File: JCA - LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT POLICY

All students in grades pre-school to grade 12 enroll through the Family Resource Center. This policy outlines assignment criteria unique to pre-school, grades kindergarten to 8, and high school (grades 9 to 12).

Kindergarten through Grade 8

To ensure equity in the Lowell Public Schools for all students, students will be assigned to a school in kindergarten to grade 8 based on the following placement criteria:

1. Space Availability - space available in a particular school, program or grade is defined according to the policy in effect as to class size.

2. Sibling Preference - all students whose parents submit a timely registration for a particular school and already have other children attending that school, are given priority of assignment for that school.

3. Diversity Balance - As relates to the minority/non-minority balance, the goal is to achieve a balance within each school, program and grade that reflects, within 10% above or below, the minority/non-minority percentage of the zone as indicated by the Voluntary Consent Decree. In addition, other factors which contribute to a school's diversity will be considered such as gender, language English learner status and economic status as part of the district's goal to ensure equity across schools.

4. 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 Transportation Department has priority of assignment for that school.

The placement criteria above will be the primary criteria for all placements and transfers for kindergarten through grade 8 under this policy.

Kindergarten Registration and Lottery

Students may attend kindergarten in the Lowell Public Schools (LPS) if they are 5 on or before September 1.

Annually, the LPS will hold a pre-registration period for kindergarten in the spring. Pre-registration takes place through Family Resource Center and the dates for pre-registration will be announced on the district website, social media, and other means of communication each spring..

. For schools where there are more pre-registration requests than seats available, a lottery will be held. The initial kindergarten lottery will be held no later than June 30 each year and the lottery

will determine the initial waitlist placement. The date of the lottery will be published on the district website, social media, and other means of communication no later than March 1 annually and the results of the lottery will be published online following the date of the lottery.

To ensure greater equity and access to choices across the district, school assignment lotteries will be held at several points throughout the registration period with full school placement targeted by August 1. This applies only for schools where demand for seats (early registrations) exceeds the number of seats available.

The first lottery will seek to fill at least 50% of the kindergarten seats. The second lottery will fill up to the next 25% of seats, and the final lottery will fill the remaining percentage of open seats prior to August 1. Families will have 48 hours to either opt-into the next lottery or accept placement at their second or third choice school. Families will be called and emailed with the option of either opting-into the second lottery or accepting their second or third place schools. Families will be required to return to the Family Resource Center the form emailed to them indicating their decision. Failure to return the required form within 48 hours from time of receipt of notification will mean they forfeit their option to be placed into the next lottery round and the student will be placed at the second or third choice schools based upon space availability of said choices. If no space is available, the Family Resource Center Coordinator will place the student according to the above cited placement criteria (1-4)

The lottery will be a weighted lottery with the following priorities: siblings, McKinney-Vento status, minority/non-minority balance (for schools whose enrollment is above or below the targeted minority/non-minority balance of the zone). The "proximity of home to school" (the school assigned as closest to a student's home by the neighborhood street directory created by the Transportation Department) lottery weight will also be added for non-citywide schools that hold a lottery for open seats.

For schools where no lottery is required, seats will be filled incrementally throughout the summer following the placement criteria 1-4 as listed above.

Transportation

Elementary students (kindergarten through 4) are to walk up to three-quarters (0.75) of a mile to their assigned school. Middle school students (5 through 8) are to walk up to one and one half (1.5) miles to their assigned school. Distances from home to school are established from the nearest school entrance along a reasonable route to home. Pre-kindergarten transportation is no longer provided.

Private, Parochial or Charter School Students

Students attending private, parochial or charter schools and who are seeking placement in the Lowell Public Schools may register beginning March 1 if they desire placement in the subsequent school year. Students who register for but fail to attend the Lowell Public Schools will be removed from the waitlist at the time they are discharged from active status in the Student Information System (SIS).

Waitlist

Beginning with the 2020-21 school year, the waitlist will initially be generated by a lottery. Students already on the waitlist from the 2019-20 school year will be grandfathered until the terminal grade for which the student is currently waitlisted at a family's request.

After the 2019-20 waitlist transfer deadline, all students will be removed from the waitlist and a new lottery will be held annually for grades K-8. Families may request to be in the lottery for the upcoming school year by submitting their request to the Family Resource Center online beginning June 1 for the 2022-23 school year.

Routine placements from the waitlist will be made beginning on July 1 and continue until the 20th school day, During peak registration times, from August 13 through the 20th day of school , the Family Resource Center will make every effort to give priority to students on the waitlist over students just entering the district. The Family Resource Center will cease making placements from the waitlist following the 20th day of school. (For the 2022-23 school year placements from the waitlist will begin July 15.)

Students must be active students in the Lowell Public Schools to be placed on the waitlist.

The adult listed as the primary contact in the Student Information System (SIS) will be notified by the Family Resource Center, by telephone, if their child is eligible for a transfer from the waitlist. All phone calls will be logged into the student's file in the SIS.

In the event the primary contact cannot be reached, the Family Resource Center shall notify the second contact listed for the student, provided that the second contact is listed as residing with the student and is listed as a custodial parent or legal guardian.

Families have forty-eight hours (two business days) to accept the transfer. The family must accept the transfer in writing by emailing the Family Resource Center. After forty-eight hours (two business days), if the family has not accepted the transfer assignment in writing, the family has forfeited their seat and the next student will be called.

If families anticipate being away during the summer, they must submit via email their summer contact information to the Family Resource Center. Families are responsible for maintaining current mailing addresses and phone numbers on file with the Lowell Public Schools in the.SIS

All families are encouraged to submit a request to be placed on the waitlist during the waitlist sign up period. The waitlist sign up period will take place from March 1 to July 1 annually beginning for the 2023-24 school year. For the 2022-23 school year, the waitlist sign up period will take place beginning June 1 to July 15. The dates will be announced on the district website, social media, and other means of communication.

Families will submit their request to be placed on the waitlist through the online to be found on the Family Resource Center's website.

The lottery will be a weighted lottery with the following priorities: siblings, McKinney-Vento status, minority/non-minority balance (for schools whose enrollment are above or below the targeted minority/non-minority balance within each zone). The "proximity of home to school" (the school assigned as closest to a student's home by the neighborhood street directory created by the Transportation Department) lottery weight will also be added for non-citywide schools that hold a lottery for open seats.

All transfer requests received AFTER the sign up period will be placed on a waitlist on a first-come first-served basis.

Address Changes

For families who move to a new residence in the city, the family must complete a change of address form with the Family Resource Center and submit proof of their new address. The Family Resource Center accepts the following as acceptable proof of address: current gas bill, current electricity bill, current cable/internet bill, mortgage statement, or lease. Current is defined as within the past 30 days. Only one proof of address is required. If families are unable to produce sufficient documentation or if their housing is insecure, the McKinney-Vento Liaisons will assist families. The district abides by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

If a family moves out of zone, the family will be asked at the time of their address change to provide three school choices in their new zone. Families will be placed in their new zone unless an out of zone placement is requested (see Out of Zone Placements).

Families who change addresses over the summer and require a new in-zone placement will be given priority over students on the waitlist. Families are encouraged to update their new addresses over the summer with the Family Resource Center by August 15th. This will ensure

students are placed in-zone prior to the start of the school year and families can request bussing with the Transportation Department if they are eligible for bussing.

Families will be reminded, and encouraged, to update their new address over the summer through messages announced on the district website, social media, and other means of communication.

Publishing the Waitlist

The district will publish, on the district website, a graph representing the number of students on each school's waitlist. The district will also provide family members with information regarding their child's placement on the waitlist, either through a list of student identification numbers, or by providing student specific information in the parent portal of the district's Student Information System. This information will be updated at least bi-weekly by the District's Data Department.

Out of Zone Placements

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

- There is space available at the grade level at the school.
- The minority/non-minority 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
- The student is not chronically absent or excessively tardy

The Attendance Supervisor shall recommend if a student is not eligible for out of zone placement, based on this requirement. Such a finding may result in a student being placed at a school in their geographical zone. The transfer must be approved by the Chief Equity and Engagement Officer.

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 minority/non-minority balance of the school is not adversely affected

- The parent provides transportation to and from the school
- The student is not chronically absent or excessively tardy

The Attendance Supervisor shall recommend if a student is not eligible for out of zone placement based on this requirement. Such a finding may result in a student being placed at a school in their geographical zone. The transfer must be approved by the Chief Equity and Engagement Officer.

Students who move from one geographical zone to the other will be removed from all waitlists in their previous zone. At the time of registration, families may choose to be placed on waitlists for schools in their new zone.

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 the 20th day of school or no later than twenty (20) calendar days after the initial placement of the student in the school. Voluntary transfer requests will be honored if there are available seats. Transfers requested after the 20th day of school will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Chief Equity and Engagement Officer.

. All current fourth graders enrolling in the fifth grade for the 2022-23 school year will follow the current feeder pattern designated by the district and posted on the Lowell Public Schools website.

Grades 9-12

New students wishing to enroll in Lowell High School or the Career Academy, a full-service Community High School, may do so through through Family Resource Center.All high school students are encouraged to bring with them, at the time of enrollment, their current transcripts. Missing transcripts will delay the development of a full and accurate schedule but will not delay students from attending the high school.

House placements will take into consideration McKinney-Vento, Foster Care, Special Education needs, minority/non-minority balance, gender, and English Language Learner status, to ensure students in all houses are being placed equitably.

Appeals

Any appeal of a placement decision must be made in writing on the district's approved form, addressed to the Chief Equity and Engagement Officer within 10 business days of said placement decision.