

## CURRENT

### LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT POLICY

To register a new student, parent/guardian needs to bring picture ID, evidence of child's birth date, proof of residency, and immunization record. Generally, the registration process takes 30 minutes. However, this could take an hour or more during rush periods: March-April (Pre-K and Kindergarten) and August through early September. The process of checking on available space and other criteria for each child applying to schools takes time.

If there are more registrations for a particular school or program than can be accommodated, the Coordinator of the Family Resource Center applies a set of priorities to decide school assignments.

Assignments are based on these factors, in order:

- **Space Availability** - space available in a particular school, program or grade is defined according to the policy in effect as to class size.
- **Sibling Preference** - all students whose parents make timely application to a particular school and already have other children attending that school are given priority of assignment for that school.
- **Ethnicity Balance** - new assignments and transfers must meet requirements of ethnicity balance. The goal is to achieve an ethnicity balance within each school, program and grade that reflects, within 10% above or below, the ethnicity percentage of the zone as a whole.
- **Place of Residence** (proximity of residence to school) - all other priorities being equal, the student living within the school neighborhood street directory as defined by the Lowell School Committee, has priority of assignment for that school.

#### Wait List

In those cases when a child cannot, for any reason, be assigned to the school or program of first choice, the parent/guardian may request to have the child's name placed on the Wait List for that school. Students on the wait list have priority over new entrants to the school system. The order of names on the wait list is determined by applying Criteria #1 - #4 above and by the date of request. Placements from the Wait List are made during the summer recess and continue up to October 20th. Students must attend Lowell Public Schools to remain on the wait list.

Students who move from one geographical zone to the other in the city may request to remain in the school they presently are attending prior to change of address provided that:

- The ethnicity balance of the school is not adversely affected
- The parent provides transportation to and from school or the child's transportation needs can be accommodated by existing school bus routes.

Parents/legal guardians may request a school of choice outside the zone in which they reside based on their child care needs provided that:

- There is space available at the grade level at the school.
- The ethnicity balance of the school is not adversely affected.
- The parent provides transportation to and from the school.

Note: Private, parochial or charter school students must renew their registration each year beginning April 1st if they do not wish to accept the offered seat for the registered school year.

### **Transfers**

Once a student has attended a school, a parent who is dissatisfied with the assignment may request a voluntary transfer. Only one transfer per year is allowed and must be requested through the Family Resource Center before October 20th or no later than 45 calendar days after the initial placement of the student in the school.

Students who no longer require a special education or English Language Learners program placement at a school that is outside of their zone of residence are allowed to remain at the same school for one year. After that, the student is considered newly enrolled and is expected to attend a school within his/her zone.

### **Preschool Programs**

The Lowell Public Schools offer Integrated Preschool Programs at various school sites for any child who is a resident of Lowell and four years old on or before September 1st. Preschool classes are Monday to Friday. Preschool classes start the first Tuesday after Labor Day. There are no classes on holidays or half days and there are no preschool classes on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.

The class size capacity is fifteen students. Classes include both children with and without special needs. Of the 15 places, 6 are held for students with identified special needs. At the age of three, a child with an IEP may be assigned to the program to receive their special education services. Preschool classrooms have morning and afternoon sessions that are held Monday through Friday for two hours and forty minutes. Due to the limited number of schools that house preschool classes, preschool is not a choice program. Students are assigned to a preschool classroom based on space availability, ethnicity balance, and proximity to the school.