CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS

POLICY	CMS/NEPN Code:
CIPLIDENIE A CONCANACINIE DI ANI	JCA
STUDENT ASSIGNMENT PLAN	Draft Revisions 10/10/16

As provided by North Carolina law, all students under the age of 21 years who are domiciled in Mecklenburg County and who have not been removed from school for cause or have not yet obtained a high school diploma are entitled to be enrolled in public school. Estudents shall be assigned to a particular school by the Board of Education in accordance with the student's place of residence and a student assignment plan adopted by the Board.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR STUDENT ASSIGNMENT²

In making decisions regarding the student assignment plan, the Board shall follow these Guiding Principles for Student Assignment, which are based on our Vision, Mission, Core Beliefs and Commitments, our Theory of Action, and input from the community.

The Mission of Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools is to maximize academic achievement by every student in every school. Effective school based leadership and teaching, differentiated staffing, and equitable and differentiated allocation of resources as expressed in Policy ADA (Equitable Distribution of Resources) have the greatest potential impacts on individual student learning. In addition, an effective student assignment plan can contribute to positive, supportive learning environments. The Board of Education is committed to creating such environments.

Home Schools

Home Schools are the foundation of our academic instruction delivery model. Since accomplishing our mission requires that every home school maximize student achievement, home schools are our first priority when making student assignment and operational decisions. Every student will be guaranteed an opportunity to attend a home school within proximity to where he/she lives.

Magnet Schools

Magnet Schools (Full and Partial) offer students opportunities for learning outside the assigned home school in environments that combine three characteristics:

- 1. A track record of consistently high student achievement
- A track record of narrowing achievement gaps at a rate that exceeds the aggregate rate of home schools

¹-Students with a disability who receive Exception Children services are entitled to be enrolled in school until they turn 22 years old.

Date of Adoption: 3/11/65, 8/10/70, 4/28/98 Page 1 of 14 Revised: 8/17/71...11/27/01, 11/23/04, 10/25/05, 7/22/08, 12/9/08, 11/10/09, 11/9/10,

12/11/13, Draft Revision 10/10/16

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 7B-3507, §§ 115C-366, -366.2, -367, -368; 42 U.S.C.

§ 11431 et. seq.

Cross Reference: ADA, IHBJ, JCA-R, JCA-E, JEB, JFAA, JFAB, JFAC, JFAC-R

Commented [S1]: Moved below so that policy starts with the Goals and Guiding Principles (see page 3).

² The Guiding Principles were adopted by the Board on August 10, 2010 and incorporated into this policy on November 9, 2010.

3. One or more of the following: an academically distinct program, demonstrated innovation in creating high academic growth, and/or a student population that is distinctly more diverse than neighboring home schools.

Stability and Predictability

In order to generate and sustain community support, the student assignment plan must provide students and families with stability and predictability. To that end, the Board of Education commits to the following:

- 1. The Board shall consider current and future population growth, potential demographic shifts, and other factors in order to create assignment patterns that are sustainable over time.
- The Board shall consider undertaking a comprehensive district wide review of the student assignment plan every six years.
- 3. The Board reserves the right to make changes to the assignment plan on a localized basis due to the following factors: the opening and/or closing of schools, overcrowding, or underutilization. With the exception of situations deemed to constitute an emergency threat to the safety of students and/or staff, the Board will notify students and families of potential changes no fewer than nine months in advance and will approve any decision no later than November 15 affecting the school year beginning in the following calendar year, while striving to provide more ample notice whenever possible. The Board may alter this schedule in circumstances where the Board deems it appropriate to delay approval of changes in the assignment plan until December 15.
- The current sibling guarantee that includes meeting eligibility requirements for magnet programs remains in effect.

Diversity 1

The student assignment plan will reflect the demographics of the school feeder areas in order to create diverse learning environments that better prepare students to live in our increasingly diverse country and to compete successfully in the global workforce.

Effective use of Capital Resources

The student assignment plan must be cost effective and make efficient use of our facilities and transportation resources. We will develop a facility use policy that includes overcrowding and underutilization, as well as alternative teaching delivery methods to maximize student achievement while reducing facilities and transportation costs.

Decision Matrix

While the Board will be mindful of our Mission, our commitment to Equity, and all aspects of our Guiding Principles when making student assignment decisions, only certain components currently can be measured objectively. Therefore, in order to provide fact based starting points, the Board directs the Superintendent and staff to include the following prioritized decision making rubric in any proposed changes to the student assignment plan.

1. Home Schools Proximity will be based in priority order on:
a. travel distance from home to school;

- b. keeping entire neighborhoods assigned to the same school (staff shall use its discretion in considering commonly accepted neighborhood boundaries, zoning decisions, covenant agreements, HOAs, etc); and
- e. to the extent possible, keeping whole elementary zones intact in middle and high school feeder patterns.
- Stability and Predictability—the likelihood that the proposed assignments may be sustained over a period of time without adjustment.
- 3. Diversity consideration for creating a relative balance of economically disadvantaged students (EDS), with the understanding that there is currently a predictive link between poverty levels and achievement gaps.
- 4. Effective use of capital resources—the total projected operating and replacement costs of facilities and transportation resources over a defined period of time.

Community Involvement

Along with our commitment to these Principles, the Board calls upon our community to join us in preparing our students to become productive citizens. For all our students to succeed, they need the support of more than just the CMS staff. Students, families, community members and groups, businesses, philanthropic groups, and other governmental bodies must become more aware of how their decisions impact students and join us in making educating all students a top priority. We call upon our entire community to act now to support individual students and schools.

PART ONE

GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR STUDENT ASSIGNMENT

The Vision of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is to provide all students the best education available anywhere, preparing every child to lead a rich and productive life. Our Mission is to maximize academic achievement by every student in every school.

Student assignment is the responsibility of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education. The Student Assignment Goals – approved at the Board's Feb. 23, 2016, meeting – represent the Board's priorities for assigning students to schools, while the Guiding Principles provide our superintendent and staff the blueprint for developing the Student Assignment Plan.

Student Assignment Goals³

The Board believes that a Student Assignment Plan that promotes the Vision and the Mission of the Board will, to the extent possible ⁴:

A. Provide choice and promote equitable access to varied and viable programmatic options for all children;

³ The Student Assignment Goals were adopted by the Board on February 23, 2016.

⁴ The Goals for the student assignment plan are not listed in priority order.

- B. Maximize efficiency in the use of school facilities, transportation and other capital and operational resources to reduce overcrowding;
- C. Reduce the number of schools with high concentrations of poor and high-needs children;
- D. Provide school assignment options to students assigned to schools that are not meeting performance standards established by the state; and
- E. Preserve and expand schools and programs in which students are successfully achieving the Mission and Vision of the Board.

Guiding Principles for Student Assignment⁵

Many factors related to student assignment are within the Board's influence and authority, including responding to the valuable input and feedback from our families and broader community. Still, there are many factors driving student assignment that are outside the Board's control. These include but are not limited to housing patterns, public transportation and the local economy. The Board calls on all of our community, especially Mecklenburg's elected officials, business owners, civic organizations, faith houses and philanthropists, to prioritize our children when making decisions that impact schools. If we are to maximize academic achievement for every child, it must be a community effort.

The Student Assignment Plan will be built on a foundation of equitable access to high-quality schools including home schools, magnet schools and additional types of school options. All schools, regardless of type, should consistently demonstrate high student achievement and must eliminate achievement gaps. The district's portfolio of schools should include a range of theme-based programs as well as instructional models that respond to the various learning styles and preferences of its student body.

The Board will intentionally expand and replicate successful programs and schools throughout the county in ways that increase equitable access to high-demand themes and instructional models.

In order to create and maintain a Student Assignment Plan that is sustainable over time, the Board will consider several factors when determining and adjusting assignment patterns. These include but are not limited to current and future population growth and potential demographic shifts, overcrowding and underutilization of facilities. Additionally, the Board will consider undertaking a comprehensive district-wide review of the Student Assignment Plan every six years, while recognizing it may be necessary to make more frequent localized changes to the assignment plan based on the aforementioned factors.

The Student Assignment Goals and Guiding Principles will drive all related student assignment decisions.

⁵ The Guiding Principles for Student Assignment were approved by the Board on April 26, 2016.

I. Types of Schools

A. Home Schools

Home schools are schools with fixed, contiguous attendance boundaries. Every student will be assigned to a designated home school within proximity to where he/she lives.

- 1. To the extent possible when establishing home-school attendance boundaries and determining proximity, the Board will consider:
 - a. Facility capacity (based on classroom standards for each school);
 - b. Travel distance from the home to school;
 - <u>c.</u> Keeping entire neighborhoods assigned to the same school (staff shall use discretion in considering commonly accepted neighborhood boundaries, zoning decisions, covenant agreements, homeowners associations [HOAs] municipal jurisdictions, etc.);
 - d. Population density within neighborhoods and school attendance areas; and
 - e. Keeping whole elementary attendance areas intact as part of middle and high school feeder patterns.
- 2. In establishing home schools, the Board will consider:
 - a. Configuring schools with varying grade levels;
 - b. Constructing attendance boundaries especially for newly established
 schools that contribute to a socioeconomically diverse student
 population; and
 - c. Collaborating with other local governmental bodies to inform those policy decisions (e.g., housing, transportation) that directly impact student assignment.

B. Magnet Schools/Programs⁶

Magnet schools do not have fixed attendance boundaries, and access is within a transportation zone or a choice zone (a geographic area that may or may not correspond with a transportation zone). A magnet school is a particular type of school option that is governed by the Board's magnet policies. Students may apply to attend a magnet school using the district's school options lottery.

C. School Options/Programs

School options do not have fixed attendance boundaries, and access is within a transportation zone or a choice zone (a geographic area that may or may not

⁶ Throughout this document, the terms "magnet schools" and "magnet programs" are used interchangeably.

correspond with a transportation zone). Broader than magnet schools and not governed by the Board's magnet policies, school options include but are not limited to middle and early colleges, innovative small schools and e-Learning academies. Students may apply to attend a school option using the district's school options lottery.

- D. In preserving, expanding, replicating and establishing new magnet schools and school options, the Board will consider:
 - Responding to demand as demonstrated by lottery applications and parent and community feedback;
 - Strategically locating full/partial magnet programs and school options/programs throughout the county; and
 - 3. Establishing a variety of choice and/or transportation zones.
- E. In assuring equitable access to magnet schools and school options, the Board will consider:
 - 1. Establishing priorities in the magnet and school options lotteries based on socioeconomic status;
 - 2. Streamlining criteria for enrollment and continuation based on programmatic requirements; and
 - 3. Providing varied transportation options.

II. Ensuring Equitable Access to High-Quality Schools

To increase each student's opportunity to access high-quality schools, the Board will:

- A. Establish a priority in the school options lottery and the transfer process for students attending a school that has been designated by the state as low performing for three consecutive years; and/or
- B. Implement partial magnet, targeted turnaround programs and specialized academic options in low performing schools to improve outcomes for all students.

III. Operational Efficiency

The Student Assignment Plan must be cost effective and make efficient use of our facilities, transportation and other capital and operational resources. To that end, the Board will strive to:

- A. Prioritize ensuring every home school is a high quality and viable school choice;
- B. Increase utilization of schools operating under capacity by expanding partial magnet schools and school options;
- C. Consider alternative instructional delivery models that maximize student achievement while reducing facility and transportation costs; and
- D. Consider modifications to transportation zones and feeder patterns that are designed to provide operational efficiency and equitable access to quality educational programs.

PART TWO

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT PLAN POLICY

As provided by North Carolina law, all students under the age of 21 years who are domiciled in Mecklenburg County and who have not been removed from school for cause or have not yet obtained a high school diploma are entitled to be enrolled in public school. Students shall be assigned to a particular school by the Board of Education in accordance with the student's place of residence and a student assignment plan adopted by the Board.

I. School Attendance Areas

- A. The Board of Education shall establish geographic boundaries for home schools, and transportation zones, and other zones of choice, locations for magnet programs and other school options, and feeder patterns for home schools, and magnet programs, and other school options that identify the schools or programs at the next school level to which students have a guaranteed assignment (continuation schools).
 - 1. Attendance areas shall be determined based on the <u>Goals and</u> Guiding Principles set forth at the beginning of this policy.
 - 2. Any such action shall be taken only after the Board has held a public hearing on the initial proposal.
 - 3. With the exception of situations that constitute an emergency threat to the safety of staff or students, the Board will notify students and parents⁸ of potential changes to the student assignment plan no less than nine months by the first Board meeting in November prior to in advance of the school

Commented [SC2]: Moved from beginning of policy.

⁷ Students with a disability who receive Exceptional Children services are entitled to be enrolled in school until they turn 22 years old.

 $[\]frac{8}{}$ "Parent" is defined in Regulation JCA-R as "unless otherwise stated, one or both parents, legal guardian, or legal custodian of a student."

year in which the changes are scheduled to go into effect, would be effective.

B. Notwithstanding the above, the Superintendent is authorized to make minor changes within a school year to home school boundaries in response to the construction of new roads or new subdivisions.⁹

II. Determination of Student Residence

- A. Except as set forth below, the residence of a student is defined as the domicile of the student's parent. A student's domicile may be changed only in the event the parent has abandoned the parent's former domicile with no intention of returning to it, established actual residence in another location, and evidenced an intention to remain in the new location permanently or indefinitely. A minor may not select, acquire, or change his/her domicile to a domicile other than that of the minor's parent.
- B. Notwithstanding the domicile of a student's parent:
 - 1. The residence of a married student shall be the domicile of the student rather than the domicile of the student's parent.
 - 2. The residence of a student who is an emancipated minor shall be the domicile of the emancipated student.
 - 3. The residence of a student who is residing in a group home, foster home, or pre-adoptive home shall be the group home, foster home, or pre-adoptive home. A pre-adoptive home is one in which a child is placed by a county Department of Social Services or licensed child-placing agency.

III. School Lottery Process

- A. <u>Effective with assignments for the 2017-18 school year</u>, assignments for the following categories of schools and/or programs will be made through the School Lottery:
 - 1. magnet schools or programs,
 - 2. school options, and
 - 3. <u>magnet schools, school options, and non-magnet schools for students attending schools designated by the state as low performing for three consecutive years (the "School Performance Priority").</u>
- B. The Board will establish guarantees and priorities for each category of school or program to which students may apply in the lottery. Students who submit timely applications for the lottery will be placed in schools at which there are available seats in the appropriate grade levels based on the assignment of a random number for each applicant and the guarantees and priority rankings

⁹ The Superintendent is authorized to take such action only when a school boundary splits an area in which a new subdivision has been developed and in which no students yet reside. The Superintendent may modify the boundary to include the entire subdivision based on newly established or existing streets or lot lines, thereby assigning students who will live in the subdivision to the same school.

adopted by the Board. These guarantees and priorities are set forth in Exhibit JCA-E.

- C. The Superintendent shall establish a Lottery process that is fair, equitable, and consistent with the priorities of the Board.¹⁰
 - The Board encourages directs the Superintendent to make reasonable efforts to ensure that seats are available for the purpose of facilitating new school assignments for students who qualify for the School Performance Priority.
 - Students qualifying for the School Performance Priority may apply for a
 nonmagnet school under the School Performance Priority even though
 they have not yet attended the continuation school for their current school
 if they meet the following criteria:
 - a. are in the terminal grade of their school, and
 - a.b. their continuation schools are low performing schools where students also qualify for the School Performance Priority.
 - 3. Students (including siblings) who wish to attend <u>school options</u> or magnet programs must meet eligibility requirements in place for a particular program before they may submit an application or be admitted to the program. Students and their parents must also agree to fulfill program requirements in order to apply for and remain enrolled in school options and magnet programs.
 - 4. The following categories of students do not need to participate in the Lottery:
 - Students who want to be assigned to their home schools for the next school year: these students should follow the process described in the regulations accompanying this policy and Policy JFAC, Student Reassignments and Transfers.
 - b. Effective with the 2011–2012 school year, sStudents (including students formerly entitled to a sibling guarantee) who wish to attend non-magnet schools other than their home schools: these students must request a transfer through the process set forth in Policy JFAC, "Reassignments and Transfers," and its accompanying regulation, JFAC-R. ¹¹ (This provision does not apply to students who qualify for the School Performance Priority.)
 - c. Students in terminal grades of <u>school options or</u> magnet programs if they wish to be assigned to the continuation program for their

 $[\]underline{^{10}}$ Lottery Priorities are set forth in Exhibit JCA-E.

- particular school option or magnet program: the default assignment for these students will be the continuation program.
- d. Students in the terminal grade of schools to which they were assigned under the School Performance Priority: the default assignment for these students will be the continuation school for their current school.

Students who submit timely applications for the Lottery will be placed in magnet programs at which there are available seats in the appropriate grade levels based on the assignment of a random number for each applicant and the guarantees and priority rankings set forth in the current student assignment plan adopted by the Board, set forth in Exhibit JCA E.

B. Title I Choice Lottery

Note: This section was removed by the Board on December 11, 2013. Students who received assignments under the former Title I Choice process are permitted to remain in the schools in which they were placed through the terminal grade. During the 2013/14 school year, CMS will provide transportation for students in the 5th and 8th grades placed in the schools through the former Title I Choice Lottery.

IV. Assignment Rules

A. Non-Magnet Assignments

Home School Guarantee
 Every student will be guaranteed an opportunity to attend the home school
 designated by the Board to serve his or her residence.—assigned to a
 designated home school within proximity to where he/she lives.

2. Change of Residence During School Year

- a. Students who move into new home school areas during an instructional year may either attend the home school serving their new address or remain in their current placements for the duration of the school year.
- b. <u>Subject to the exception set forth below</u>, <u>Ee</u>ffective with the subsequent school year, these students will be assigned to attend the home school that serves their new address. Transportation will not be provided to students who elect to remain in their current placements for the remainder of the school year in which they moved.
- 3. Exceptions "Stay Put" Option for Students with Change of Residence
 An exception to the above rule applies to students in the 11th grade.

 Setudents who move into a new home school area after during the school year or in the summer prior to beginning the 11th the terminal grade of their current school. These students may remain at the same school to which they were properly assigned in 11th grade for their senior year in high school with these stipulations:

Commented [S3]: Moved higher in the section.

Commented [SC4]: Scott, you have a homework assignment: calculate the mobility rate for each school. We need this for the next PC meeting on 10/10/16. [Tom would like us to provide transportation to kids who move out of a home school area for the rest of that school year, so they don't have to change schools b/c of lack of transportation. Sort of a McKinney-Vento transportation provision for all students.

- a. The student must have been properly assigned to the school;
- **a.**<u>b.</u>Students who choose to remain at their current schools are not eligible for transportation to the school.
- b.c. Younger siblings of rising seniors students who choose to remain at their current schools under this exception will not have a sibling guarantee to attend the same school.

4. Continuation Schools

For students who, under prior student assignment rules, were assigned through the Lottery to non-magnet schools that are not their home schools, the continuation schools for the next school level are their home schools. An exception to this rule applies to students assigned to new schools under the School Performance Priority. These students may remain in the feeder pattern for the new school to which they were assigned through the 12th grade. Transportation will be provided for these students.

B. Magnet Lottery Assignments

A student is expected to attend the <u>magnet program school</u> to which he or she is assigned in the first or second <u>magnet-lottery</u>. For the school year for which the assignment was made, a student may be placed in a different <u>magnet program-school</u> only in the following circumstances:

- 1. The student is offered a seat in a different <u>school options or</u> magnet program from a Wait Pool;
- The student is granted a reassignment or transfer by the administration or Board pursuant to Policy JFAC; or
- A student is in the Exceptional Children Program (EC) and has an Individual Education Plan that requires a program not located in the student's current school.

After enrolling in their lottery-assigned <u>school or</u> magnet programs, students who wish to attend different <u>magnet programsschools</u> for the next school year must participate in the lottery for that school year.¹²

C. Transportation

With designated exceptions, ¹³ students who reside outside the transportation zone for the program in which they are enrolled are not eligible for CMS-provided transportation. a family must provide transportation if their child is admitted to a magnet program that does not serve the student's high school feeder area. ¹⁴ An exception applies for students assigned to schools through the School Performance Priority. Transportation will be provided for these

Commented [SC5]: Scott, do we need to keep this sentence? At the Policy Committee meeting, we discussed removing it as no longer applicable or necessary. Should we replace it with something

¹² In some circumstances, students may be able to apply for reassignment to a different school through the reassignment/transfer process provided in Policy JFAC and its accompanying regulation.

¹³ Exceptions include students who received a transfer from a school that is persistently dangerous and students identified as entitled to McKinney-Vento services.

¹⁴ Transportation rules are set forth in detail in Regulation JCA-R.

students through the terminal grade in high school.

V. Lottery Deadlines

- **A.** All lottery applications must be submitted via an online process established by the Superintendent. Late applications will not be accepted.
- **B.** Students who are enrolled in CMS and miss a Lottery deadline will be placed in their home schools or magnet continuation program.
- C. Students who were not enrolled in CMS during the application period, or who were enrolled but not registered, who miss a Lottery deadline will be placed in their home schools. Students who do not want to attend their home schools may apply for a transfer or reassignment according to the process described in Policy JFAC and its accompanying regulation.

VI. Participation in Partial-School Magnet Programs by Non-magnet Program Students

A non-magnet student assigned to aFor elementary and middle schools that houses a are partial-school magnet programs, the magnet theme is school wide. Therefore, all students in the school, whether or not they were assigned to the school through the lottery and are designated as magnet students, participate may, with the permission of the principal, take classes in the magnet program. For high school magnet programs, non-magnet students may participate in magnet classes if space is available and any prerequisites have been met. However, for all grade levels, only students enrolled in the magnet program are entitled to the guaranteed continuation magnet school.

only if the student otherwise meets any eligibility criteria in place for the magnet program. An exception to this general rule applies to partial magnet high school International Baccalaureate programs. For those programs, only students who live within the transportation zone for a particular high school IB magnet program may participate in that magnet program.

VII. Contingent Assignments

- A. Except as may be inconsistent with federal law, all assignments to schools other than the guaranteed_designated home school are contingent upon_a student following all disciplinary and attendance rules and, for students not eligible for or not using CMS transportation, the a student's parents arranging for reliable transportation to and from school when CMS transportation is not provided or is not used by the student.
- B. A student may be reassigned to his or her home school if the student's parents:
 - 1. Violates the Code of Student Conduct,
 - Has an excessive number of unexcused absences or tardies, and/or

Commented [SC6]: Added per 9/19 PC meeting

<u>Is-consistently fail tonot</u> <u>bring the student to school on time at the start of the school day or transported the student from campus in a timely manner after the end of the school day or after-school activity, such that the student's success at the school is negatively impacted or there are safety issues.</u>

- C. In addition, students assigned to magnet programs may be reassigned to the home school if they do not fulfill all requirements of the Magnet Compact for their particular magnet program.
- C. Principals must ensure that all reasonable efforts are made to work with the student and his/her parents to seek solutions to the underlying issues causing the transportation problems before the student is reassigned to his/her home school. A detailed description of the specific circumstances in which this rule will be applicable and the process that will be followed to reassign these students to their home schools is set forth in Regulation JCA-R.
- D. In addition, students assigned to magnet programs may be reassigned to the home school if they do not fulfill all requirements of the Magnet Compact for their particular magnet program.

VIII. Notice of Assignment

Notice of student assignment must be made prior to the effective date of the assignment. Notice of assignment may be given by noting the assignment on the report card of the student or any other means that will adequately ensure the delivery of written notice to the parent, including sending the notice of assignment by mail to the address of record of the student.

IX. Communications

It is the intent of the Board that the administration will develop techniques to communicate effectively with parents and students about the student assignment plan and the various school choices that are available to each student that, at a minimum, employ a variety of forms of print, telephone, online and in-person methods of communication in the languages predominantly used by students and families in CMS. The Superintendent shall include a description of the planned communication plan with the student assignment plan recommendation that is presented to the Board for adoption.

X. Comprehensive Review

Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, the Board will consider conducting a comprehensive review of the student assignment plan at least every six years.

XI. Regulations

Commented [SC7]: This is Sarah's effort to capture the intent of the Board. Would appreciate feedback/suggestions.

The Superintendent shall adopt regulations and develop procedures to implement the details of the student assignment planthis policy.