

## **School Choice Plan**

### **Jackson County Parental Choice Plan**

#### **I. Details of the Plan**

The Jackson County School Board presently has in place seven attendance zones that define where a student attends school. Students living within the boundaries of these zones are assigned to the schools within the attendance zone by the grade attended. Each zone is designed to contain an elementary, middle, and high school. Each zone is designed to serve one of the seven communities located within Jackson County. Transportation to and from school within the attendance zone shall be provided by the Jackson County School Board according to established transportation guidelines.

Parents are allowed to select a school inside or outside their attendance zone. Parents who select a school outside their attendance zone are required to complete JC-296, *Student Transfer Request*. The form may be obtained at each school or at the Director of MIS, Middle and Secondary Instruction's office. Every attempt is made to honor the parent's request of placement.

The Director of MIS, Middle and Secondary Instruction will monitor the enrollment at each school. In the event there are more requests for a school than there are seats available, assignments will be made up to the educational capacity of the school (as determined by the Director of Facilities using the FISH Report). At that time, all assignments will be made in accordance with the racial and ethnic diversity guidelines and the following preferences:

- a. Sibling Preference
- b. Proximity Preference
- c. Special Program Priority (ie. ESOL, ESE, DOP, etc.)
- d. Random Lottery Number

If students can not be accommodated at their parent's school of choice, the student will be assigned to the school within their residence zone. If the desired school has reached maximum capacity or there is no space at the school in which the student's zone requires attendance, the name of the student will be placed automatically in an eligibility pool for possible reassignment to their parent's school of choice if and when space becomes available in their particular grade level using the procedures above. Student transfer procedures will permit equitable but limited and necessary movement of students from school to school.

## **II. Transfers Out of Attendance Zones**

Due to the number of different schedules used by schools in Jackson County, transfer of students outside their attendance zone in grades PreK-12 will only be allowed during the first week of each grading period. Transfers outside of the first week of each nine-week grading period will only be approved with the approval of the receiving school principal. Parents who desire for their child to transfer outside of the first week of each nine weeks grading period will have to secure the receiving school's principal's signature on the Form JC\_296, along with the customary district level signature.

Parents who choose for their child to attend a school outside their attendance zone will be required to transport their child at their own expense to the parent's school of choice or to the nearest existing bus route stop within that school zone. If in the event that a bus becomes overcrowded due to students riding from outside their attendance zone, students who live outside the attendance zone will be removed off the bus first. No child will be reassigned to a school with boundaries which are closed due to an increase in student enrollment.

Upon the recommendation of the principal and the review and approval of the Director of MIS, Middle and Secondary Instruction, a student may be returned to the assigned school in his/her attendance zone at the beginning of the next grading period for reasons of discipline and or attendance problems or if the reasons for reassignment are no longer valid.

When a student's parent(s) or guardian(s) change residence to a different attendance zone, after school is in session, the student may remain in the school assigned prior to relocation or may enroll in the new school if the school has not been closed due to an increase in student enrollment.

The goal of the Jackson County Public Schools is to offer an educationally equivalent range of programs, curriculum, and instruction in each zone. Special Programs that cannot be efficiently replicated in each zone will be placed so that they will be reasonably accessible to all students. The School Improvement mechanism of this Plan will promote the replication of popular and effective schools and course offerings, while encouraging differentiation (choice factors) among schools in the various zones.

### **III. School Improvement**

The Jackson County School Board recognizes that parental involvement is critical to a child's success in education and that parents value an educational system that provides numerous and meaningful options for students. The School Board also believes that parental choice in public school will cultivate constructive competition, serve as an impetus for academic improvement and foster greater accountability within the school system.

Parents are more likely to become involved when they have the opportunity to choose the schools that their children will attend and know that school assignment will be stable. Through active participation, parents will be helping to identify the successful components and processes within schools which are worthy of replication in other schools. They also will be helping to identify components or processes within a school which should be changed to make the school more successful and more popular to other parents.

The Jackson County School Board recognizes that some schools will be chosen more frequently than others and that parent and student choices will be based upon a wide variety of factors. Parent and student satisfaction is an important component of school success. Therefore, schools in which the district must assign a disproportionate number of students who did not choose the school as their choice will be the subject of formative evaluations to determine the reason(s) that they are under-chosen, and to make recommendations for correcting any deficiencies that may exist.

**According to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, if a Title I school is identified as "in need of improvement" due to not making "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP) for two consecutive years, student will be given the option to transfer to another school. The transportation cost will be at district expense. The cost of transportation will be paid by the district for two consecutive years. If the school makes AYP for those two years, then public choice at the district's expense is terminated. If the school does not make AYP after two years, then public choice will continue until such time as the school makes AYP for two consecutive years.**

**Once the Title I school is identified as "in need of service", the parents of the students attending the identified school will receive a letter notifying the parent of the option to transfer. The letter will give choices of schools that have made AYP. The parent will have approximately one month to respond to the letter. If no response is made by the established deadline, the option**

**to transfer expires until the following year, when the opportunity is extended again.**

#### **IV. Continuity of School Assignment**

Once a student has been assigned to a school, they will continue through the highest grade level offered in their assigned school, if they so desire (unless the principal has made a recommendation following the guidelines in section II , paragraph II).

Students, who move from one zone to another within the District, shall be treated as a student new to the District and will be required to follow the guidelines in section I of this Plan. These students may remain in the school in which first enrolled for the remainder of the school year if their parents apply for and receive permission for continuation of assignment.

Transportation for such students will be the responsibility of the parent, **Unless the parent is exercising their right for public choice under the NCLB provisions. If so, transportation costs are the responsibility of the district, until the Title I school has made AYP for two consecutive years.**

Special outreach and consideration will be given to students who, for reasons of seasonal migration with their parents, in agricultural industries, might otherwise be treated as new to the District when enrolling late in the year. Generally, stability of assignment due to a migratory lifestyle is the primary factor contributing to educational difficulties these students experience. Therefore, every attempt will be made to identify members of this population and to arrange for continuation assignments, thus mitigating this problem.