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Florida Department of Education
2017-2018 Holmes School District Controlled Open Enrollment Plan

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Nine Quality Indicators of Consideration:
1. Application Process:

Parents/guardians access schools of choice through an application process during the Controlled Open Enrollment period (March 20--May 5) established annually by the District. The application for Controlled Open Enrollment can be obtained from the Holmes County Schools website for printing. Parents/guardians without computer access may seek assistance from the District Office or public library. Submitting an application does not guarantee that the student will be approved to transfer to the requested school. The application is completed and signed by the parent/guardian and submitted to Instructional Administrator via fax or email. Applications are required when:

- The request is for initial entry of a student in a school of choice.
- A student is attending a school of choice that is impacted by boundary changes, and the parents/guardians/guardians want their child to remain at the school the student was previously approved to attend through the school choice process.
- There is a change of home address, which places the student in a different neighborhood school, and the parents/guardians/guardians want their child to remain at the school for the remainder of the current school year. In these cases, approval is limited to the remainder of the current school year.
- The parents/guardians want to transfer their child from one school of choice to another school of choice.
- A student in good standing withdraws from an approved school of choice, and the parents/guardians want their child to reenter the school of choice.
- A student withdraws from a course of study that was the reason for attending the school of choice, and the parents/guardians want their child to remain at the school of choice for the remainder of the current school year.
- A school is severely overcrowded, there are no alternatives for relief, and the Superintendent has deemed that the impact of school choice must be reconsidered.
- A parent/guardian of a Holmes County student is requesting attendance in another district or a parent/guardian living in another district is requesting attendance at a Holmes County school. In such cases, parents/guardians must reapply annually for release from their home district and entry into Holmes County or release from Holmes County for entry into another district.

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Additional Options include:

1. McKay Scholarship

Note: School choice approvals for Holmes County residents remain in effect throughout the highest grade level at the school of choice, unless circumstances warrant a new application or the district rescinds school choice approval.

2. Process for Declaring School Preference:

- School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment applications are accepted for all district schools Controlled Open to Choice. To be Controlled Open to Choice a school must be below 90% capacity.
- Applications are accepted outside the Controlled Open Enrollment period ONLY when a school choice request is based on a documented hardship or other eligible situation.
- School choices are publicized primarily through the district web site including the following information:
    i. School program information
    ii. School location/zoning maps
    iii. Transportation information

3. Consideration of Mitigating Factors and Process that Encourages Placement of Siblings within the Same School:

A. Mitigating Factors

Holmes District administrators will assist in the assignment process and will make reasonable efforts to provide an assignment that is appropriate for the individual circumstances.

Preferential treatment is given to:

- Homeless students as defined in School Board Policy 5.20
- Children who move due to a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent
- Students residing in the school district
- Students in foster care
- Dependent children of active duty military personnel
- School assignment issues that arise due to custody issues, legal situations and administrative circumstances

B. Sibling Placement

Placement of siblings within the same school is facilitated whenever feasible during the Controlled Open Enrollment period if appropriate educational services are available for each sibling at the requested school. The Controlled Open Enrollment application includes a section for the parent to indicate if they have submitted new applications for other siblings to attend the same school or if a sibling in good standing is currently attending and will continue to attend the requested school. The application includes a section for parents/guardians to provide the full name and grade level of each sibling so that blended families with different surnames can be cross-referenced.

Special consideration for approval of school choice is given to:

- Siblings of exceptional education students placed at the school of choice through School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment or McKay Scholarship;
- Siblings of students previously approved for school choice who are enrolled, in good standing and attending the school of choice; and
- Siblings of students who attend another educational level (elementary, middle or secondary) at schools co-located on the same grounds or physically adjacent to each other when a documented hardship situation warrants approval to attend the requested school.

4. Lottery Procedure to Determine Student Assignment:

- Once a school approaches or exceeds 90% of stated capacity, the school is reclassified as frozen to Controlled Open Enrollment.
- After capacity has been reached, the remaining school choice Controlled Open Enrollment applications are assigned a lottery number. This number is used to weight the remaining requests.

5. Appeals Process for Hardship Cases:

Parents/guardians of students who applied during Controlled Open Enrollment and were not approved for placement in a school of choice may request an appeal review based on a documented hardship situation within 3 days of receiving notice of denial. A written appeal describing the hardship must be submitted via facsimile or email to the Instructional Administrator's office. The appeal committee serves as the contact for appeal requests and coordinates the review of all hardship requests. The results of this appeal are considered final.

Hardships or statutory provisions may affect Choice transfers to schools in all status categories. These provisions include documented medical, emotional, psychological, and legal reasons:

- Availability of day care will not be considered as a basis for hardship beyond the elementary level.
- If a hardship appeal is submitted for medical reasons, including psychiatric, the parent or guardian must submit a Medical Hardship Documentation and Release of Records form, including a physician's statement describing the medical condition of the student and specific medical reasons justifying the request.
- If a hardship appeal is submitted for legal reasons, the parent or guardian must submit documentation of the legal hardship.
- Hardship appeals based on course availability will not be considered unless the requested program was stated in the original application and is not available at the zoned school, and the requested school has space available in the core academic classes as well as in the requested program.

6. Procedure to Maintain Socioeconomic, Demographic, and Racial Balance:

• A database of school choice requests is maintained and cross-referenced with the district electronic student information system. Updated lists of students approved to attend a school of choice are generated periodically for review by district and school based administration.

• School choice data is collected and the Superintendent's staff is apprised of emerging patterns that may potentially impact the socioeconomic, demographic and racial balance of the district. If necessary, further analysis and possible revision to the district School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment may be recommended.

7. **Availability of Transportation**:

   The parent/guardian is responsible for the transportation of a student approved to attend a school of choice through the Controlled Open Enrollment process.

8. **Process for Promoting Strong Parental Involvement, Including the Designation of a Parent Liaison:** Development of the district Controlled Open Enrollment plan incorporates input from school based staff, district departments, and consortium district representatives. Input is obtained through: focus group meetings to address school choice topics presented by school based staff, district departments, families or community members include but are not limited to:
   - Meetings to discuss proposed school boundary changes
   - District liaisons assigned to serve as non-voting members of School Advisory Councils
   - Individual conference meetings with parents/guardians, school staff, and community members
   - Superintendent staff meetings with school principals and assistant principals
   - Parent Involvement Advisory Council

   The Instructional Administrator provides information on school choice options, assists parents/guardians with the application process, coordinates the approval process for school choice within the district, and facilitates the appeals process for hardship cases. Information is available via phone, e-mail, or the website.

9. **Strategy for Establishing an Information Clearinghouse**

   Serving as an information clearinghouse on school choice options available to parents/guardians, the Instructional Administrator oversees implementation of School Choice Controlled Open Enrollment, the McKay Scholarship for Students with Disabilities, and home education. The Instructional Administrator works collaboratively with the district departments responsible for implementation of Opportunity Scholarship Program school choice options, charter schools, virtual school programs, alternative education, home instruction, career and technical education, Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities and enhanced and innovative programs. Information regarding the school choice Controlled Open Enrollment process is made available to parents/guardians and the community via:
   - Local and regional press releases
   - School newsletters to the parents/guardians of students impacted by school boundary changes
   - School marquee announcements
   - Year round postings on the district website
   - Application Guidelines and a Question and Answer Paper published on the district website
   - School-based meetings for families of students articulating from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school.