



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HERNANDO COUNTY CONTROLLED CHOICE PLAN 2014-2015

The School Board of Hernando County employs what is commonly referred to as a Neighborhood School concept. Students are assigned to school attendance zones based on the student's legal residential address. A Controlled Choice Program is designed to give all parents the opportunity to select a school other than their child's zoned school.

Examples of School Choice Options:

- Controlled Parental Choice
- Career Academies
- International Baccalaureate Program
- Thematic Programs
- Magnet Programs
- Hernando eSchool (contact 352-797-7072 for application information)
- McKay Scholarships (contact www.floridaschoolchoice.org for application information)
- Charter Schools (contact Charter School for application information)

Controlled Parental Choice

⇒ Applications are required when:

- a. The request is for initial entry of a student in a school other than their zoned school;
- b. Boundary changes place a student in a different neighborhood school, and the parents want their child to remain at the school the student was previously zoned for before the changes were made;
- c. There is a change of home address which places the student in a different neighborhood school and the parents want their child to remain at the school. In these cases, approval is limited to the remainder of the current school year;
- d. A school is severely overcrowded, there are no other alternatives for relief, and the Superintendent has deemed that the impact of student reassignment must be reviewed and reconsidered;
- e. A parent of a Hernando County student is requesting attendance in another county or a parent living in another county is requesting attendance in a Hernando County School.

Application Process

⇒ Controlled Parental Choice, Career Academies, International Baccalaureate Programs and Thematic Programs:

- a. Access to applications for the Controlled Parental Choice, as well as Career Academies, International Baccalaureate and Thematic Programs when not available at the zoned

school are available online during the open enrollment period which is established yearly by the School Board. Parents without a computer or Internet access may seek assistance from their nearest school, public library, or District office.

- b. Parents may complete an online application during the District's open enrollment period from February 1st through March 1st as established by the School Board.
- c. All applications submitted outside of the open enrollment period will only be considered when there is a documented hardship or other eligible situation.
- d. Schools close to or over 100% capacity are not available for Controlled School Choice. These will be determined annually by the Superintendent's office.
- e. Parents will be notified through parental email address provided on the application (*or by phone if email is not available*) during the month of March.

⇒ Magnet Programs:

- a. Parents are to complete the application process during the Magnet School's open enrollment period established yearly by the School Board.
- b. Refer to the approved Magnet School Procedures for further details on their application process. The current procedure can be found under "District Documents" on our website at www.hernandoschools.org

⇒ Preference for Admission:

⇒ Dependent children of active duty military personnel.

⇒ Siblings residing at the same address, requesting to be assigned to the same school with the exception of a student that is an exiting fifth, eighth, or twelfth grader or enrolled through a specific program such as Magnet programs, International Baccalaureate or Career Academies.

⇒ Children of Hernando County School District employees.

Continuity of School Assignment

⇒ Once a School Choice assignment has been approved, students may remain in attendance up to the highest grade level offered in their chosen school unless the school is at capacity or unless the student has disciplinary or attendance problems.

⇒ Once a student is approved and registered for a controlled parental choice, magnet or theme program, he or she will no longer be eligible for any other school choice options for that school year.

⇒ Students will not be allowed to change schools during the year without approval of the District Hardship Committee.

Change of Residence

⇒ Parents who can demonstrate they are purchasing, building or renting a home in a different zone from where they are currently living, (original electric or water bill in their name, rental agreement, notarized statement from landlord, deed or construction contract

showing commencement of construction) **do not** require an application through School Choice procedures.

- ⇒ Parents who move and wish their child(ren) to remain at their current school for the balance of the school year, must request school reassignment for special circumstances through the Student Services Department and receive approval from the District Hardship Committee.

Transportation

- ⇒ The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for providing transportation when their student is approved to attend a school outside of their attendance zone. Transportation will be provided to certain Exceptional Education Students when required by their IEP. Also, some limited transportation options are available for students accepted into Magnet programs.

Rescinding of Approved School Choice

- ⇒ Approval of a School Choice application may be rescinded if:
 - a. False information was provided;
 - b. It is determined by district and school personnel that enrollment at a requested school is having a negative impact on the student's educational progress;
 - c. The student withdraws from a course of study that was the basis for enrollment at the requested school (i.e. Career Academies, International Baccalaureate);
 - d. The student does not maintain passing grades, good attendance, appropriate behavior, or if the student is chronically tardy to school.

The decision to rescind a School Choice approval requires discussion with the parent, the school administration, and the Student Services Department. A student whose reassignment has been rescinded, will return to his/her zoned school the following school year.

Appeals Procedures

- ⇒ Once an application for Controlled School Choice has been denied, the student is expected to attend his/her zoned school and may re-apply during the next open enrollment period for enrollment the following school year.
- ⇒ Parents may request a review before the Hardship Committee based upon a documented hardship situation. Board approved hardship criteria includes:
 - a. A medical condition as verified in writing by a physician that requires treatment or supervision in proximity to the school being requested;
 - b. A situation where the student requesting reassignment has been the victim of a crime and/or violence by another student.
 - c. There has been a death of a student's parent(s) or sibling(s).

The Hardship Committee shall consist of the Director of Student Services, the Assistant Superintendent, and a Supervisor of Curriculum.

Parents who are denied their appeal through the Hardship Committee may appeal the decision to the Superintendent of Schools. The decision of the Superintendent is final and cannot be appealed to the School Board.

Promoting Parental Involvement and Disseminating Information:

- ⇒ The district believes that parental choice is a vital part of the child’s education. The district accepts responsibility for providing information, as well as assisting parents in making school choice decisions for their children.
- ⇒ Information regarding the school choice open enrollment process is made available to parents and the community via:
 - Local newspaper advertising in print and online.
 - School newsletters to the parents of students impacted by school boundary changes
 - Automated telephone messages announcing open enrollment time lines
 - School marquee announcements, when possible
 - Year round postings on the district website
 - Application guidelines and a “Question & Answer” paper published in English and Spanish on the district website and in paper format
 - Letters and flyers mailed to directors of private preschools and daycare centers
 - School-based meetings for families of students articulating from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school
 - Parent communication on semester report card.
- ⇒ The parents of students being bused for desegregation purposes may submit a written request to the Student Services Department to object to busing and opt out of participation in the district’s voluntary desegregation plan. When a parent makes such a request in writing, that student shall attend their zoned school.

Attendance Zone Changes:

- ⇒ As new schools are built, the District will form rezoning committees to consider setting the new school’s boundaries as well as revising the zones of affected schools.

Additional Information Regarding Choice Options

- ⇒ Career Academies

These are career technical programs that typically entail three to four years of coursework and are offered at varying high schools. Academy students are required to maintain a “B” average in their academy program to continue on to the next level and pass the industry certification exam for the program. Career Technical Education Specialists conduct orientation meetings regarding high school programs in the fall for eighth grade students at each middle school. All applications must be submitted during the online enrollment period (February 1st through March 1st). Students who withdraw from courses required in the selected high school career academy will return to their zoned school at the end of the year.

- ⇒ Charter Schools

These are nonsectarian schools of choice designed to deliver programs to meet the needs of the community. Funding for charter schools comes from the state and is sponsored by the local school District but privately operated. Charter Schools have the freedom to set their

own rules on curriculum, teaching style, personnel and discipline rules. Contact the charter school directly for application information.

⇒ John M. McKay Scholarship Program for Students With Disabilities

A parent of a student, who has been identified as disabled and has a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 accommodation plan, may request that the student attend another public school in the district provided that school can provide the services the student needs to accomplish the goals and objectives on the student's individual plan. The McKay Scholarship Program may also offer a student the opportunity to attend a public school in an adjacent district or receive a scholarship to attend a participating private school. Parents wishing to find out more information about this program should contact the Exceptional Student Education office.

⇒ International Baccalaureate Program (IB)

A school with an IB program is a school offering students a rigorous and relevant curriculum that is recognized internationally. These schools are designed to attract a diverse student body wishing to participate in a demanding four-year curriculum (2 years of preparation and 2 years of IB coursework) leading to final examinations and a qualification that is welcomed by leading universities around the world. These schools have an attendance zone. Parents must submit an application to the district and meet the application criteria. Schools with an IB program conduct orientation meetings regarding their school programs during the month of November. All applications must be submitted during the online enrollment period (February 1st through March 1st). Students who withdraw from courses required in the program will return to their zoned school and may not select an alternate program in order to remain at the school.

⇒ Thematic Programs

A school with a thematic program offers curriculum and academic instruction based on a central theme. These schools have specific attendance zones and accept a limited number of students outside of their attendance zone based on student vacancies at specific grade levels.

⇒ Magnet Program

A school with a magnet program is a school offering curriculum based on a specific theme or instructional method. For more information, refer to the approved magnet program procedures on our website at www.hernandoschools.org under "District Documents".