

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT
OF
CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA



District Controlled Open Enrollment Plan

Overview

The School District of Clay County has developed what is commonly referred to as a Controlled Choice method of student assignment designed to give all parents the opportunity to make selections from a wide range of schools offering appropriate educational program options for their children and to promote stability of assignments for students. This document has been submitted to the Commissioner of Education to fulfill the requirements for filing a School Choice Plan, required by the Florida Department of Education.

The Clay County Controlled Choice Plan is developed around a system of priorities that consider the nine quality indicators identified in Florida law. These indicators provide a comprehensive framework for implementing the plan, and promoting parental involvement.

I. District Application Process

Students will be assigned to appropriate schools on the basis of attendance zones recommended by the Superintendent and established by the School Board of Clay County. The recommendations of the superintendent will be approved by the Board for Advertisement in accordance with Florida Statutes 1002.31. In addition, the Superintendent will make a reasonable effort to notify parents/guardians whose children will be affected by the proposed change in zoning. The proposed changes will be published in local newspapers, school newsletters and posted to district and school web sites.

The Clay County Controlled Choice Plan offers maximum stability for students and promotes the District's school improvement initiatives. Once an assignment has been made, a student who does not move out of the District or to another choice zone, or require an alternative program placement may, if he/she desires, continue to the highest grade level offered in their assigned school.

When a parent/guardian desires his child to attend a school other than the one to which he has been assigned a written request to the Superintendent via the Special Pupil Request form must be completed. Forms are available at all schools and in the District's Student Services Department. The form must state the reason for the request; specify the school assignment desired; and have the signature of both the principals from the zoned school and the requested school. Appropriate documentation should be attached to support the reason for request. The completed application should be submitted to the requested school site.

Parents are encouraged to complete the application prior to the start of an academic year or the beginning of a grading cycle; however, applications will be accepted when submitted. While the application is pending, the child must remain in attendance in the school of the original assignment. Parents/guardians will be notified of approval/denial via mail with the return of a copy of the approved/denied Special Pupil

Request form (SPR). If request is approved, parents/guardians are to then withdraw student from the zoned school and enroll him/her in the approved school. If the request is denied at the school level an appeal to the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction may be made by submitting the application with attached documentation through the District's Student Services office. If denied at the District level, an appeal may be made by requesting in writing to speak before the School Board of Clay County. This request is made through the District's Student Services office at 23 South Green Street in Green Cove Springs.

Note: Currently due to rapid growth many of the Clay County Schools are at capacity and have been declared closed schools except to extenuating circumstances or for programs or courses that are not available at other sites.

For students residing outside of Clay County, they must obtain a *Non-Resident Admission Form* and attach a *Letter of Release* from the District in which they reside. The application is available at all schools and at the District's Student Services Department. The application will be processed and the parent informed via mail in writing of the decision. If the application is denied an appeal may be made to the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction by contacting the District Student Services office. Out of district students will not be accepted at closed schools.

II. **Process for Declaring School Preference**

The parent/guardian informs the school district of his/her request for an out of zone school assignment through the submission of a Special Pupil Request form obtained from one of the local schools or the District Student Services office. If the student lives outside of Clay County the Non-Resident Admission form must be submitted with a Letter of Release from the district in which they reside attached to the form.

School zones are available on the District web site. School web pages have individual school profiles with pertinent curriculum information to assist parents in making selections.

Directions for obtaining an application for a Special Pupil Request are posted on the District web page. Parents are encouraged to complete the applications prior to the academic year or prior to a grading cycle to provide maximum continuity to instruction. Applications are accepted when submitted. Students are to remain in their current placement until the application is processed. If approved the student should be withdrawn from the current placement and enrolled at the requested school.

If a student is applying for the Concept School, Orange Park Elementary, then they must register and participate in the school lottery. The lottery process will result in being assigned to an open slot or placed on a waiting list. Parents are notified in writing of the assignment.

If a secondary student is applying for a specific program or course of study outside of their home school, the acceptance letter must be attached to the application.

Exceptional Student Education students assigned to a specific program outside of their zone are not required to complete a Special Pupil Request.

III. Process of Sibling Placement

Parents with more than one child enrolled in a school are given preference to have other children attend the same school at the elementary and junior high level and open high schools. If the student is a high school student that has been accepted into a special program of student, then sibling placement is dependent on space available.

IV. Lottery Procedures

A lottery procedure is utilized for the district concept school, Orange Park Elementary. Registration dates are published thorough advertisement on the district website, local new releases and school publications. Parents may register their students during the open period to participate in the lottery for openings in the up coming year. Preferences are honored for placement of siblings and students remaining on the waiting list from the previous year.

On an advertised date certain in a public forum, all applications are drawn, numbered and announced by the Director of Elementary Education and the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction. When all available slot s are filled, the remaining applications are placed in numeric order on a waiting list.

V. Appeals Process for Hardship or Extenuating Circumstances

The following specific allowances are given consideration when processing a request for attendance in non-assigned school zone:

- Day Care (K-6 only): Parents desiring a special pupil request because of before/after school care may make application provided the day care provider is located within the attendance area of the requested school **AND** the requested school is **open**. Approval is based on the stated guidelines regarding enrollment, space availability and staff.
- Medical: Must be substantiated with physician's statement attached to the Special Pupil Request.
- Academic Programs (Grades 9-12 Only): The Special Pupil Request must have verification by principal of acceptance into academic program.
- Seniors: Those students entering their senior year and their zoned school changes due to a change in residence or redistricting.
- Extenuating Circumstances: Board Policy 4.06(D) states the "Persons claiming extenuating circumstances to leave a zone to which they have been districted to attend should be prepared to present documentation to the Superintendent and/or Designee."
- Title I Choice: Students attending Title I schools designated as "Schools in Need of Improvement" (SINI) are given Choice based on No Child Left Behind. Parents have the option of selecting from two or more designated schools. Enrollment may continue at the school of Choice

with transportation provided until that grade configuration is completed. A student may return to their home school at any time. Application must be submitted to Title I office with “CHOICE” on the line for reason.

- McKay Scholarship: Any individual student with a disability on an active Individual Education Plan (IEP) and who has attended a Florida school for the one year prior to applying for a McKay scholarship is eligible. One may request a public school of choice or one may seek a voucher for an approved private school. Information is available at the District’s Exceptional Student Education Department.
- Employee: Parents employed by the School District of Clay County may request a specific school for their child/children to attend. This does not include substitutes.

Documentation to support the statement/reason given on the line “Reason for Request” must be attached to the Special Request Form.

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

The district believes that all students and staff should have similar experiences, and should develop greater skills and increased sensitivity, in working with persons of differing backgrounds, so that they may function well as members of a culturally-diverse society. The District’s goal is to ensure that the minority/ethnic diversity composition of each school maintains a representative balance as identified by the zone’s minority/ethnic percentages at the time of implementation.

VII. Availability of Transportation

Transportation will be provided for students assigned to a “Choice” school through Title I NCLB placement.

Students assigned to specific placements outside of their home school zone by the Exceptional Student Education Department will be provided transportation.

Students requesting schools outside their zone, with the exception of the above situations, will be expected to provide their own transportation. If the Day Care provider is within a zone a student that resides outside the zone may be given a courtesy ride in accordance with transportation service standards, Florida Statutes, and District policies set by the School Board.

Students selecting to attend the Concept School will provide their own transportation.

Transportation options are revisited annually for consideration of expansion within the budget constraints.

VIII. Promoting Parental Involvement

The district recognizes that parental involvement is critical to a child's success in education and that parents value an education system that provided numerous and meaningful options for students. The District also believes that choice in a public school will serve as impetus for academic improvement and foster greater accountability with the school system. Each school has a school advisory council that has opportunity to submit valuable feedback to the educational community on new ideas and strategies. Parents are included on district level committees. Title I has an advisory group that meets four times per year at the district office and provides feedback on school issues. At the monthly Board meeting there is opportunity for citizens input. District staff attends and participates in local school events such as open houses, parent night activities, PFA events, and other meetings which give an opportunity for parents to share their views and thoughts. There is opportunity for citizens to address the School Board of Clay County at their monthly meetings. Information posted on local school websites as well as the district web page gives yet another opportunity to disseminate information to help parents make informed decisions in regards to choice for their students.

IX. Clearinghouse of Information

Each year the Clay County School Board publishes a Parent Guide which is sent home with every student. The guide contains a wealth of information to provide assistance to parents/guardians relative to the educational system of Clay County.

The Clay County School Board webpage, www.clay.k12.fl.us is also a valuable source of information for parents/guardians. From this page an individual can access the individual websites for all of the schools in the district. In addition it is also a link to the state website and all the abundance of resources that are linked to that site.