West Ada School District, Meridian

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Series 600

Policy Title  Schools of Choice  Code No. 604.00

Statement of Guiding Principals

West Ada School District believes in offering students and families a variety of educational opportunities that allow students to pursue an educational setting that matches their interests. The intent of West Ada School district is to provide this educational opportunity equally to all students within the district.

School of Choice Policy

The West Ada School District employ a lottery system to select students for its Schools of Choice. The purpose of the lottery is to provide an equitable system for selecting students when more applications are submitted than there are seats available.

All students who are currently registered at and attending a School of Choice may continue to attend the following year without reapplying by must submit an intent to re-enroll.

Parents of new applicants must complete the Schools of Choice online application from the district website. Siblings of current students are considered new applicants and must complete the online application. Parents can also go in-person to the school to complete the School of Choice application.

Lottery Process – Establishing Priority

- All ON TIME applications are numbered by category and grade level and are given priority as follows:
  - Siblings of currently enrolled students (who will also attend in the coming year) living in the primary attendance zone
  - Siblings of currently enrolled students (who will also attend in the coming year) living in district boundaries but outside of the primary attendance zone
  - New applicants living in the primary attendance zone
  - New applicants living in district boundaries but outside of the primary attendance zone
  - Siblings of current enrolled students (who will also attend in the coming year) living outside district boundaries
  - New applicants living outside district boundaries
  - Note: Students who applied but were not accepted in the previous years on time lottery are given an extra number for the lottery draw (i.e., their application counts twice).
  - Note: Children of full time school employees receive priority status (the same priority afforded to primary attendance zone siblings) in their parent/guardian’s building. Children of full time employees receive priority at the pool level in all other lotteries, after the first draw is held. If a pool draw is not necessary, these applicants are placed at the top of the wait list for their grade level.
• **LATE APPLICATIONS** will be considered after all on-time applications in the order that they are received regardless of in-district boundary or sibling status. Out-of-district late applications will be considered after all in-district late applications.

• While students may apply for multiple Schools of Choice, they will only be drawn and placed for one School of Choice. Once their name is drawn and placed in one lottery, it is taken off the list for any other schools to which they applied and for which lotteries have not yet taken place. The order of School of Choice lottery draw is randomized and changes yearly.

• Once all available seats are assigned, officials begin drawing for the wait list. A wait list of no more than 30 is drawn. The remaining applicants without wait list numbers are placed in a "pool" from which they can be randomly selected if the placed applicants and the initial wait list applicants decline seats.

• Parents must respond to the placement invitation by the date given in the email by completing online school registration and submitting valid proof of residency (a copy of a utility bill dated within 30 days with the customer’s full name and service address clearly visible, a home purchase agreement, or a home rental agreement). Proof of residency will be confirmed and checked against the address provided at the time of application. Any preference given at the time of the lottery draw is contingent on valid proof of residency.

• Once parents respond and accept the seat, that School of Choice becomes the student’s home school. A family must follow the in-district transfer process to attend any other district school according to Policy 501.9.

• If a seat becomes available, the wait list is accessed in by numbered order. Families are notified directly if a seat becomes available for their child. If there is no wait list at a given grade level, then the seats are filled on a first come, first served basis.

• In the event of grade acceleration or retention after the time of placement at a School of Choice, Schools cannot guarantee that space is available in the new grade level. Continued placement is contingent on space available. If space is not available, students will need to return to their home boundary school.

• Not all programs are offered at all schools. Placement in any building is dependent on that school’s ability to appropriately serve the student’s needs.

• In cases where a student’s unique circumstances require a determination regarding a student’s placement in the lottery, that determination will be made in the best interest of the student by School of Choice Coordinator.

**Home School Determination:**

• Once lottery acceptance occurs the School of Choice becomes the student’s new "Home school". If a student considers leaving the “Home school” he/she must follow the in-district transfer process to attend any other school in the district.
If a transfer is granted to leave a School of Choice, then the school where the student transfers becomes the students “Home school” and the student would lose their lottery position.

Any transfer must be approved annually according to Idaho Code 33-1402. In-district students that have bee accepted at a School of Choice do not need to apply for the annual transfer because the School of Choice becomes their “Home school”.

Applicants must live in the residence from which they are applying at least 50% of the time with a parent or legal guardian.

Out-Of-District (Open Enrollment) Students

- In-District students will be given preference over out-of-district students in every scenario except late applications (See LATE APPLICATIONS above). Out-of-district students will be placed on space available according to appropriate lottery rules.
- Out-of-district transfers must complete the state Open Enrollment form and be approved annually as per Idaho Code 33-1402.
- If an in-district student that has been accepted to a School of Choice moves out of the district, the student will then be considered out-of-district. If the student moves out-of-district before attending the first day of school, the student’s seat will; forfeit. If the student moves out-of-district after attending the first day of school, the student may remain in the School of Choice.

Tuition Kindergarten Lottery Process for Schools of Choice

- Students will receive no lottery preference due to the fact that they are seeking Tuition Kindergarten.

The process keeps all personal information about applicants confidential. Wait list names and numbers are not given out as a general practice.

Definitions

- Siblings - two or more children living at the same residence at least 50% of the time with shared parents, guardians, and/or step-parents.
- Home School – the School of Choice you accept admission to attend.
- Boundary School – The traditional neighborhood school a student qualifies to attend without any lottery process.
- Primary Attendance Zone – The geographic area of the district where students get priority in the lottery.
- School of Choice – West Ada District Schools that admit students by lottery when there are more applicants than seats available.

Date of Revision: 8/23/16; 3/13/18
Legal References: Code of Idaho 33-5205(k)