

Upper Pittsgrove Board of Education District Policy Manual

Instructional Program

New Jersey Interdistrict Public School Choice Program

Series 6000

Policy 6147.2

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The New Jersey Interdistrict Public School Choice Program was created by the New Jersey Legislature in January 2000 and made permanent in June 2010. This program was designed to increase educational opportunities for students and their families by providing students with the option of attending a public school outside their district of residence without tuition.

Beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, students will be able to choose to go to a school outside of this district if the selected school is participating in the choice program. Transportation of up to 20 miles or aid in lieu will be provided to a student going to a choice school. If the school is outside of the 20-mile radius, transportation will be the responsibility of the student or his/her parents/guardians.

The choice school will set the number of openings per grade level and if there are more students requesting admission to the school than there are available openings, the choice school will choose the students using a lottery system.

The Upper Pittsgrove School District has been designated as a Choice School, and as such will be a receiving district for students wishing to attend a school in the Upper Pittsgrove School District.

Receiving District (Choice School Destination) Procedures

As a Choice School, the Upper Pittsgrove District will follow the regulations and procedures as stipulated in the New Jersey Interdistrict Public School Choice Program legislation.

The Upper Pittsgrove School District will admit choice students on a space available basis and may limit admissions to a particular grade level or to areas of concentration.

The district may establish reasonable criteria to evaluate prospective choice students, including the student interest in the program(s) offered. However, the district will not impose admission criteria upon prospective choice program students other than those used to determine admission of resident students to the program(s) for which the prospective choice students are applying. The district may give preference for the enrollment to siblings of students already enrolled in the program.

If more applications from prospective students are received than there are spaces available, a public lottery will be held to determine the selection of students for participation in the choice program.

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Pursuant to NJAC 6A:12-4.3(g), a waiting list will be developed based on the results of the lottery. Preference for enrollment shall be given in both application cycles to those students on the waiting list in accordance with NJAC 6A:12-4.3(e)1 & (g).

Parents/guardians of every student who has submitted an application to participate in the choice program shall be notified of the date and time of the lottery. Each student participating in the lottery shall be assigned a number and the parents/guardians of the students shall be advised of that number.

Before conducting the lottery, the district may give preference for the enrollment to siblings of students already enrolled in the program. If preference is given to siblings of students already enrolled in the program, and there are no spaces available after granting permission to participate in the choice program to such siblings, a lottery shall be held for the remaining applicants in order to assign them a place on the waiting list. If preference is given to siblings of students already enrolled in the program, and there are more sibling applicants than there are available spaces, a lottery shall be held for siblings only in order to determine the selection of students for participation and for placement on the sibling waiting list.

No applicant to become a choice student shall be discriminated against on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a student with disabilities, proficiency in the English language or any other basis prohibited by State or Federal law. In addition, enrollment shall not be denied based upon a determination that the additional cost of educating that student would exceed the amount of additional State aid received as a result of the student's enrollment. Enrollment may be denied for a student who has been classified as eligible for special education services pursuant to Chapter 46 of the Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes if that student's individualized education program could not be implemented in the district, or if the enrollment of that student would require the district to fundamentally alter the nature of its educational program, or would create an undue financial or administrative burden on the district.

Application Procedures

All applicable procedures stipulated in NJAC 6A:12-4.3 shall be followed by the district and parents/guardians of students wishing to enroll in the choice program in this district.

Enrolled Students

Once enrolled in the choice program of this district, the choice student may remain enrolled and is required to submit annual or periodic applications.

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Upon acceptance of a choice student, he/she shall be enrolled in this district until the student graduates or until the student voluntarily withdraws, except as limited by NJAC 6A:12-4.3(f) 1 & 2. In the event that the choice program is terminated in the district or statewide, any student already enrolled in the choice program of this district shall be entitled to remain enrolled in the district until graduation.

A choice student may transfer back to the sending district except as limited by NJAC 6A:12-4.3(f)1 and may apply to attend a different choice district by following the choice student application procedures as set forth in NJAC 6A:12-4.3.

General Provisions

All credits toward graduation that were awarded by another district Board of Education shall be accepted by this district for students attending the choice program.

A diploma will be awarded to all choice students who participate in the program if those students meet the established graduation requirements of this district and the requirements of the State of New Jersey.

A public information program shall be established to inform the public about the New Jersey Interdistrict Public School Choice Program as offered by this district, and directed to all communities from which the district can anticipate attracting students. Specific communities shall not be targeted, as the public information program shall be regionwide in scope. The public information program shall include, but not be limited to:

- Notification that the district is a choice district;
- A description of the choice program(s) offered;
- Information regarding application procedures;
- Information regarding the district, its schools, its programs, its policies and procedures; and,
- Any other information deemed to be appropriate.

Transportation

Transportation shall be provided to eligible students for transportation services to and from the district. Transportation or aid in lieu of transportation shall be provided in accordance with NJAC 18A:36A:13 and NJAC 6A:27-4.

Appeals

Appeals may be filed on behalf of the district in accordance with the provisions of NJAC 6A:4 and appeals of denial of student applicants may be filed with the Commissioner in accordance with the provisions of NJAC 6A:24.

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Sending District Procedures

The Upper Pittsgrove School District shall not prevent or discourage its students from participating in the School Choice Program.

Pursuant to NJSA 18A:36B-7b(1) & (2) and NJAC 6A:12-3.1(a)1, the Board of Education limits the number of its district students permitted to participate in the choice program to a maximum of 10 percent of the number of students per grade level per year and 15 percent of the total number of students enrolled in the Upper Pittsgrove School.

The calculation of the enrollment of this district will be based on the October Application for State School Aid (ASSA) in accordance with NJSA 18A:36B-8b(4) & (5) and NJAC 6A:12-3.1(a)3.

Procedures

In accordance with NJAC 6A:12-4.3(c)1, upon receipt of a Notification of Intent to Enroll in a Choice District from a student residing in this district, the Superintendent of Schools/designee shall verify that the student is enrolled in a school of the district and that the student has been counted as a student in the district in the October ASSA of the current school year.

Pursuant to NJAC 6A:12-3.1(a)4i, in the event that student requests for participation exceed the enrollment percentages listed above, the district will conduct a lottery. The lottery must be held in enough time to meet the deadline established by law for notification to the parent/guardian of the student.

As stipulated in NJAC 6A:12-3.1(a)4i and 4ii, in the first application cycle, the results of the lottery must be used to determine which students will be eligible to participate in the School Choice Program and to develop a waiting list of the remaining students to be used in the second application cycle. Each participant in the lottery must be assigned a number reflecting the student's place on the list of eligible students or on the waiting list.

In the event that some or all of the students in this district who received permission to apply to a choice school district in the first application process do not enroll in a choice school district, this district will first go to its waiting list to ascertain which student will be eligible to apply to a choice school district in the second application cycle. Should it become evident that there are more openings than may be filled by the students on the waiting list, this district will allow additional students who express an interest in applying to a choice school district to do so. If there are more interested students than would be

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permitted by this district's enrollment limitation percentage as noted above, this district must conduct a lottery of all newly interested students to determine which students may apply to a choice school district. This lottery should not include students on the first application cycle waiting list who must be offered the opportunity to apply to a choice school district before the newly interested students.

During the second application cycle, it is not necessary to develop a waiting list.

In accordance with NJAC 6A:12-4.39(c), parents/guardians of all students who have submitted a notice of intent to enroll in a choice district by the due date, shall be provided written notification that the student may or may not participate in the School Choice Program.

In cases where the parent/guardian is notified that that student may not participate in the School Choice Program, such notification shall include an explanation as to the reason(s) for not being permitted to participate. In the first application cycle, if the student has been placed on the waiting list, the notification will include that information and provide the waiting list number assigned to the student.

Legal References

NJSA 18A:7A-10 Evaluation of performance of each school
18A:7C-2 Boards of education; establishment of standards
18A:7F-1 through -34 Comprehensive Education Improvement and Financing Act
18A:33-1 District to furnish suitable facilities; adoption of courses of study
18A:35-1 et seq. Curriculum and Courses
18A:36B-7b(1) & (2) Limits of participation in School Choice Program

NJAC 6A:12-1 et seq Interdistrict School Choice Program
6A:8-1.1 et seq. Standards and Assessment
6A:12-3.1(a)1 Limits for participation in School Choice Program
6A:23-1.1 et seq. Finance and Business Services
6A:26-1.1 et seq. Educational Facilities
6A:30-1.1 et seq. Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. 107-110
New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC)