

St. Johns County School District Student Assignment, Enrollment and Choice Plan

The St. Johns County School District is dedicated to ensuring that all students will choose a learning path that leads to a well-rounded graduate who demonstrates good character and leadership. To that end, every school in the district offers high quality educational options for students. Students originally are assigned to the school in the attendance zone of their permanent residence, but the District also provides a number of opportunities for parents to select other options for their children in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Student Assignment, Enrollment and Choice Plan (“Plan”).

Options include:

- Programs of Emphasis/ Career Academies
- Controlled Open Enrollment Choice Options
- Hardship Transfers
- The John M. McKay Scholarship Program for private or public school
- The Opportunity Scholarship Program
- Virtual School Programs
- Home School
- Charter Schools

I. Attendance Zone Assignments

The initial assignment of students to schools is based on established attendance zones and the permanent residence of the student, as determined in accordance with School Board Rule 5.03. All traditional District schools have a geographic area designated for attendance based on their established grade structure. These geographic boundaries are developed utilizing the following parameters and principles:

- Attendance zones should reflect the diversity of the District to the extent practical and consistent with constitutional requirements.
- Maximum utilization of school facilities by distributing students among the existing capacity as evenly as possible.
- School size commitments as recommended by the School Board to the extent practical.
- The plan includes target enrollments that allow for growth and anticipated changing demographics.
- The plan keeps neighborhood units in the same attendance zone to the extent practical.
- The plan assigns students to the closest school to the extent practical.
- The plan does not place a transportation burden on any identifiable diversity subgroup (socioeconomic, race/ethnicity, ESOL, or disability). Demographic/Socioeconomic balance.
- Maximize transportation efficiency costs.
- Minimize the disruption to students and families related to attendance zone changes to the extent practical.

Both overall District Attendance Zones for Elementary, Middle and High Schools, and the individual School Attendance Zone Maps are located on the School District website. In addition, an Attendance Zone Locator is available to determine the appropriate zoned school on an individual address basis. The following link provides access to all three: <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/zoning/>.

II. Residence

A student's permanent residence is the student's permanent residence of the student, parents or legal guardian(s) as defined in this section.

"Permanent residence" is defined by Florida Statute 196.012(17) as follows:

[T]hat place where a person has his or her true, fixed and permanent home and principal establishment to which, whenever absent, he or she has the intention of returning. A person may have only one permanent residence at a time; and, once a permanent residence is established in a foreign state or country, it is presumed to continue until the person shows that a change has occurred.

An adult student's permanent residence is his or her current permanent residence. A minor student's permanent residence is the permanent residence of his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s). If a minor student's parents or legal guardians live in separate residences while sharing physical custody under the terms of a court order or otherwise, the student may attend the school zoned for either residence with appropriate residency documentation.

Full and Complete Current Residence

A person cannot have more than one permanent residence, and only the student's current permanent residence as defined above may be used for enrollment purposes.

Proof of Residence

St. Johns County School District requires detailed proof of residence provided by a parent/guardian or adult student. Follow the requirements as included on the Student Services website at the following link: <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/student/residency/>

Change of Residence

The following items are evidence that a change of residence is full and complete:

- The former residence is not occupied for any purpose at any time by the student or any of the persons with whom the student has been living; and
- All personal belongings are moved from the former residence; and
- Mail is received at the new residence; and
- All utilities are transferred to the new residence.

If the student's permanent residence changes, notification and updated documentation must be provided to the school within 10 school days.

Residency Fraud

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are committing residency fraud if they submit an address during the enrollment process that is not their true permanent residence.

If there is reasonable suspicion that the student is not residing at the claimed address, the following procedures may be implemented at the discretion of the Superintendent or his designee.

- A letter may be sent to parent(s) requesting that the parent verify and update enrollment information. This may be followed by a phone conversation or home visit.
- The school staff may examine the Property Appraiser's website to determine the parent's homestead (permanent residence) location. The homestead address of the parent will be a factor to determine the student's zoned school. A conflicting address indicates that further investigation is required.

If it is determined that the student is attending a school outside of their zone, the student shall be withdrawn by the school and must be registered and enrolled in the appropriate zoned school.

In all cases the Superintendent or designee reserves the right to make an independent investigation and to make the final determination as to the residence of a student.

III. Career Academies/Programs of Choice

A Career Academy/Program of Choice provides an opportunity for a group of students to enroll in a specific set of courses associated with a designated career or focused educational program of study.

Each Career Academy has the following components:

- A recommended sequence of courses.
- A capstone project, a work site experience, a research project studying careers in the academy area, or some other experience in which students learn more about the career cluster with which the academy is affiliated.
- A demonstrated need for employees within the Career Cluster.
- An advisory board consisting of business leaders in the Career Cluster.
- Adherence to specific rules established by the school system.

Programs of Choice exist both in the middle and high school grades. At the middle school level, R.J. Murray Middle School hosts the Center for the Arts program. There are currently two acceleration academies in St. Johns County high schools: Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) and International Baccalaureate program (IB). Three high schools currently offer one of these two programs. In addition, three high schools employ a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program. ROTC is a program of choice designed to focus on leadership development, problem solving, strategic planning, and professional ethics. The School District currently has programs that support the Air Force, Army and Navy.

Eligibility

The St. Johns County School District's career academies and programs of choice are open to all eligible high school students (with the exception of the middle school arts program) in the District and is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in employment and educational opportunity. No person shall be discriminated against or harassed in any educational program, services or activities, or employment conditions or practices on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation. The district may assess each student's ability to benefit from specific programs through placement tests and counseling, and if necessary, will provide services or referrals to better prepare students for successful participation.

IV. Controlled Open Enrollment Choice Options

In addition to the established attendance zone, career academies and programs of choice, the St. Johns County School District will provide additional options for school assignment based on Controlled Open Enrollment in accordance with Florida Statute 1002.31. The following controlled choice options are permitted pursuant to School Board Rule 5.03 and will provide additional opportunities for students to attend a school other than their zoned school and will provide parents greater choice options. The Controlled Open Enrollment process and procedures are set forth in this Section IV.

A. Determination of Capacity

A determination of the schools with available capacity is updated annually, and will be posted on the School District's website at the following link: www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/choice. Specifications, plans, elements and commitments contained in the School District's Educational Plant Survey, Five Year District Facilities Work Plan and long-range student projections are incorporated into the District's capacity determinations for Controlled Open Enrollment.

For the 2017-2018 school year, a school will be subject to Controlled Open Enrollment when it has been determined that the school's enrollment is less than 80% of permanent Florida Inventory of School House (FISH) capacity. This determination takes into account the rapid enrollment growth in St. Johns County School District, which exceeds 20% over the past five years. In fact, the DOE Capital Outlay Full-Time Equivalent (COFTE) Projections show the District enrollment growing by an additional 21% over the next five years. The First Twenty-Day Count for the previous (current) school year will be used to measure enrollment for purpose of making the capacity determination. Current enrollment will be compared with the school's permanent capacity based on the current FISH database at the time of the enrollment count. Available capacity will be the difference between the number of then-currently enrolled students and 80% of FISH capacity.

Each charter school governing board shall determine capacity based upon its charter contract. A charter school may provide preferential treatment in its Controlled Open Enrollment participation process in accordance with Florida Statute 1002.33(10), if such special purposes are identified in the charter contract.

Since Pre-Kindergarten (PK) programs are not mandatory, Controlled Open Enrollment options are not available for PK students.

ESE students are eligible to apply to all programs and eligible schools including Controlled Open Enrollment. If accepted to the school, an IEP team will convene to determine whether the student's needs can be adequately addressed and to ensure the IEP can be implemented at the chosen school. If not, the student will not be enrolled, but placed at the appropriate school based on attendance

zone or appropriate placement for services if they are a resident of St. Johns County. Students residing in another county, whom the District is not able to serve, will be expected to enroll in their home county.

For the 2017-2018 school year, the following schools have available capacity for the specified number of seats. No K-8 Schools or High Schools currently meet the Controlled Open Enrollment criteria.

Elementary Schools	2016-2017 Permanent Student Stations	2016-2017 Permanent Capacity	2016-2017 1st 20-Day Enrollment	Available Seats based on 80% Permanent Student Stations
Durbin Creek Elementary	858	858	656	30
PVPV/Rawlings Elementary	1333	1333	1024	42
Webster School, The	959	959	497	270
TOTAL	3150	3150	2177	343
K-8/Middle Schools	2016-2017 Permanent Student Stations	2016-2017 Permanent Capacity	2016-2017 1st 20-Day Enrollment	Available Seats based on 80% Permanent Student Stations
Murray Middle	1093	984	745	42
TOTAL	1093	984	745	42

B. Application Process and Lottery Selection

Applications are available on the School District’s website during an open enrollment period as listed in the updated schedule for each year, attached hereto as Exhibit A. Paper copies of the application are also available for those without access to a computer. One application is required for each school to which the student would request consideration. (For example, if the student would be willing to attend two Controlled Open Enrollment elementary schools, two separate applications would be required.)

Students subject to a current expulsion or suspension will not be permitted to take advantage of a Controlled Open Enrollment choice.

For purposes of continuity of educational choice, a student who enrolls or transfers under Controlled Open Enrollment may remain at the Controlled Open Enrollment school until the student completes the highest grade level at the school. After completion of the terminal grade of that school, the student must return to their zoned school or apply for and be granted another lottery selection through Controlled Open Enrollment. Students residing in another county must return to their school district in the absence of another lottery selection entitling them to enroll in another District school.

Applications for Controlled Open Enrollment will only be accepted during the application window. Once the window has closed, all applications will be randomly numbered with the assistance of a computer program. Available seats will then be assigned to the applicants for that school starting at 1 and ending at the total number of seats available. (For example in 2017-2018, Controlled Open Enrollment students will be accepted for Durbin Creek Elementary from 1 to 30.)

The application window will run simultaneously for both St. Johns County residents and out-of-county residents. There will be two separate lotteries, with in-county and out-of-county students being numbered separately. The out-of-county applications will only be considered if there are still remaining open seats after the completion of the in-county lottery.

Once notified of a lottery selection of an available seat, the parent/guardian must accept and enroll the student in the specified school. If a student happens to receive a lottery selection for more than one school, the parent/guardian must select one and decline the other. If seats re-open due to a declined selection, the student with the next number in the lottery will be notified and offered the seat. Once notified, the parent/guardian will have ten working days to respond. No response will be considered a decline of the selection. This process will only continue until the first day of school. After the first day of school, the wait list will be discontinued.

There is no appeal process for Controlled Open Enrollment as it is based strictly on a lottery procedure.

C. Siblings and Preferential Placement

A parent may declare their school preference with respect to the placement of sibling students within the same school. Applications with a verified sibling priority shall be noted and maintained in a separate sibling list. These applications will be given a lottery number along with all other applications. However, when one sibling is selected, the remaining sibling(s) will be given a priority to attend the same school by allowing them to take the next number or to be placed on the waitlist only behind other siblings. If siblings cannot be placed at the same school, a hardship request may be requested.

Siblings are defined as a brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, stepbrother or stepsister, living in the same household. Verification will be required.

D. Availability of Transportation

No District transportation options are available to any choice option in St. Johns County. Transportation must be arranged and provided by the parent/guardian.

E. Student-Athlete Transfers

Student-Athletes who transfer to another school must comply with the FHSAA Rules of Athletic Eligibility in order to be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics and intrascholastic extracurricular activities.

- A student participating in Controlled Open Enrollment or a choice program is immediately eligible upon enrollment to participate in interscholastic athletics and intrascholastic extracurricular activities.

- A student may not participate in a sport if the student participated in that same sport at another school during that school year, unless the student meets one of the following criteria:
 1. Dependent children of active duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders.
 2. Children who have been relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone.
 3. Children who have been moved due to a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent.
 4. Good cause for participation exists under District or charter school policy.

F. Voluntary Return to Assigned School or District

Upon request, a student shall be permitted to return to the student’s zoned school; however, it is recommended that the student return at the end of the marking period or semester, unless extenuating circumstances are present.

G. Rescinding of Placement

Controlled Open Enrollment placement may be rescinded if:

- Incorrect or false information was provided in the application;
- Attendance, tardiness or discipline/behavior problems develop at the receiving school.

H. Class Size Compliance

Availability of seats at a school designated as having capacity under the Controlled Open Enrollment process is subject to the maximum class size pursuant to Florida Statute 1003.03 and Section 1, Article IX of the State Constitution.

V. Hardship Transfers

A student may be granted a “hardship” transfer when a condition or situation exists that implies an adverse or compelling circumstance or a state of misfortune unique to that student’s life or a family’s life situation. The situation could impact the student’s ability to achieve success at their zoned school. Relevant documentation must be attached to the Out of Zone Transfer Request.

A. Preferential Placement

Preferential placement will be provided to the following through the Hardship Transfer process:

- Dependent children of active duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders.
- Children who have been relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone.
- Children who have been moved due to a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent.

B. Grandfathered Requests for St. Johns County Residents

Fifth, Eighth and Twelfth grade students may remain at his or her previous school, if the parent/guardian chooses to submit a Hardship Out of Zone Application. Siblings, however, must attend their zoned school, unless they, too, have an approved Hardship Transfer.

C. Home Purchase Requests

Hardship transfers based on future home purchases shall not be granted. Students shall be assigned to a school based on their current residence.

D. Out-of-County Residents

Out-of-County Residents may only apply to attend St. Johns County Schools on a Hardship Transfer as a current employee.

E. Controlled Open Enrollment as a Hardship

Not being selected by the lottery for Controlled Open Enrollment shall not constitute a hardship.

F. Hardship Transfer Application Process

- Applications must be submitted by the assigned deadline, attached hereto as Exhibit A.
- Transportation must be provided by the parent.
- Requested school must be compliant with the Class Size Amendment.
- Parent agrees that at any time during the school year, a transfer may be revoked due to poor attendance, tardiness, or discipline issues.
- Parent understands that falsification of residency shall result in the revocation of the transfer waiver. The student will return to his or her zoned school at a time determined by the Superintendent or designee.
- Parent must receive an APPROVED Hardship Transfer from the St Johns County School District's Department for School Services.
- Parent must complete a separate application for each child seeking to transfer.

The application process for Hardships will be divided into three separate application windows:

- Current District Employee Transfers (District Employee Transfer Application)
- Renewal of Hardship - Out of Zone Transfers at Current School (to return to current school with the same hardship)
- First Time Hardship Out of Zone Transfers
- New Employee Transfers (District Employee Transfer Application)

Each of these groups will apply during the application window included in the schedule attached to this plan (Exhibit A) and posted on the School District Website at the following link: www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/choice. Each group will complete the application specifically designed for their circumstance.

Hardship transfers are valid for **one school year only**. Students currently on a hardship waiver are not automatically guaranteed acceptance for the next school year. A new application must be submitted annually.

A committee will review the hardship request for an out of zone transfer. A decision will be made based on the information provided in the application and any additional documentation.

School District employees may request, as a privilege of employment, to bring their children to either the school in which they work or the closest school in proximity to their place of employment

within the appropriate grade structure. Employees will complete the appropriate application and receive approval from the School Services Department.

If the employee is not a resident of St. Johns County, it is the employee's responsibility to obtain a release from the school district in which they reside.

If the conditions of employment or placement should change, the employee transfer will be null and void. If the employee is no longer employed by the District, the privilege is revoked. If the place of employment has changed, a new application must be submitted.

G. Hardship Appeals Process

If an application for a Hardship is denied, a parent/guardian may request an appeal in writing to the Office for School Services. Once the denial is provided to the parent, however, the parent must enroll the student in the attendance zone in which they reside, even if appealing the decision to the next level. The Superintendent will appoint a Transfer Appeals Committee. If requested, the Superintendent or his designee shall review the Committee's decision. All decisions by the Superintendent are final.

VI. McKay Scholarship Program for Students with Disabilities

The District participates in the McKay Scholarship program offered through the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE). Parents of eligible students with special needs or a 504 Plan may select a placement in a private school or selected public school, including charter schools. Florida's School Choice Programs ensure that no child will be left behind by allowing parents to choose the best educational setting—public or private—for their child. The *McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program* currently provides more than 30,000 Florida students with special needs the opportunity to attend a participating private school. The McKay Scholarships Program also offers parents public school choice. A parent of a special needs student who is dissatisfied with the student's current school may choose to transfer the student to another public school. Contact the FLDOE, Office of Independent Choice and Parental Choice at (800) 447-1636 or see the [Florida Department of Education McKay homepage](#).

The McKay Scholarship public school option is subject to the availability of required services for the individual student at the requested school. With the district's assistance, FLDOE determines deadlines, eligibility, award amounts and payment distributions based on Florida Statute 1002.39 and State Rule 6A-6.0970. Parents can learn more about this option by visiting the District's website at <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/ese/>. Information about this option also is provided to parents by District schools during the process of developing and implementing the child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Accommodation Plan.

Transfers under the McKay Scholarship Program Public School Option are approved based on the following criteria:

- The student applied for a McKay Scholarship through the FLDOE and your child was found eligible to receive the scholarship; and
- The review of the student's ESE or 504 records indicate that the special education services he/she needs can be provided at the requested school.

The McKay Scholarship allows the student to continue at the approved public school until he or she has successfully completed all grades offered at that school. Transportation is not provided for McKay Scholarship Students.

A student that is approved for the McKay Scholarship and would like to transfer to another public school under McKay must complete a written request to Tina Kennon, ESE Coordinator. Requests can be sent via US Mail, fax or by emailing to Ms. Kennon at the following contact information:

40 Orange Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084
(904) 547-7672 Phone
tina.kennon@stjohns.k12.fl.us

VII. Opportunity Scholarship Program

The Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) was created as a Florida school choice option in 1999. As originally implemented, the program offered students who attended or who were assigned to attend failing public schools the option to choose a higher performing public school or a participating private school.

On January 5, 2006, the Florida Supreme Court issued a ruling declaring the private school option of the Opportunity Scholarship Program unconstitutional. Students assigned to a failing school are no longer offered the opportunity to transfer and enroll in a participating private school. The option to attend a higher performing public school remains in effect.

OSP Eligibility Requirements

A public school student's parent may request and receive from the state an Opportunity Scholarship for the student to enroll in and attend a higher performing public school if:

- By assigned school attendance area or by special assignment, the student spent the prior school year in attendance at a public school that has been designated as earning a grade "F" or three consecutive "Ds" as based on the statewide assessments conducted pursuant to Section. 1008.22, Florida Statutes.
- The student has been in attendance elsewhere in the public school system and has been assigned to such school for the next school year.

Opportunity Scholarship transfers are subject to available space/capacity at the higher-performing school they are seeking to attend.

An eligible student may use the Opportunity Scholarship to continue attending in the higher-performing public school district until the student graduates from high school.

Transportation is dependent on the option chosen by the parent or guardian of the eligible student.

- If a parent chooses a higher-performing public school within the district, the school district is responsible for providing transportation.
- If a parent chooses a higher-performing public school in any other district, the parent or guardian is responsible for providing transportation.

VIII. Charter Schools

Charter Schools are public schools that operate under a performance contract or “charter” established between the school district or “Sponsor” and a Florida not-for-profit organization. Florida Statute 1002.33 defines the rules, requirements and regulations under which a charter may be authorized. The act of authorization is a right reserved to the local School Board. Charter contracts must meet the standards established by statute, however, other local provisions may be included as part of the contract negotiating process.

St. Johns County is currently home to three charter schools, which can viewed on the school district’s website at <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/charter/>.

Parents interested in sending their child to a charter school may contact the charter school directly for information on their application process or contact the school district’s Director for Guidance and Programs of Choice at 904-547-7752.

IX. Home School

Florida Statute 1002.01, F.S., defines home education as the sequentially progressive instruction of a student directed by his or her parent or guardian in order to satisfy Florida’s compulsory education requirements.

Florida Statute 1002.41 specifies the responsibilities of parents who establish a home education program. They must:

- Send a written notice of intent to the school district superintendent. The notice must be filed within 30 days of beginning the home education program and must include the following information:
 1. Name of the home education student(s)
 2. Birthdate(s)
 3. Address
 4. Parent’s signature
- Maintain a portfolio of educational records. Statute defines a portfolio as: a log of educational activities which is made contemporaneously with the instruction and which designates by title any reading materials used, and samples of any writings, worksheets, workbooks or creative materials used or developed by the student.
- Make the portfolio available for inspection by the superintendent upon 15-day written notice (The statute does not require the superintendent to inspect all portfolios).
- Provide an annual educational evaluation of the student’s educational progress to the superintendent. The evaluation must consist of one of the following:
 1. A Florida certified teacher chosen by the parent may evaluate the child’s progress based on a review of the portfolio and discussion with the student.
 2. The student may take any nationally-normed student achievement test administered by a certified teacher.
 3. The student may take a state student assessment test at a location and under testing conditions approved by the school district.
 4. The student may be evaluated by a psychologist holding a valid, active license pursuant to Florida Statutes 490.003 (7) or (8).

5. The student may be evaluated with any other valid measurement tool as mutually agreed upon by the parent and the superintendent.
- Preserve each student's portfolio for two years.
 - Submit a letter of termination to the school district superintendent upon completion of the home education program, enrollment in a public or private school or moving from the district.

X. Virtual School

St. Johns Virtual School (SJVS) offers high quality, online K-12 curriculum taught by local St. Johns County teachers. Students are able to take individual courses while they attend their traditional school or apply to become a Full Time St. Johns Virtual School student. SJVS Full Time students who earn the necessary credits, receive a St. Johns County diploma. The next enrollment window for Full Time SJVS will open on April 12, 2017, and close on July 11, 2017.

A. Part Time Options

Students are able to take SJVS courses during the school day in a lab at their school of attendance or after school as an additional course. If you are looking to have your child take a SJVS course during the school day, please work with your child's guidance counselor for placement.

B. Full Time Options

St. Johns Virtual School is a district school of choice meaning students must apply and be accepted. Acceptance is based on prior student grades, test scores, and student attendance.

The rationale for our selective process is based on the premise that if a student is not successful in the Full Time program or chooses to withdraw, a student can severely disrupt their graduation timeline.

Enrollment windows will open in April of each year. A second enrollment window, for second semester, will open in late November/early December. More information on how to register for a part time course or to apply for Full Time SJVS is available at the following website: <http://www-sjvs.stjohns.k12.fl.us>.

Exhibit A

Schedule for Controlled Open Enrollment Choice Options

New Student Registration

Career Academies/Programs of Choice January 19 – February 10, 2017

RJ Murray Middle School Arts Program January 19 – February 10, 2017
February 7, 2017 Auditions

St. Johns County Center for the Arts January 19 – February 10, 2017
February 7, 2017 Auditions

Returning Students

Career Academies/Programs of Choice No Action Necessary

RJ Murray Middle School Arts Program No Action Necessary

St. Johns County Center for the Arts No Action Necessary

St. Johns County School District Employees January 17 - February 10, 2017

Current Hardships

Renewal of Hardship Out of Zone Transfer at Current School January 23-February 10, 2017
(to return to current school with the same hardship)

Controlled Open Enrollment

In-County Residents February 13 – March 10, 2017
Lottery and Notification March 13-17, 2017

Out-of-County Residents February 13 – March 10, 2017
Lottery and Notification March 13-17, 2017

New Employees/First-Time Hardships

First Time Hardship Out of Zone Transfer Applications Beginning March 20

New Employee Applications Beginning March 20
(District Employee Transfer Application)