

2019-2020 District Controlled Open Enrollment Plan

Hardee District

Contact Information

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1. Application Process

Applications are available at the Federal Programs office, 230 South Florida Avenue (863-773-9058) and at www.hardee.k12.fl.us. The application information is available in Spanish and English. Upon completion of the application by the parent/guardian, it is to be returned to the Federal Programs office for processing. These applications are submitted to the requested schools, reviewed by the school principal for approval based on school capacity, subject to the maximum class size requirements and forwarded to the district Student Academic Services and Federal Programs' office for processing.

The initial window for applications for the following year will begin in May of the current school year. Applications are processed during the summer months. Parents are notified of approval/disapproval by phone call or letter.

After the initial application window deadline on May 31, 2019, applications will continue to be accepted for new district enrollees and hardship cases and approval contingent on school capacity, subject to the maximum class size requirements.

Applications are accepted and processed throughout the school year for new student enrollees in the district with approval based on school capacity, subject to the maximum class size requirements.

Applications are accepted and processed throughout the school year for transfers outside of the May enrollment window for a hardship transfer based on school capacity, subject to the maximum class size requirements.

Attendance Area:

The plan creates five elementary school areas. District assigned school attendance zones shall take into consideration balancing student enrollment numbers and balancing student economic patterns. Transportation of students shall comply with the Hardee County School Board's Transportation Policy Manual. Attendance Zones will be determined by the Superintendent's Office annually. Any revisions or changes will be School Board approved.

The number of available seats at a school will be determined before the application process starts each year. The district will analyze Southern Association of Colleges and Schools recommendations, FLDOE Class Size Reduction requirements, staffing plans, classroom space, restrooms, and dining facilities in the permanent facility to arrive at a maximum capacity for a school.

2. Process for Declaring School Preference

Information is provided to the parents/guardians of all students enrolled in Hardee County Schools of each year regarding the application process and enrollment window dates by phone through our automated phone service, SAC meetings, school newsletters or announcements placed on our district website and local newspaper. To the extent possible, this information is distributed in English and Spanish.

For purposes of continuity of educational choice, a student who transfers may remain at the school chosen by the parent until the student completes the highest grade level at the school. Applications will not be required on an annual basis upon the initial approval year at the school. Students, who were approved for the 2018-2019 school year, will not need to complete an application for the 2019-2020 school year.

The application requests are not approved on a first-come, first-served basis, but will be approved in accordance with school capacity, subject to the maximum class size requirements. If there are more applicants than capacity for a school, then a lottery procedure will be implemented.

Preferential treatment in the enrollment process is provided to:

- Dependent children of active duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders;
- Children who have been relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone;
- 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;
- Siblings living in the same residence; and
- HCSB employee children.

Students who move during the school year from one zone to another may continue to attend the current school for the remainder of the year or attend the new zoned school. Transportation will be the responsibility of the parent when the student remains in the current school.

Parents from any school district in the state, whose child is not subject to a current expulsion or suspension order, may enroll his or her child in and transport his or her child to Hardee schools in accordance with school capacity, subject to the maximum class size requirements. Current Hardee county students residing in the district may not be displaced by a student residing in another school district seeking enrollment in Hardee county.

3. Process that Encourages Placement of Siblings within the Same School

Siblings may be placed together in the same school according to the Controlled Open Enrollment Plan in accordance with school capacity, subject to the maximum class size requirements.

4. Lottery Procedure to Determine Student Assignment

Hardee County has not previously used a lottery procedure for placement of students requesting open enrollment. Open enrollment applications have been accommodated without the need for a lottery. However, if there are more applicants than capacity for a school, then the following lottery procedures will apply:

- a. Applications received prior to 4:30 pm on May 31 in the Student Academic Services office will be considered for open enrollment.
- b. All preferential applications will be placed initially and then any available seats will be assigned by a lottery. If space does not permit all of the preferential students to be accommodated, then a lottery will determine their placement.
- c. All preferential applications will be randomly numbered with the assistance of a computer program and then sorted from the smallest random number to the largest random number. Available seats will then be assigned to the applicants for the school starting with the smallest random number and ending at the total number of seats available.
- d. If seats remain, then any remaining Hardee resident applications will be randomly numbered with the assistance of a computer program and then sorted from the smallest random number to the largest random number. Available seats will then be assigned to the applicants for the school starting with the

smallest random number and ending at the total number of seats available.

- e. Out of county applications will be considered if there are remaining seats after the preferential students and all of Hardee students are placed. A random lottery will be conducted for out of county residents if necessary.

Applications are accepted and processed throughout the school year for new student enrollees with approval based on school capacity, subject to the maximum class size requirements. A lottery procedure will be conducted if there are more new enrollee applicants than capacity.

5. Hardship Transfer Appeal

Applicants for enrollment choice transfers outside of the open enrollment window, in May of each year, may request a hardship transfer at the Student Academic Services office. The Deputy Superintendent will review the hardship case and will place the student if hardship indicates this is appropriate in accordance with school capacity, subject to the maximum class size requirements. A lottery procedure will be conducted if there are more hardship transfer applicants than capacity.

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

Current and historical placements of students based on choice of controlled open enrollment have not affected socioeconomic, demographic or racial balance. District staff monitor these factors according to controlled open enrollment placements. If these factors were to present a concern, the district guidelines will be amended to include procedures to maintain this balance.

7. Availability of Transportation

All provisions within this section shall adhere to current Board policy. The Hardee County School Board currently provides transportation of students to their zoned schools and will not fund transportation across district/ school/attendance boundary lines. The parent or guardian shall be responsible to transport his or her child to the unzoned school which has not reached capacity, subject to the maximum class size requirements. In accordance with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), relocated foster care students and homeless students will be transported by Hardee County School Board to the school of origin upon an assessment of the best interests of the student.

8. Process for Promoting Strong Parental Involvement, Including the Designation

of a Parent Liaison

Hardee County's Controlled Open Enrollment Plan is presented to each School Advisory Council (SAC), which will serve in the role of a parent liaison, in order to promote parental involvement and feedback regarding the plan. Parental and community feedback gathered through the SAC meetings, and other venues is considered during the development of the district controlled open enrollment plan.

9. Determination of Capacity

A determination of schools with available capacity will be posted to the school district's website at www.hardee.k12.fl.us.

For the 2019-20 school year, a school will be subject to Controlled Open Enrollment when it has been determined that the school has available capacity. Capacity will be determined by the principal in conjunction with the Deputy Superintendent using the Florida Inventory School House (FISH) report and class size maximums according to F.S. 1003.03.

ESE students are eligible to apply to all programs and eligible schools, including Controlled Open Enrollment. If accepted to the school, an IEP team will convene to determine whether the student's needs can be adequately addressed and to ensure the IEP can be implemented at the chosen school. If not, the student will not be enrolled, but placed at the appropriate school based on attendance zone or appropriate placement for services if they are a resident of Hardee County. Students residing in another county, whom the district is not able to serve, will be expected to enroll in their home county.

10. Strategy for Establishing an Information Clearinghouse

Hardee County is a small district that includes five elementary schools, one middle school, one alternative school, and one high school. The open enrollment program in Hardee County is well-publicized. The program has been in effect for many years and the local community is well aware of the application process. For transfers into the district and newly enrolled kindergarten students, information is available at the time of enrollment. All documents are available in Spanish and English and translators are available at all school sites to assist parents in the application process. In addition, translators are available to assist parents in answering questions.

11. Student-Athlete Transfers

Student-athletes who transfer to another school must comply with the FHSAA Rules of Athletic Eligibility in order to be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics and Intrасhoolastic extracurricular activities.

- a. A student participating in Controlled Open Enrollment is immediately eligible upon enrollment to participate in interscholastic athletics and Intrасcholastic extracurricular activities.
- b. A student may not participate in a sport if the student participated in that same sport at another school during that school year, unless the student meets one of the following criteria:
 1. Dependent children of active duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders.
 2. Children who have been relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone.
 3. Children who have been moved due to a court-ordered change custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent.
 4. Authorized for good cause in district school policy.

12. Voluntary Return to Assigned School or District

Upon request, a student shall be permitted to return to the student's zoned school if capacity permits; however, it is recommended that the student return at the end of the marking period or semester, unless extenuating circumstances are present.

13. Rescinding Placement

Approval of a school choice application may be rescinded if:

- a. False information was provided (F.S. 837.06 & F.S. 92.525-providing false information is a criminal act).
- b. The student does not maintain passing grades, good attendance, appropriate behavior, or if the student is chronically tardy to school.
 1. The principal will meet with the parent/guardian upon the possibility of school choice being rescinded to discuss the concerns. The meeting will be documented by meeting notes.
 2. If this does not remedy the matter, the Deputy Superintendent will meet with the parents and determine if school choice will be rescinded.
 3. An elementary school student whose choice has been rescinded will return to the zoned school at the end of the grading period. Out of county middle or high school students whose choice has been rescinded may return to the zoned district school immediately or at the end of the semester upon the principal's discretion.

14. Residence:

A student's permanent residence is the student's permanent residence of the student, parents or legal guardian(s) as defined in this section.

"Permanent residence" is defined by Florida Statute 106.012(17) as follows: *That place where a person has his or her true, fixed and permanent home and principal*

establishment to which, whenever absent, he or she has the intention of returning. A person may have only one permanent residence at a time.

An adult student's permanent residence is his or her current permanent residence. A minor student's permanent residence is the permanent residence of his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s). If a minor student's parents or legal guardians live in separate residences while sharing physical custody under the terms of a court order or otherwise, the student may attend the school zoned for either residence with appropriate residency documentation.

- **Full and Complete Current Residence**

A person cannot have more than one permanent residence, and only the student's current permanent residence as defined above may be used for enrollment purposes.

- **Proof of Residence**

Hardee County School District may require detailed proof of residence, and only the student's current permanent residence as defined above may be used for enrollment purposes.

- **Change of Residence**

The following items are evidence that a change of residence is full and complete:

- a. The former residence is not occupied for any purpose at any time by the student or any of the persons with whom the student has been living; and
- b. All personal belongings are moved from the former residence; and
- c. Mail is received at the new residence; and
- d. All utilities are transferred to the new residence.

- **Residence Fraud**

Parents(s) / Guardian(s) are committing residence fraud if they submit an address during the enrollment process that is not their true permanent residence. If there is reasonable suspicion that the student is not residing at the claimed address, the following procedures may be implemented at the discretion of the Superintendent of his/her designee.

- a. A letter may be sent to the parent(s) requesting that the parent verify and update enrollment information. This may be followed by a phone conversation or home visit.
 - b. The school staff may examine the Property Appraiser's website to determine the parent's homestead (permanent residence) location. The homestead address of the parent will be a factor to determine the student's zoned school. A conflicting address indicates further investigation is required.
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