

**STUDENT RESIDENCY, ELIGIBILITY,
ENROLLMENT AND ASSIGNMENT**Effective: January 11, 2024

I. General Enrollment Procedures

- A. A student will be registered by a parent who has established bona fide residence in Howard County. The following documentation will be provided during the registration process. (Exceptions are made for homeless students; see Policy 9300 Homeless Children and Youth.) If the online registration tool is used, registration is not complete until original proof of parent identity is provided.

1. Proof of student's date of birth

Acceptable documents include a birth certificate, hospital or physician's certificate, church/baptismal certificate, passport/visa, or parent's affidavit.

- a. Age for admission to public schools has been established by the State. A child must be:
- i. Four years old by September 1 to attend prekindergarten.
 - ii. Five years old by September 1 to attend kindergarten.
 - iii. Six years old by September 1 to attend first grade.
- b. Application for exception to the age requirement may be made under the provisions of Sections III.C. and III.D. below.

2. Additional documentation of completion of an approved kindergarten program for a student enrolling in first grade (see Section III.B. below).

3. Proof of parent identity

Acceptable documents are driver's license with photograph, passport/visa, Motor Vehicle Administration identification, or other legal form of photographic identification.

4. Proof of parental relationship or custody

- a. Acceptable documents include birth certificates that identify the parents, court orders, separation or divorce decrees. In cases of deployment a military power of attorney is acceptable. Individuals seeking to rely on foreign court decrees, orders, and/or judgments will have them enrolled as a foreign decree in a Howard County court.

- b. In cases of separation or divorce, when primary physical custody has been awarded, documents regarding the bona fide residence will reflect that of the parent with primary physical custody unless a modification of the custody order is provided. Court orders or parent statements notarized by both parents can be used as proof of the modification of a custody agreement, for the purposes of this policy.
 - c. If parents who are separated or divorced have joint legal custody with no primary custody designated, documents regarding the bona fide residence will reflect that of the parent with whom the student lives for a majority of time.
 - d. Parent name(s) on proof of identity document(s) will be consistent with the name(s) on document(s) providing proof of custody.
- 5. Proof of emancipation when applicable
- 6. Proof of current student immunization
 - a. Parents are responsible for providing proof of immunization to the school prior to the student attending. Proof of an appointment for necessary immunizations within 20 calendar days may be acceptable.
 - b. In certain cases, exemptions to student immunizations may occur. Proof of exemption will be presented as:
 - i. A medical contraindication (exemptions for specific immunizations) form, signed by a physician.
 - ii. A lost or destroyed record statement signed by a parent. Proof of measles and rubella immunization by a blood test must be presented. Revaccination may be required.
 - iii. A religious exemption statement signed by a parent.
 - iv. Lack of documentation due to homeless status.
- 7. Proof of residency
 - a. Homeowners must provide a deed or a deed of trust that has all required signatures, along with any one of the following issued within the previous 45 days of registration: a cable television or internet service bill, bill for land line telephone, gas and electric bill, or current water and sewer bill. If a home was just purchased and no deed is available, signed settlement papers may be submitted. Within 30 days of enrollment, the parent will submit a deed or a deed of trust with all required signatures.
 - b. Renters will provide an original, current lease with all required signatures, along with a gas and electric bill, or water and sewer bill issued within the previous 45 days of registration. If utilities are included

in the rent payments, as stipulated in the rental agreement, a cable television or internet service bill, or bill for a landline telephone issued within the previous 45 days of registration may be substituted.

- c. Shared housing – See Multiple Family Determination (Section II.C.).
- B. The full registration process only needs to be completed once when enrolling in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), not when students change schools or levels. However, proof of residency must be submitted if a student changes schools within the HCPSS due to a residency change or if there is cause to suspect that a change in residency has occurred.
- C. The International Student Registration Center (ISRC) will support registration processes when:
 - 1. Parents need language support and there is no liaison that speaks the parent's language to assist with registration at the school.
 - 2. The student's primary language is one other than English as determined by the language survey on the HCPSS registration form and the student has been in a U.S. school for less than two years from the current calendar date (grades 1–12 only).
 - 3. The student is of high school age with a foreign transcript.
- D. If there is a question about the accuracy or completeness of the enrollment information, or if the parent cannot provide all of the required information, a pupil personnel worker will be contacted to assist in completing the enrollment process.
- E. Pupil personnel workers will investigate suspected fraudulent residency or custody documentation. If documents used to establish enrollment are determined to be fraudulent, the school principal/designee will notify the parent in writing of the intent to withdraw the child(ren).
- F. Appeals of decisions to withdraw students based on fraudulent residency or custody documents will be addressed to the Superintendent/designee. Appeals must be filed within ten (10) school days of the date of the letter notifying the parent(s) of withdrawal. Students may remain in their current school pending a decision of the appeal.
- G. Individuals who disagree with the decisions of the Superintendent/designee with regard to enrollment may appeal to the Board of Education pursuant to the requirement of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 4-205(c)(3). The appeal must be received in writing within 30 calendar days of the date of the written decision. A residency appeal will not stay the decision to withdraw students from their current school.

- H. If a student is in State supervised care (including foster care), enrollment procedures are governed by COMAR 13A.08.07. Students in State supervised care will be enrolled by the assigned pupil personnel worker.

II. Enrollment Responsibilities of Pupil Personnel Workers

A. Investigation

At the request of a school administrator, the Office of Pupil Personnel will investigate the residency or custody status when a student seeks to meet enrollment or eligibility requirements or when there is cause to suspect an unreported change in residency or an enrollment that does not satisfy the criteria of this policy, and will report the findings. The Office of Pupil Personnel will utilize the services of the School Security Office for record searches, investigative follow-up, or other actions necessary to residency investigations.

B. Hardship

When seeking enrollment for a student under the hardship provisions described below, the parent or potential caregiver may be required to provide documented evidence of hardship subsequent to the student's immediate enrollment in school. The assigned pupil personnel worker will meet with the parent and/or caregiver to complete the appropriate enrollment forms.

1. Informal Kinship Care – A student whose parent(s) are residents of the State of Maryland and are currently experiencing a hardship may be eligible for Informal Kinship Care Enrollment. The relative who is assuming kinship care responsibilities must be a resident of Howard County. Applicable tuition costs may be reimbursed by the Maryland school system of origin. The hardships considered under this provision are:
 - a. Death or serious illness of a parent.
 - b. Drug addiction of parent.
 - c. Incarceration of parent.
 - d. Abandonment by parent.
 - e. Active military deployment of parent.
2. The following procedures are required of the relative providing informal kinship care in order to complete and maintain an Informal Kinship Care Enrollment:
 - a. The relative will provide evidence of bona fide residence.
 - b. The relative will verify the informal kinship care relationship through a sworn affidavit and provide documentation of hardship to the Office of Pupil Personnel upon request. A new affidavit and supporting

documentation will be provided each year at least two weeks before the beginning of the school year.

- c. The relative will notify the Office of Pupil Personnel, in writing, within 30 days of any change that occurs in the care of the student or in the serious family hardship of the student's parent.
 - d. The relative providing informal kinship care will make the full range of educational decisions for the student. The parent of the student in an informal kinship care relationship will have the final decision-making authority regarding the educational needs of the student.
 - e. The Office of Pupil Personnel may verify the facts given by the relative providing informal kinship care. If fraud or misrepresentation is discovered during an audit, the student will be withdrawn from the HCPSS. Any person who willfully makes a material misrepresentation in the affidavit will be subject to a penalty payable to the HCPSS for three times the pro rata share of tuition for the time the student fraudulently attends an HCPSS school.
3. Caregiver for Non-Maryland Resident Student – A nonresident student whose parents reside outside of the State of Maryland and are currently experiencing a hardship may be eligible for Caregiver for Non-Maryland Resident Student status enrollment. The adult relative who is assuming caregiver status must be a resident of Howard County. The hardships considered under this provision are:
- a. Child abuse or neglect.
 - b. Death or serious illness of a parent.
 - c. Incarceration of parent.
 - d. Abandonment by parent.
 - e. Active military deployment of parent.

Procedures for Caregiver for Non-Maryland Resident Student Status enrollment (see Section II.B.1. above) are similar to those for establishing and maintaining an Informal Kinship Care Enrollment but may require additional documentation.

C. Multiple Family Determination

Guest families residing with host families may establish residency through the completion of the Multiple Family Disclosure form.

- 1. Multiple Family Determination with Hosts Leasing a Property
 - a. Guest families living with host families who are leasing a property will complete a Multiple Family Disclosure form at a meeting with the school's pupil personnel worker. One member of both the guest and host

family will attend. The host and guest must each bring photo identification for the purpose of notarization. The representative of the host family must be listed on the lease as a leaseholder.

- b. The host family will provide an original, current lease with all required signatures, along with a gas and electric bill, or water and sewer bill issued within the previous 45 days. If utilities are included in the rent payments, as stipulated in the rental agreement, a cable television or internet service bill or bill for a landline telephone issued within the previous 45 days of registration may be substituted.
- c. Guest families will provide two proofs of residency within 14 days of enrollment, including but not limited to a pay stub, Post Office change of address label, credit card statement, tax statement, or bank statement. Any other official mail documents not listed are subject to approval by the assigned pupil personnel worker.
- d. Guest families who are able to have their names and the names of their children added to the lease of the host family are considered occupants/tenants and are not required to complete a Multiple Family Disclosure form.

2. Multiple Family Determination with Hosts Owning a Property

- a. Guest families living with host families who own a home will complete a Multiple Family Disclosure form at a meeting with the school's pupil personnel worker. One member of both the guest and host family must attend. The host and guest will each bring photo identification for the purpose of notarization. The representative of the host family will be listed on the deed as an owner.
- b. The host will provide a deed or a deed of trust that has all required signatures, along with any one of the following issued within the previous 45 days of registration: cable television or internet service bill, bill for land line telephone, gas and electric bill, or current water and sewer bill. If a home was just purchased and no deed is available, signed settlement papers may be submitted. Within 30 days of enrollment, the host must submit a deed or a deed of trust with all required signatures and a new utility bill.
- c. Guests will provide two proofs of residency within 14 days of enrollment, including but not limited to a pay stub, Post Office change of address label, credit card statement, tax statement, or bank statement. Any other official mail documents not listed are subject to approval by the assigned pupil personnel worker.

3. General Conditions of Multiple Family Determination

- a. All guest families will provide updated proofs of residency annually for as long as the multiple family living situation continues. Failure to provide updated proofs of residency will result in the students of that guest family being withdrawn from school.
- b. Multiple family enrollments are subject to investigation at any time. A finding that falsified information was used to establish a multiple family enrollment will result in the student(s) of the guest family being withdrawn from school. Tuition will be charged from the first date of entry to the date of withdrawal.
- c. Decisions to withdraw students based on false claims of multiple family enrollment may be appealed to the Superintendent/designee within 10 school days of the notification of withdrawal.

D. Homelessness

A student who is homeless will be enrolled by a pupil personnel worker (see Policy 9300 Homeless Children and Youth).

E. Foster Care

A student in a foster care placement will be enrolled by a pupil personnel worker.

III. Additional Considerations for Enrollment in Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, and First Grade

A. Prekindergarten

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation, codified in the Annotated Code of Maryland Education Article §7-1A-01, has established three tiers of priority for access to prekindergarten which are dependent upon student age, family income, seeking full-time enrollment status, and other factors. Prekindergarten is provided to any child who meets first priority criteria (Tier 1) and whose parents seek enrollment.

1. First priority category includes students who are either:
 - a. Income eligible.
 - b. Homeless.
 - c. In foster care.
2. When space allows, as determined by the Superintendent/designee per countywide enrollment projections, additional children who meet second

priority criteria may be enrolled. Priority for enrollment, when available, will be made available for:

- a. Children from homes in which English is not the primary spoken language.
 - b. Tier 2, as defined by State law.
 - c. Tier 3, as defined by State law.
3. Children with an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) may attend prekindergarten programs as determined through the IEP process, even if income and/or age requirements are not met.
 4. Registration/enrollment for prekindergarten occurs at the designated school site. An application will be submitted by parents, including documentation needed to verify eligibility. Upon determination of eligibility, the student may be enrolled.
 5. Parents may apply for the Learning Together Program, a fee-based, inclusive educational opportunity that has a limited number of spaces available for children without disabilities who are not of school-age. Children who attend this program must meet the minimum age requirement when entering kindergarten.

B. Transfers

1. A student may not transfer from a nonpublic kindergarten during the kindergarten year unless the student meets the minimum age requirement for admission to the HCPSS kindergarten program.
2. A student may transfer from a public kindergarten in another State during the kindergarten year regardless of age. Close monitoring of progress will occur if the student was not five years old by September 1.
3. A student who meets the age requirements and is transferring from a private school or from another jurisdiction to enroll in first grade will provide documentation to show that the mandatory kindergarten attendance requirement was met by one of the following options:
 - a. Completion of a kindergarten educational program in a public or nonpublic (approved or church-exempt) program.
 - b. Regular attendance in an alternative program setting (full-time in a licensed child care center or registered family day care home, or part-time in a Head Start 5-year-old program).
 - c. Supervised home instruction that has been registered with the HCPSS Office of Home Instruction.

4. A student transferring from another State after successful completion of a public kindergarten program may enroll in first grade pending receipt of school records, regardless of age. Close monitoring of progress will occur if the student was not six years old by September 1.
5. If a child has not met the mandatory kindergarten requirement but is of age to attend first grade, the school team will utilize grade-appropriate assessments to determine the best placement.

C. Deferred Admission

A child whose parents believe that a delay in school attendance is in his or her best interest may be exempted from mandatory school attendance for one year. The parents must file the Kindergarten Waiver form to the Superintendent/designee.

1. Following the one-year waiver, a child must be registered for kindergarten.
2. If a student is enrolled in kindergarten but the parent feels that it is in the best interest of the student to be withdrawn from kindergarten, the parent may file the Kindergarten Waiver form for a waiver in order to defer kindergarten attendance until the following school year.
3. Children for whom admission to kindergarten has been deferred due to maturity or alternate location are not eligible for enrollment in HCPSS prekindergarten, except in limited cases where the Superintendent/designee, in consultation with the school team, determine that prekindergarten may be a more appropriate placement than kindergarten. Enrollment in the prekindergarten program in lieu of kindergarten is contingent upon meeting eligibility requirements.
4. Students who are enrolled in the HCPSS prekindergarten program, and for whom admission to kindergarten has been deferred, are not eligible to repeat prekindergarten, except in limited cases when the child's development is severely delayed and a decision is made by the Superintendent/designee that repeating kindergarten may be a more appropriate placement than kindergarten.
5. The request for delay or withdrawal will be approved or denied in writing within five (5) working days from the date of its receipt. Requests to enroll in prekindergarten or to repeat a prekindergarten program will be approved or denied in writing within (15) days from the date of its receipt.
6. Parents may appeal the decision to the appropriate Superintendent/designee within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of notification.

D. Early Admission

Children whose birth dates miss the established deadline for school attendance may have educational needs or demonstrated capabilities that warrant early admission to prekindergarten, kindergarten or first grade. Early admission is open only to children whose birthdays fall within a six-week window of the established deadline by the State of Maryland, specifically between September 2 and October 13, inclusive. Students born on or after October 14 are not eligible for early admission under any circumstances. All early admission placements will be made before the start of the school year. Other eligibility requirements differ depending on the grade level:

1. Early admission for prekindergarten may be warranted if a child demonstrates a need for early education which is defined by at-risk developmental factors that critically impact potential success in kindergarten.
 - a. Early admission to prekindergarten is available only to children who are economically disadvantaged or homeless or in foster care.
 - b. Parents may obtain information and application packets from the Office of Early Childhood Programs.
 - c. Applications require inclusion of one developmental screening tool to be completed by the parent(s) and one developmental screening tool to be completed by a teacher or if a teacher is unavailable, a non-related adult knowledgeable about the child. All information will be submitted to the Office of Early Childhood Programs between April 1 and the last business day in June.
 - d. The Office of Early Childhood Programs will review application materials and results and make a decision regarding eligibility for admission by the end of July. Parents will be notified of the decision in writing. Parents may appeal the decision to the appropriate Superintendent/designee within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of notification.
 - e. Families who move into Howard County from another State after the application window may apply for early admission to prekindergarten using the above procedures up until the end of the business day one week prior to the start of the school year.
 - f. Students who are eligible for early admission to prekindergarten may have to wait for placement, which is dependent upon available space at the start of the school year.
 - g. Students granted early admission to prekindergarten may be

- considered for promotion to kindergarten after successful completion of prekindergarten.
2. Early admission to kindergarten may be warranted for children who display an exceptionally high degree of academic, social, emotional and physical readiness to attend kindergarten.
 - a. Parents may obtain information and application packets from their designated school or on the HCPSS website.
 - b. Applications require inclusion of one developmental checklist to be completed by the parent(s) and one checklist to be completed by a teacher or if unavailable, a non-related adult knowledgeable about the child. All information and application packets should be submitted to the Office of Early Childhood Programs between March 1 and the last business day in April.
 - c. Students for whom completed applications are received will be assessed by the HCPSS using a standardized process.
 - d. The Office of Early Childhood Programs will review application materials and make a decision regarding admission by the end of July. Parents will be notified in writing of the decision. Parents may appeal the decision to the appropriate Superintendent/designee within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of notification.
 - e. For families who move into Howard County from another State after the application window, the kindergarten early admission procedures will be extended to the end of the business day one week prior to the first day of school.
 3. Early admission to first grade may be warranted for students who display an exceptionally high degree of academic, social, emotional and physical readiness and who have completed kindergarten in a Maryland State-approved program.
 - a. Parents may obtain information and application packets from their designated school or on the HCPSS website.
 - b. Applications require inclusion of one developmental checklist to be completed by parent(s) and one developmental checklist to be completed by a kindergarten teacher. All information should be submitted to the designated school between March 1 and the last business day in May.
 - c. Once a completed application is received, a student will be evaluated by a trained assessor using a standardized process at the student's designated school.

- d. The school administration will review application materials and make a decision regarding admission before the end of the school year. Parents will be notified in writing of the decision. Parents may appeal the decision to the appropriate Superintendent/designee within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of notification.
 - e. For parents who move to Howard County from another Maryland county after the application window, the first grade early admission procedures will be extended to the end of the business day one week prior to the first day of school.
 - f. A child who has not attended kindergarten, or one who has attended a private program that is not Maryland State-approved, will first enroll in kindergarten. During that placement, the student will be observed and assessed to determine if acceleration to first grade is necessary (per Policy 8010 Grading and Reporting: Pre-Kindergarten Through Grade 5).
4. Student admission under the early admission process is subject to a 30-calendar day trial period. Parents of students for whom continuation is not recommended will be notified in writing at the end of the trial period. Parents may appeal the decision of non-continuation to the appropriate Superintendent/designee within ten (10) calendar days after receipt of the non-continuation notice.

IV. Student Reassignment Initiated by Parents

- A. Parents requesting reassignment of students will submit the Student Reassignment Request form, with appropriate supporting documentation, to the Superintendent/designee for Residency and Reassignment.
- B. The Superintendent/designee for Residency and Reassignment will approve or deny the request based on the provisions of this policy. Parents will be notified in writing of the decision. Parents may appeal the decision to the appropriate Superintendent/designee within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of notification. Individuals who disagree with the decisions of the Superintendent/designee with regard to enrollment and assignment may appeal to the Board of Education pursuant to the requirement of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 4-205(c)(3). The appeal must be received in writing within 30 calendar days of the date of the written decision.

A student who resides in Howard County and is the child of a HCPSS employee requesting reassignment must maintain enrollment in the school where assigned during a given school year. The student can attend the assigned school and the associated feeder cluster schools through the student's entire education as long as the parent remains an employee at the work location where the assignment was

granted. Administrative placement standards described in Policy 9000 Section III.O. remain applicable.

- C. While the application is pending, the student will remain in attendance in the student's assigned/designated school.
- D. For students in prekindergarten with an IEP, reassignments will be approved or denied by the Office of Early Intervention Services. The following will be taken into consideration: maintaining fidelity of staff to student ratios and transportation needs. Reach out to earlyinterventionservices@hcpss.org for additional information.

V. Student Reassignment Initiated by Parents under Standard M. (Open School Designation-General)

All schools will have attendance areas determined by the Board. A student attending public schools in Howard County will attend the designated school serving the attendance area in which their parents have bona fide residence unless reassignment is granted or administrative placement occurs. In the event that the Board identifies schools that are open to enrollment by students not living in the schools' attendance area, student reassignment may be initiated by parents in accordance with the following procedures:

- A. Parents requesting reassignment to an open school will submit the form, Request for Student Reassignment, during a designated period, to the Superintendent/designee.
- B. In any school(s) where there are more applicants than openings, a lottery will be conducted.
 - 1. The lottery will be administered by the Superintendent/designee.
 - 2. A timeline will be established which includes: announcement of the lottery, the lottery registration window, the date on which the lottery will be held, and deadlines for selected students to exercise their options.
 - 3. Each student's name will be given a number. The affected parents and students will be invited to attend an open meeting at which the lottery is held. Numbers will be drawn to fill the available slots in the open enrollment school. Additional numbers will be drawn to establish a list of alternates.
 - 4. In the event that students selected by the lottery do not exercise their option by the established lottery deadline, alternates will be extended the option in the order drawn until a given deadline or until the number of available slots is filled, whichever comes first.
- C. If no lottery is necessary, the Superintendent/designee will approve or deny the request.

- D. Students reassigned under this provision will be ineligible for participation in interscholastic athletics for a period of one year, effective the day of transfer.

VI. Student Reassignment Initiated by Parents under Standard N. (Open School Designation-Directed)

In the event that the Board identifies schools with a programmatic initiative that are open to enrollment by students not living in the programmatic initiative schools' attendance area, student reassignment may be initiated by parents in accordance with the procedures described in Section V.A-C. of these implementation procedures. When conducting the lottery, sibling information will be taken into account.

VII. Administrative Placements into the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC)

For admission to the JROTC program:

- A. Students whose designated school offers a JROTC program are eligible to enroll in the JROTC program at their designated school. Students who do not have a JROTC program offered at their designated school are eligible to apply to any JROTC program of interest.
- B. Applications must be received by the established deadlines.
- C. Students who transfer into the school system during the school year or during the summer months and were not in a JROTC program, may apply by the established deadline for the following school year.
- D. Students who transfer into the school system during the summer months, or during the school year and were in a JROTC program, are eligible to apply if a favorable recommendation is received from the previous JROTC instructor and space is available in the program to which the student is applying.
- E. Decisions regarding acceptance into the JROTC program and school placement are made by the program leader and administrative staff at each school.
- F. Exceptions may be made if the JROTC program is at risk for being eliminated due to low enrollment.

VIII. Administrative Placements into a Programmatic Initiative Specified by the Superintendent

One or more schools may be identified by the Superintendent to house various programmatic initiatives.

- A. The Superintendent will identify the schools whose students are eligible to apply for admission into the programmatic initiative.

- B. Decisions regarding acceptance into the programmatic initiative will be made by the Superintendent/designee.
- C. The Superintendent/designee will establish a process for determining acceptance into the programmatic initiative and administrative placement when multiple schools house the programmatic initiative.
- D. Completed applications from students attending schools identified in Section VIII.A. above must be received by the established deadline.

IX. Definitions

Within the context of these implementation procedures, the following definitions apply:

- A. Home Instruction – The education of children at home typically by parents or tutors, rather than in other formal settings of public or private school.
- B. Unaccompanied Youth – A homeless student not in the physical custody of a parent.

X. Monitoring

Policy 9000 implementation procedures will be overseen by the Division of Academics.

XI. History¹

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¹ Key: ***Adopted***-Original date the Board took action to approve a policy; ***Reviewed***-The date the status of a policy was assessed by the Superintendent's Standing Policy Group; ***Modified***-The date the Board took action to alter a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee did not require a comprehensive examination; ***Revised***-The date the Board took action on a that policy based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee needed a comprehensive examination; ***Effective***-The date a policy is implemented throughout the HCPSS, typically July 1 following Board action.