



# Lawrence Public Schools

## Policy of the School Committee

**Section J: STUDENTS**

**JFBA**

**Subject: INTER-SCHOOL TRANSFER/VARIANCE**

**1 of 4**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **Summary**

This criteria is being promulgated in the context of the following goals established by the Superintendent:

Many schools have designed programs tailoring the delivery of instructional services to the diverse needs of students in their neighborhood; however, there are instances where an individual student desires an instructional program offered in another school. While innovation within schools is strongly encouraged, this policy provides an orderly process for transfers between schools to meet the needs of parents and students. Transfers may be requested to meet the educational, medical, safety, social-emotional, or other special needs of students and their families.

This policy governs the transfer of students from one school to another. The ability of students to transfer to another school will promote parent involvement, provide structured school choice, and help ensure that all students have access to appropriate programs. This policy sets forth the procedures to be followed by parents in seeking an inter-school transfer and the process for approval of this request. The school district shall be responsible for determining the location and extent of available space in its schools for the purpose of inter-school transfers. Priority for available space must go first to the neighborhood school students and mandated programs. The Superintendent or his/her designee must approve all inter-school transfers.

#### **Process for Requesting Inter-School Transfers/Variations**

- A) Parents contact Parent Information Center to obtain information, applications, procedures and timelines in order to apply for a transfer/variance. Transfers/Variations may be requested up to September 15<sup>th</sup> of the school year for which the request is made. Only requests based on hardship or safety issues will be accepted and reviewed after that date.
- B) Parents should visit the school they wish to transfer their child(ren) to prior to making a formal request to transfer in order to better acquaint themselves with school programs and travel requirements. Visits are arranged by contacting the Principal of the school and scheduling a time to visit.
- C) Parents request a transfer to a school by completing the transfer/variance application and having a conference with the Principal of the requested school. Following this conference, the Principal will sign the application either approving or denying the request for admission.
- D) Following the conference, the application form should be forwarded to the Office of Student Support Services by the parent. The application will then be reviewed and the Superintendent or his designee will give the final approval or denial for admission into the requested school.

*Original adoption: 5/24/01*

*1<sup>st</sup> Reading:*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:*

*Adoption:*

*Proposed reconsideration:*



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- E) All approved transfer/variance requests are made with the understanding that parents are committing to have their child(ren) remain in the "receiving" school for at least one year and to transporting their child to the requested school.. If circumstances warrant return of a student prior to the end of the first year, parents must apply to the Superintendent or his designee for a release.

### **Criteria for Review of Transfer/Variance Requests**

- A) All requests will be reviewed based on: space availability, program availability, student attendance history, and legal mandates for integration/equity.
- B) Schools must accommodate transfer requests for their own neighborhood students, especially when participation is limited by space and/or program availability, prior to considering requests of out-of-neighborhood students. Special education, bilingual/ESL, and 504 students must be provided with equal opportunities for transfer provided the school (or program) can provide their mandated services. Schools are not required to establish services to meet the needs of students requesting to transfer in.
- C) Inter-school transfers must not become a means of negating legitimate zoning or integration procedures, including school programs that contain specific integration criteria. Specifically, integration objectives and admission procedures mandated by the Massachusetts General Laws may not be compromised.
- D) There is no automatic "right" to an inter-school transfer based on having a sibling in the requested school. A request for a transfer/variance due to sibling status may be made and will be considered in accordance with the procedures herein outlined.
- E) The Principal of the "receiving" school and the Superintendent or his/her designee must approve Transfer/Variance requests. Approval by the Principal of the "sending" school is not required.

### **Approval Process for Transfer/Variance Requests**

- A) The Application for School Transfer/Variance should be completed and taken to the conference with the Principal of the requested school.

*Original adoption: 5/24/01*

*1<sup>st</sup> Reading:*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:*

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- B) The Principal of the requested school will sign off on the application following the conference and either approve or deny the request for admission to the school. If the application is approved, the parent must then forward it to the Office of Student Support Services for review and approval by the Superintendent. If the Principal denies the request, he/she must put in writing the reasons for the denial and advise the parent of the right to appeal the denial. A copy of this written denial must be forwarded to the Office of Student Support Services along with the denied application form.
- C) Upon receipt of the application by the Office of Student Support Services, the Superintendent or his/her designee will review the application and approve or deny it within two (2) working days. If it is approved at this level, a copy of the approval will be forwarded to the parent, Principal of the "receiving" school, Principal of the "sending" school, and the Parent Information Center. No Principal may accept an out-of-neighborhood student without an approved transfer/variance request application signed by the Superintendent or his/her designee. If the application is denied at the Superintendent's level, the parent will be notified and have the right to appeal this decision to the Appeals Board.
- D) When an application is approved, the Principal of the "sending" school will be responsible for ensuring that the student's records are forwarded to the "receiving" school in a timely fashion. No student may be discharged from a "sending" school until he/she is placed on the register of a "receiving" school.
- E) When a student is transferred into a school, the student becomes the responsibility of that school and shall be afforded the same rights as other students in that school. When an out-of-neighborhood transfer student reaches the terminating grade at that school, he/she has the option of attending the school for which the neighborhood resident students are zoned.
- F) Transferred students may not be returned to their "sending" school for excessive absences, tardiness, or disciplinary problems. Transferred students who exhibit these issues may have their transfer/variance approval rescinded at the end of the school year and be returned to their neighborhood school for the next school year.

### **Appeals Process**

- A) The Superintendent shall establish an Appeals Board consisting of personnel from the Office of Student Support Services and the Office of Parent Involvement and Outreach to hear appeals of denied transfer/variance requests.

*Original adoption: 5/24/01*

*1<sup>st</sup> Reading:*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:*

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- B) Parents who choose to appeal the denial of their request for transfer/variance must make a written request for an Appeals Board Hearing and send it to the Office of Student Support Services. Within two (2) working days of receipt of this written request for a hearing, the Appeals Board will schedule a hearing at a mutually agreed upon time.
- C) Within 24 hours of a hearing, the Appeals Board will make a recommendation to the Superintendent relative to overturning the denial. The Superintendent will make the final determination within two (2) working days and communicate the decision to the parent, the Parent Information Center Supervisor, and the "receiving" Principal, if approved.

### **Review of the Inter-School Transfer/Variance Plan**

- A) The Office of Student Support Services will review and evaluate the effectiveness of the inter-school transfer/variance plan periodically. This evaluation shall be completed in consultation with the Superintendent.
- B) Each school will maintain accurate records concerning inter-school transfer requests, including: submitted applications and summaries of the number, nature, and disposition of these requests by school. This information, along with any other descriptive material, notices, and sample copies of notification of acceptance/denial of variance requests, must be submitted to The Office of Student Support Services by December 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.
- C) The Office of Student Support Services shall be available to provide technical assistance to schools to develop new or expand existing programs.

Inquiries pertaining to this policy should be addressed to:

#### **Office of Student Support Services**

255 Essex Street  
Lawrence, MA 01842  
(978) 975-5905 ext. 761  
Fax: (978) 975-3072

*Original adoption: 5/24/01*

*1<sup>st</sup> Reading:*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:*

*Adoption:*

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