ADMISSION OF NONRESIDENT STUDENTS (INTERDISTRICT TRANSFERS)

Code **JFAB** *Issued* **11/26**

The district has adopted the following administrative rule to implement board policy JFAB, Interdistrict Transfers. The superintendent or designee is responsible for administering the interdistrict transfer program in accordance with this rule and applicable law.

Capacity Study

The superintendent or designee will conduct an annual capacity study prior to the opening of the interdistrict transfer application window. The capacity study will determine available space by school and grade level, as determined by the number of grade-level educators multiplied by the grad level's student-to-teacher ratio established by the superintendent. The Board of Trustees empowers the superintendent to set student-to-teacher target ratios for the district.

Capacity numbers will be posted on the district's website, disaggregated by grade level, or specific program and updated at least annually before the enrollment window opens. The district may, but is not required to, update capacity numbers during the transfer application window.

The district is not required to accept additional nonresident students once a school has reached ninety percent (90%) of its grade level, class, or specialized program capacity.

Application Process

The superintendent will maintain an interdistrict transfer application that collects, at minimum, the following information:

- Student's legal residence and current district of enrollment or home-based instruction.
- Requested school and grade level.
- Any additional information required for specialized program consideration.

Applications may be submitted online or on paper. The online application will be accessible on the district's website and by mobile device. Paper applications are available at the district office. The district will provide information on its website about the transfer process, eligibility criteria, and schools with available capacity.

The annual transfer application window will open no later than February 1 for the upcoming school year and will remain open for a minimum of ninety (90) days. The district will include the application window on its website and in other appropriate communications before its opening. Applications received after the established deadline may be considered at the discretion of the superintendent or designee. The superintendent, at his/her discretion, may re-open the application window for any school below 90 percent capacity.

Enrollment Criteria and Denials

In determining whether to grant admission or a request for readmission, the superintendent or his/her designee may consider any factor he/she deems relevant and as required or allowed by law or board policies, including but not limited to the criteria outlined below.

A transfer application may be denied due to:

- **Capacity:** The requested school, grade level, or program is at or above ninety percent (90%) capacity per capacity standards as set by the Board of Trustees, or such admission would overcrowd, exceed maximum enrollment, or otherwise exceed established capacity thresholds determined by the district for school or specialized programs.
- **Discipline:** The student has a history of Level III disciplinary offenses, persistent disciplinary issues, a history of suspension exceeding five (5) days, a history of expulsion or other disciplinary offenses that present a threat to the security or safety of the school, students or staff. The district may, but is not required to, consider placement in the district's alternative school for students with such disciplinary histories.
- **Attendance:** Elementary and middle school students with more than ten (10) unlawful absences in a school year, or high school students with more than five (5) unlawful absences in a 90-day semester course or more than ten (10) unlawful absences in a 180-day course.
- **Specialized program requirements:** The student does not meet the eligibility requirements of the requested specialized program (e.g., Scholars Academy/SCECHS), which may include auditions, interviews, or standardized assessments.
- **Academic requirements:** As set out in policy JFAA, *Admission of Resident Students*
- **False information:** The application contains false or substantially misleading information.

Priority for acceptance will be given to siblings of currently enrolled nonresident students when both students would attend the same school during the upcoming school year.

Transfer applicants submitted after the established deadline may not be considered.

Enrollment requests for children of District 4 employees may be considered separately from the Interdistrict Transfer policy and process as an employment benefit in accordance with applicable board policies.

Notification of Enrollment Status

The district will notify applicants in writing of the outcome of their application and the student’s enrollment status within thirty (30) days of the close of the application period. The notice will state whether the student has been accepted, placed on a waitlist, or denied enrollment, and will include a clear explanation of the reason if denied, and notice of the right to appeal.

If accepted, the parent/legal guardian will have fifteen (15) business days from the date of the acceptance notice to accept the transfer offer and complete any required enrollment steps. Failure to complete enrollment timely within this period may result in forfeiture of the enrollment slot.

If the application is denied, the superintendent or his/her designee will provide an explanation for the decision. The applicant has the right to appeal the denial to the board. The appeal must be delivered in writing to the superintendent or his/her designee within ten (10) days of receiving the denial notice. Upon receipt of a timely appeal, the board shall review the appeal at its next scheduled board meeting for which the agenda has not already been posted pursuant to the SC Freedom of Information Act. Only the written appeal, transfer application, and related application documents will be considered on appeal. No external information will be considered, and no board hearing will be held. The board will issue a final written decision within ten (10) days after the next scheduled board meeting at which the appeal is considered. The board's final decision may be appealed to the State Board of Education within ten (10) days after receiving the board's final decision.

Records Transfer

To complete enrollment of a nonresident student, the resident district must release all pertinent student records to the district, including but not limited to:

- Previous school records and academic transcripts.
- Formative, summative, and screener testing data.
- Previous discipline records.
- IEP and 504 documentation.
- Health and immunization records.
- Attendance records.

Applicants are responsible for providing all authorizations and information to facilitate the timely release and transmittal of the student's records to the district.

See policy and administrative rule JRA, Student Records, for additional information regarding the transfer of student records.

Transfer Fees and Billing

Annual interdistrict transfer fees ("Out of District Student Tuition") will not exceed the prior school year's local per-pupil tax revenue amount as calculated by the South Carolina Department of Education using Chart of Account Codes 1110-1290 and the 135-day Average Daily Membership. Transfer fees will be posted prominently on the district's interdistrict transfer webpage. The district may charge nonresident students any additional fees permitted by law that would be charged to resident students for comparable services or materials.

Families may make payments on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. Fee invoices will align with the ESTF disbursement schedule published by SCDE. No invoice will be due until at least ten (10) business days after ESTF funds are disbursed. Invoices will clearly state due dates, payment instructions, and any applicable penalties for late payment.

The district will sign up as an Education Service Provider (ESP) under the ESTF program as required.

Late Payment and Penalties

Transfer fees are due according to the district's established payment schedule. If a payment is not received by the due date, the district will make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/legal guardian. Before any action is taken regarding a student's transfer status due to non-payment, the district will provide written notice to the parent/legal guardian and a reasonable opportunity to address the outstanding balance, consistent with applicable law and board policy. The nonresident student must make payment before the first day of each semester or the student may lose approval status.

Continued Enrollment and School Changes

A nonresident student in good standing with respect to behavior and attendance will not be required to submit a renewal application to remain enrolled in the same school. In most cases, a student matriculating to the next school in the district's grade progression (e.g., elementary to middle, middle to high) will not be required to reapply. The district may require reapplication where there is no established feeder pattern or where capacity constraints exist at the next level; in such cases, existing nonresident students will receive priority over new applicants. During continued enrollment, annual transfer and other fees remain due as established by the district. A student in good standing is making academic progress, has good attendance, and no significant or persistent discipline issues. A student not in good standing may have their enrollment revoked based on academic, attendance, or behavior issues.

Children of Staff Members

The superintendent may admit children of staff members on a year-to-year basis provided they provide a release from the district in which they reside. Staff members' children do not have to submit an application for admission of nonresident students.

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