform the School Board of any significant updates to these operational procedures via board report, workshop, or meeting, at his/her discretion.

2. Creating a Choice School or Program

2.1 Program Proposal Process - New Program

Schools seeking to establish a new choice or in-house program must adhere to the following program proposal process:

2.1.1 Preliminary Consultation: The school principal shall meet with their regional superintendent or designee to discuss the scope and intent of the recommended program.

2.1.2 Recommendations: The Department of Choice and Career Options will distribute an annual bulletin regarding the program proposal process. In accordance with the published timeline, principals must submit formal recommendations for new programs via the department's designated submission portal.

Note: A minimum of one full school year of planning is required prior to new program implementation. Exceptions are at the sole discretion of the superintendent.

2.1.3 Formal Proposal: If the recommendation is approved, principals will be notified by the published timeline to proceed with the formal program proposal process using PBS Form 2079.

2.1.4 Program Proposal Committee: The Department of Choice and Career Options will convene a committee of district personnel (including, but not limited to representatives from the Planning, Budget, Transportation, Facilities, and Curriculum departments) to review principal submissions. To facilitate a timely and efficient review, the meetings will be held virtually via the district's approved virtual conferencing platform.

2.1.5 Superintendent Review & Approval: The committee's recommendation will be submitted to the superintendent for final approval. In making a determination, the superintendent shall evaluate the following factors:

2.1.5.1 Equitable Access: Geographic location and reasonable transportation times for all students.

2.1.5.2 Demographics: Attendance zone shifts, including declining enrollment.

2.1.5.3 Site Suitability: The physical condition and capacity of the potential facility.

2.1.5.4 Strategic Alignment: Consistency with school board priorities.

2.1.5.5 Community Impact: Potential displacement of currently assigned students and the effect on enrollment at surrounding schools.

2.1.5.6 Resource Utilization: Impact on class size reduction, site capacity, and utilization rates.

2.1.5.7 Academic Data: Evidence of student learning gains and achievement.

2.1.5.8 Fiscal Impact: The budgetary requirements for creation or replication, weighed against available funds and other District needs.

2.1.5.9 Annual District Review: An update on choice programs will be presented annually to the superintendent and district leadership during a board workshop.

2.1.6 Board Notification: The superintendent or designee in collaboration with the Department of Choice and Career Options will inform the School Board of new programs upon approval. If the proposal involves grade-level expansion or significant capital expenditure, the Board must be informed *prior* to final approval. An update on choice programs will be presented annually to the superintendent and district leadership during a board workshop.

2.2 Program Proposal Process - Modifying/Converting/Closing a Program

To maintain consistency and fairness across all programs, the following procedures apply to any choice school seeking to modify its existing structure, eligibility requirements, convert its theme or program status, or cease operations.

2.2.1 Preliminary Consultation: The school principal shall meet with their regional superintendent or designee to discuss the recommended changes.

2.2.2 Recommendations: The Department of Choice and Career Options will distribute an annual bulletin regarding the program proposal process. In accordance with the published timeline, principals must submit formal recommendations to modify/convert or close a choice or in-house program via the department's designated submission portal.

2.2.3 Formal Proposal: If the recommendation is approved, principals will be notified by the published timeline to proceed with the formal program proposal process using PBS Form 2168

2.2.4 Technical Assistance and Program Improvement

Prior to consideration of closing a program, if a choice program fails to meet the mission or goals specified in its original program proposal, the Director of Choice and Career Options, with approval from the superintendent or designee, shall convene a Technical Assistance Planning Team. This team will develop and implement a formal improvement plan for the following school year.

2.2.5 Notice of Discontinuation or Modification

A program may be recommended for closure or significant modification if it fails to demonstrate satisfactory progress following three years of implementation and one full year of technical assistance. The Director of Choice and Career Options shall notify the principal of the district's intent to discontinue or modify the program by the conclusion of the technical assistance year.

2.2.6 Administrative Grounds for Closure

The regional superintendent, chief academic officer, or superintendent (or designee) may recommend a program for closure or modification due to administrative grounds. Such closure or modification may be enacted at any time, as determined by the superintendent or their designee, for reasons including:

2.2.6.1 Insufficient student participation or enrollment;

2.2.6.2 Lack of sustainable funding or the loss of teacher allocations;

2.2.6.3 Other "good cause" as determined by the superintendent

2.2.7 Transition Planning

If a choice or in-house program is approved for closure, the regional superintendent and the principal must develop a comprehensive transition plan. This plan shall be presented to the superintendent or designee to ensure an orderly phase-out and conversion to a non-choice status.

2.2.8 Board Notification

The superintendent (or designee) will inform the School Board of all program closures following the completion of the formal process. If a modification involves grade-level expansion or significant capital expenditures, the School Board must be briefed prior to the superintendent's final approval. The superintendent or designee will inform the School Board of any significant updates to the choice program procedures and choice program booklet through either a board report, workshop and/or meeting, at the discretion of the superintendent or designee.

3. Recruitment and Outreach Strategies

3.1 Marketing Plan

To ensure equitable educational access and balanced enrollment, the superintendent and designated staff require each choice school or program to maintain a comprehensive marketing and recruitment plan. Each school must submit its annual marketing plan to the Department of Choice and Career Options by the established yearly deadline.

3.2 District Information and Accessibility

The District is committed to providing transparent information and assistance to all parents and

guardians. The Department of Choice and Career Options ensures that choice program details are accessible at the following locations:

3.2.1 Physical Sites: The Fulton-Holland Educational Services Center and every public school throughout the District.

3.2.2 Digital Hub: The official website at www.palmbeachschools.org/choiceprograms.

3.3 Outreach and Monitoring

The Department of Choice and Career Options oversees the coordination of outreach initiatives and the systematic monitoring of applicant pools for all programs. To ensure equitable access and maximize program visibility, the District leverages a multi-faceted recruitment strategy:

3.3.1 Strategic Outreach Channels

3.3.1.1 Events & Media: High-profile engagement such as the annual **Showcase of Schools**, regional newsletters, and targeted newspaper or radio advertisements. These efforts are supported by the District's communications and/or marketing department to ensure consistent branding and messaging.

3.3.1.2 Community Engagement: Collaborative partnerships with civic organizations and local government agencies to broaden publicity and reach communities with low participation rates.

3.3.1.3 Digital Presence: A robust online strategy utilizing the school district website, social media, and high-quality digital promotional materials to streamline recruitment.

3.4 Language Access and Translation

The department provides choice program information in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Creole. Further translation or interpretation services into additional languages are available upon request by a parent or legal guardian.

4. District-Wide Maintenance of School Populations

4.1 Applicant Data and Self-Monitoring

To support balanced enrollment, choice coordinators and school leadership have year-round access to real-time data regarding applicants from communities with traditionally low choice application rates.

4.1.1 Purpose: This access allows schools to self-monitor recruitment efficacy and adjust outreach strategies mid-cycle to ensure a broad, representative applicant pool.

4.1.2 Reporting: The Department of Choice and Career Options shall prepare a summary report of applicant demographics annually prior to the recruitment season.

4.1.3. Application Analysis

The Department of Choice and Career Options will analyze elementary and secondary school applications to ensure they align with District goals.

5. Budgeting and Funding Procedures

To address the unique requirements of Choice and Career Education programs, principals may submit proposed budget requests for the upcoming school year during the school district's budget timeline. Proposals must be submitted to the Department of Choice and Career Options. The Director of Choice and Career Options will review all requests before forwarding them to the Director of Budgeting Services or designee for funding consideration. This same protocol applies during Program Proposal Review Committee meetings.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1 The superintendent may submit to the School Board a report regarding the implementation of Choice schools and programs, covering the following:

6.1.1 Eligibility Pools: Data on eligible students for each school or program.

6.1.2 Recruitment Strategy: Analysis of techniques that have impacted the applicant pool.

6.1.3 Acceptance Trends: Demographic data on students accepted into each program.

6.1.4 Committee Oversight: Data on the eligibility committees that are used to determine student eligibility for choice schools or programs.

6.1.5 Barrier Identification: Identification of perceived barriers to student enrollment and actionable recommendations for elimination of these barriers.

6.1.6 Curricular Impact: Data on how unique program themes attract a broad student body.

6.1.7 Performance Outcomes: Academic performance results categorized by demographic representation and subgroup metrics.

6.1.8 Attrition: Statistics regarding student withdrawals.

6.1.9 Strategic Recommendations: Proposals for improving program development and maximizing student participation.

7. Annual Review

The Department of Choice and Career Options shall review these procedures annually. Any recommendations for revision will be submitted to the superintendent, who may then authorize amendments to the procedures as necessary to ensure continued alignment with District objectives.
