



**Guidelines for School Choice  
for District 7 Residents and Out-of-District Tuition Students  
Approved by the District 7 Board of Trustees February 2024**

**School Choice Guidelines for District 7 Residents**

*NOTE: Board Policy JFAA and JFAB govern the enrollment of children of employees in District 7 schools, which is separate from School Choice. Policies JFAA and JFAB pertain to full-time employees who are eligible to receive employment benefits. To aid in the recruitment and retention of the highest quality teachers and staff, District 7 gives first priority to employee enrollment requests.*

*District 7 reserves the right to pause or discontinue the School Choice program at any time if doing so is deemed to be in the best interest of the District. The Superintendent has final discretion on all decisions regarding School Choice.*

**REQUIREMENTS AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL CHOICE**

- Families participating in School Choice **must provide transportation** for their children to and from school.
- Accepted students must **remain at the choice school** through the entire school year. The parent/guardian may apply for another choice school during the next application window.
- **Athletic Eligibility for Middle School Students** - Families should be aware of the rules of the South Carolina High School League, which determines eligibility for interscholastic athletics and activities for middle and high school students. The principal and athletic director at each middle school should be consulted prior to applying for School Choice. A rising 8th grade student who accepts a choice option may lose one year of athletic eligibility.
- **Students enrolled in special education programs** that are offered at all schools may be accepted for School Choice if space is available within those programs at the choice school. Students who are enrolled in special education programs offered only at specific sites must continue to attend one of those sites.

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

To be considered for School Choice in District 7, a student must meet all of the following criteria at the time of application:

- Live with legal guardian(s) within the boundaries of District 7
- Meet District 7’s discipline, attendance, tardy, and grade criteria
- Have not had a previous School Choice acceptance revoked .

**CONSIDERATION OF APPLICANTS**

- School choice applicants who have a sibling who is 1) currently enrolled in the requested school AND 2) will continue to attend the requested school for the next school year will be considered before all other School Choice applicants. Admission for siblings is **not guaranteed** – it is only available as space allows. When the number of eligible sibling applicants exceeds the available spaces, a lottery will determine sibling acceptances.
- Once sibling applicants have been considered, all other School Choice applicants will be considered. When the number of eligible applicants exceeds the available spaces, a lottery will determine acceptances.

**DETERMINATION OF AVAILABLE SPACES AND OPEN SCHOOLS**

- District 7’s Target Class Size Standards will be used to determine projected available School Choice spaces for each grade-level at each school.

**District 7 Class Size Standards:**

K5	24
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	18
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	19
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	20
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	22
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	22

- Half of the projected available spaces in each grade level in each school **may** be filled via School Choice.
- When a school has 4 or fewer total projected available spaces in a specific grade-level, **that school’s grade level will be closed to School Choice** for siblings of current choice students and for non-employee district residents.
- At the discretion of District 7, **a school may be closed to new School Choice applicants** when there are 4 or fewer projected available spaces in at least half of its grade levels.

## APPLICATION TIMELINE FOR 1<sup>ST</sup> – 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADES

- The School Choice application window for rising 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades will open annually from March 1-31.
- Parents should be notified by April 30 of School Choice status.
- No School Choice applications will be taken or considered outside of the School Choice application window.

## APPLICATION TIMELINE FOR 5K

- Due to the inability to accurately project 5K enrollment, the application window for **ALL 5K School Choice** applicants will be July 15 – 31.
- **The July application window will only be opened** for schools that 1) are not closed to School Choice and 2) have 4 or more projected available 5K spaces at the time of the application window. Only half of the projected available spaces may be filled by School Choice.
- No School Choice applications will be taken or considered outside of the School Choice application window.

## CURRENT SCHOOL CHOICE STUDENTS

- Once approved for School Choice, students do not need to reapply.
- Students on School Choice will move up to the secondary school for which their choice school is zoned to attend.
- Current School Choice students must continue to meet disciplinary, attendance, grades, and tardy criteria, and all needed services must be available at their choice school. **Students may be required to return to their zoned school at any time** if these criteria are no longer met.
- Students who withdraw from District 7 are not guaranteed to continue School Choice if they reenroll in District 7. They must submit a new application. Their priority order for consideration is determined based on the stated priority criteria.

### **Guidelines for Out-of-District Tuition Students**

*Note: Out-of-District Tuition Students are separate from the In-District School Choice program. District 7 reserves the right to pause or discontinue the Out-of-District Tuition option at any time if doing so is deemed to be in the best interest of the District.*

- Out-of-District Tuition Students will only be considered after all In-District School Choice Students have been considered. Priority order for consideration will be

determined by lottery of all applicants meeting District 7's eligibility criteria of discipline, attendance, tardy, and grade policies.

- All Out-of-District Tuition Students will pay the current District 7 Out-of-District Tuition as set by the Board of Trustees annually. This tuition amount may change from year-to-year. Payment must be made by August 1 and December 1 of each year.
- Out-of-District residents who own property within District 7 that is in the name of the student(s) requesting to enroll in District 7 will pay Out-of-District Tuition minus the amount of school taxes paid by the parent/guardian.
  - Tuition Due = Out-of-District Tuition – District 7 School Taxes Paid
- Out-of-District residents who own businesses within District 7 **will pay full tuition** for their children to attend school in District 7.
- The application window for Out-of-District Tuition Students will be March 1-31 of each year and run concurrently with the School Choice application window; however, Out-of-District Tuition will have a separate application from School Choice.
- Out-of-District Tuition Students will be monitored for eligibility compliance and those not meeting the discipline, attendance, grade, and other school rules criteria may be withdrawn from District 7.
- No refunds for Out-of-District tuition will be granted, even if the Out-of-District status is revoked by District 7.