File: JCA - CONTROLLED CHOICE STUDENT ASSIGNMENT PLAN

ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS TO SCHOOLS

SCHOOL CHOICES

Under the "Controlled Choice" student assignment plan, parents/guardians may be allowed to choose the schools or elementary programs that are best suited for their children by their own rank order of preference. The student assignment plan gives Somerville parents/guardians the opportunity to enroll their student(s) in any school with an appropriate program and grade structure. Parents/guardians will rank at least five choices, and are encouraged to visit a range of schools before submitting their school choices to the Enrollment Office.

STABILITY OF ASSIGNMENT

Once enrolled in their permanent school of assignment, all Somerville students will be afforded stability of assignment, unless a student must be displaced because the current school will no longer offer an appropriate placement.

PROXIMITY SCHOOLS

For the purposes of this policy, Proximity School is defined as the school to which a student is given placement preference based on the student's street address. The Somerville Public Schools publishes an alphabetical street listing on the District's website designating the Proximity School for each address. Every year, the Enrollment Office will review and may update its alphabetical street listing of Proximity Schools to include any new address. When significant developments occur, including but not limited to decennial censuses, enrollment studies, or major new housing projects, the Enrollment Office will revise its Proximity School listing to better align school assignments with populations in different areas of the city. The Somerville Public Schools' prioritization of Proximity School ensures that students have the opportunity to attend a school that is within a reasonable distance from their home.

Somerville Public Schools may adjust the Proximity Schools for any address based on changes to populations and their distributions across the city. Such Proximity School changes will not affect the stability of assignment for students already assigned to a school.

PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT

Students are assigned to available openings according to the following procedures:

1. PROGRAMMATIC PRIORITY ASSIGNMENTS

   Students requiring special education or English Language Learner classes are assigned to those respective programs.

2. SIBLING ASSIGNMENTS

For kindergarten through eighth grade, students who have a sibling already enrolled in their first-choice school will be given preference for assignment to that school provided that the assignment does not violate Somerville School Committee policies. Moreover, every effort will be made to assign siblings to attend the same schools if their parents/guardians so desire.

3. PARENT/GUARDIAN CHOICE AND PROXIMITY SCHOOLS

Students will be assigned to the first available school on the list of preferences selected by their parents/guardians. For students with the same preference ranking for a school, those students who have that school as their Proximity School will be given preference to that school over those students who have a different Proximity School.

4. RANDOM LOTTERY ASSIGNMENTS

If the procedures listed above are not sufficient to determine assignments for a group of students, assignments shall be made by random lottery conducted by the Enrollment Office.

WAITING LISTS

Every effort will be made to accommodate parent/guardian preferences for their children's placement within the system of priorities and educational seating capacity. Students who are not assigned to their parents'/guardians' first-choice school will be added to that school's waiting list. Assignments from the waiting list will be made in accordance with the Controlled Choice procedures indicated above until November 1. In general, transfers occur only between the start of the school year and November 1, with the exception of those transfers required for educational programming purposes or compliance with student safety plans. After April 1 of the following year, the Enrollment Office will contact parents/guardians to confirm their continued interest in having their child on the waiting list.

ENROLLMENT OFFICE

The purpose of the Enrollment Office is to assist parents/guardians in enrolling their children in school, to support families with referrals to other school/city departments and non-profit organizations that offer support, and to assign students based on the controlled choice student assignment plan. All students who are new to the District will be enrolled through the online portal or in person at the Enrollment Office. The Enrollment Office will make every effort to have staff appropriate to serve the linguistic and educational needs of the city's diverse student population groups. The Enrollment Office staff are responsible for parent/guardian outreach and orientation to the student assignment plan, coordination of school visits and student registrations, reviewing and revising the Proximity School listing, and all other necessary activities that will facilitate parents/guardians making informed school choices.

Student Assignment Officer

The Superintendent will designate an Enrollment Director who shall be responsible for supervising the establishment and staffing of the Enrollment Office and the training for the

Enrollment Office staff. The Enrollment Director reports directly to the Superintendent and is responsible for making all final student assignments for newly enrolling and transfer students in grades Pre-K through 8.

School Transfers

Students who need a transfer because of a change in recommended educational programming (e.g., sub-separate special education class to a general education setting, sheltered English Immersion-1 classroom to general education setting) will be prioritized over other requested transfers. Parents/guardians requesting a school transfer for their student(s) during a school year must submit a school-transfer application form to the Enrollment Office, and such requests will be subject to availability of open seats and subject to the Controlled Choice student assignment plan. This procedure will apply to all students seeking a school transfer in grades Pre-K through 8. Parents/guardians of students already enrolled in the Somerville Public Schools who submit timely school-transfer applications will be given priority before other newly enrolling students.

Language Testing and Placement of New English Language Learners

Students who newly enroll in the Somerville Public Schools and indicate a language other than English on their Home Language Survey are required to receive an English language assessment prior to receiving their particular program or school assignment. This action ensures effective compliance with state and federal English Language Learner requirements for identification and screening and facilitates an educationally sound approach to the program placement and assignment of students with limited English proficiency.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37C; 71:37D; 71:37I; 71:37J

Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to Section 8 of Chapter 636 of the Acts of 1974, Regarding Magnet School Facilities and Magnet Educational Programs, adopted 2/25/75

Board of Education Regulations Pursuant to Chapter 636 of the Acts of 1974, adopted 9/10/74

Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to the Preparation of Racial Balance Plans Which Involve Redistricting, adopted 4/24/73

CROSS REFS.: JFBA, INTRA-DISTRICT TRANSFER

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