

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

FEDERAL PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

The St. Tammany Parish School Board is required by both Federal law and the Louisiana School Accountability Program to develop and maintain a *Public School Choice* policy for any school with a *School Performance Score* (SPS) below levels set by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). *School Choice* allows eligible students to transfer to an academically acceptable school.

Once schools eligible to receive students have been identified, a school-site utilization study shall be conducted as needed in all schools to determine the extent to which capacity exists to possibly accommodate students from schools offering choice, including students with special needs and/or students with disabilities. Only those schools that are labeled *academically acceptable* shall be considered eligible to receive students.

The Superintendent and staff shall be responsible for developing and managing a *School Choice Plan*, which shall determine the schools to which students may transfer, which students shall have priority in transferring, and all other regulations and procedures for supervising school choice within the school district.

Notification

Notification of parents of their school choice options shall be sent as early as possible, but not later than the first day of the school year for the schools that are required to offer choice. If there are no choice options available, this information shall be included in the notification sent parents.

Eligibility of Students

All students in a school required to offer choice shall be eligible to transfer. However, the School Board shall give priority to the students from the lowest performing schools.

LOUISIANA PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

Louisiana Public School Choice (La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §17:4035.1) provides for the right of a parent or legal guardians to enroll his/her child in a school other than the school to which the child was scheduled to be enrolled based upon a school district attendance zone, if the school at which the child was most recently enrolled received an School Performance Score of “D” or “F” in the most recent assessment and the school to which the child is sought to be enrolled received a School Performance Score of “C” or better in the most recent assessment. To facilitate the operation of Louisiana Public School Choice the St. Tammany Parish Public School System (“System”) establishes the following policy and procedure. As Louisiana Public School Choice provides for certain variable eligibility criterion, any enrollment based upon Louisiana Public School Choice will be considered an annual enrollment and will not obligate the System to allow for enrollment beyond one school year.

The School Board shall define “capacity” for each school, and determine a transfer

request period which shall begin no later than March first and end no earlier than March twenty-eighth, annually. Prior to the transfer request period, the School Board shall notify parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in schools that received a D or F school performance letter grade of the following:

1. The provisions of the Louisiana Public School Choice policy;
2. Schools under the jurisdiction of the School Board that received an A, B, or C school performance letter grade, if any;
3. The process for submitting student transfer requests; and,
4. The page on the Louisiana Department of Education's website that contains school performance data.

SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT

1. A parent or guardian wishing to utilize Louisiana Public School Choice who resides and intends on continuing to reside during the upcoming school year outside of St. Tammany Parish must contact the Covington Annex at 406 East Boston, Covington, Louisiana, or the Slidell Annex at 980 Ninth Street, Slidell, Louisiana. These will be the only offices authorized to process an application to enroll under Louisiana Public School Choice.
2. A birth certificate, identification and/or proof of guardianship must be provided at the time of application.
3. An application for enrollment under Louisiana Public School Choice shall serve as consent for the System to obtain the records and information necessary to determine the eligibility/ineligibility of the student.

VERIFICATION OF INITIAL ELIGIBILITY

1. Documentation of the prior school enrollment of the student must be provided; such as report card or official correspondence.
2. The System will verify that the school of prior enrollment was most recently assessed as a "D" or "F".
3. The parent or guardian shall identify the school to which the student is sought to be enrolled, and the System will verify that such school was most recently assessed as a "C" or better.

VERIFICATION OF CAPACITY

1. The primary obligation of the System is to provide for the enrollment of students who reside within St. Tammany Parish and more specifically to provide for enrollment of students in St. Tammany Parish in the schools aligned with duly established attendance zones. Therefore, the System will not enroll Louisiana Public School

Choice students to the extent that such enrollment may conflict with this primary obligation.

2. Upon receipt of an application for enrollment under Louisiana Public School Choice the System will verify whether the school to which the student is sought to be enrolled has sufficient capacity.
3. The capacity verification shall take into account grade level and special program requirement, such as gifted and talented and shall be made on a school by school basis.
4. For purposes of determining capacity, any school which has an anticipated enrollment of greater than 80% of its optimal total student capacity, in the grade in which the student seeks to enroll, will be deemed to have insufficient capacity to allow for a Louisiana Public School Choice enrollment. Any school that has portables or modular buildings would be considered at capacity.
5. Upon such a determination, the parent will be advised that the school to which enrollment is sought has insufficient capacity.
6. The verification of capacity shall be an annual determination for the re-enrollment of Louisiana Public School Choice students for each subsequent year.

EXCESS APPLICATIONS

1. In the event the number of applications for enrollment exceeds the capacity in any particular school, students enrolled in the school for the prior year shall have preference.
2. If, after enrolling all prior year student applicants exceed the remaining capacity, applicants will be selected at random until capacity is no longer available.

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

Parents and guardians are responsible for contacting the Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) to determine the eligibility of the student for participation in varsity sports. In order to participate in varsity sports sanctioned by the LHSAA, students must have written approval of the LHSAA.

TRANSPORTATION

Parents and guardians who do not reside within St. Tammany Parish will be responsible for the transportation of students to and from school.

INELIGIBILITY

1. A student meeting any of the following will be ineligible to enroll as a Louisiana Public School Choice student:

2. The student was expelled for disciplinary reasons in the preceding school year;
3. The student was suspended more than once in the preceding school year;
4. The student was involved in more than one fight or other act of violence on school grounds in the preceding school year;
5. The student was found in possession of any illicit drug or narcotic on school grounds in the preceding school year;
6. The student had more than ten (10) unexcused absences during the preceding school year.

After enrollment a student shall be ineligible to continue enrollment as a Louisiana Public School Choice student if any of the following apply:

1. The student is suspended more than once in the school year;
2. The student is expelled for disciplinary reasons during the school year;
3. The student is involved in more than one fight or other act of violence on school grounds during the school year;
4. The student is found in possession of any illicit drug or narcotic on school grounds during the school year;
5. The student has more than ten (10) unexcused absences during the school year.

CONSENT OF HOME SCHOOL DISTRICT

No student may enroll without the written consent of the school system, with which the student was previously enrolled, to both of the following:

1. to make payment to the System in an amount equal to the St. Tammany Parish Public School System local per pupil amount recognized in the Minimum Foundation Program for the school year in which the student seeks to enroll, in proportion to the portion of the school year during which the student is enrolled in the System, and the appropriate local share of capital expenditures; and
2. to provide records and information necessary for the System to determine the student's eligibility/ineligibility.

Ref: 20 USC 6316; La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§17:105, 17:4035.1; Louisiana School, District, and State Accountability System, Bulletin 111, Louisiana Department of Education; Board minutes, 8-14-14.