

ENROLLMENT PRACTICES IN LARGE URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL ADMISSIONS, ATTENDANCE, BOUNDARIES
FEBRUARY 1, 2008

Public School Enrollment Systems: Synopsis

Oakland Unified School District

All students in OUSD who will be attending a new school during the next school year (new students, rising 5th and 8th graders, and students transferring to another OUSD school) submit an Options application by mid-January. Students can apply to any grade-appropriate non-Charter school in the district. Priorities are given to students residing in the neighborhood; students with a sibling who will be attending their first-choice school, students residing in a neighborhood with all schools designated Program Improvement trying to attend a non-PI school, and an open lottery. Over 90% of students applying through the Options process get one of their choices. Students whose neighborhood school is overcrowded are given a priority to attend a nearby school. Students unhappy with their school assignments are allowed to appeal and can request to be put on a waiting list for their desired school. Students attending a non-PI school due to the PI status of their neighborhood school are given free bus passes.

Background: The Intradistrict Open Enrollment policy was created as an equity strategy to promote and support “choice” of high quality schools throughout the district.

Operating Assumptions of Our Policy:

- There would be space throughout the district for students from outside of a neighborhood;
- Prioritizing neighborhood families would initiate the development of two quality schools in every neighborhood;
- Prioritizing siblings second would support families staying together;
- Program Improvement School Neighborhood status as third priority would, by law, ensure opportunities at non-PI schools.
- Publicizing Options Enrollment information, especially the timeline and process, would be adequately accessible to families throughout the district.

Unintended Consequences/Emerging Tensions

- Location of perceived “quality schools” privileges the neighborhood families. Many neighborhoods in Oakland are of similar race & class, consequently homogenizing school communities (see demographic information provided);
- Prioritizing non-neighborhood siblings second has not fully supported keeping families together. For example, in Oakland we have extreme mobility and stability patterns in varying neighborhoods. It can be inferred from the District Policy that stability is the norm or an assumption, consequently creating additional challenges for families as they move to different neighborhoods throughout a school year.
 - There were 1250 active students who entered their school after October 1.
- Prioritizing students from PI School neighborhoods third may not be high enough a priority for all to have admission to non-PI schools.
- Current time frame for Open Enrollment window has various impacts on different Oakland Communities (e.g., too late for families who want to consider private schools; too early for families who traditionally participate in enrollment closer to the beginning of the school year).
 - There were 1142 late options applications turned in between January 9 and May 14;
 - There were over 3600 late applications turned in between May 15 and September 7 for students who were new or returning to the district
- Our policy has facilitated an increased promotion of our schools. As a result, we have had a greater return of our neighborhood families from private schools consequently impacting available spaces for non-neighborhood students;
- The sequence of planning and implementing diverse English Learner programs are aligned with open enrollment policy and administrative regulations, but not enrollment patterns of many English Learners, consequently impacting the most optimal placement of English Learners at schools with appropriate EL program options and resources.
- Enrollment options and shifts due to school closures and new school development have predominantly impacted African American Students for the former and Latino students for the latter.

Potential Questions for Discussion

- How does policy serve as an “equity strategy” (i.e., what principles or values should be explicit in developing an intradistrict open enrollment policy)?
- What role does data play in creating this policy?

Berkeley Unified School District

All students in BUSD who will be attending a new school during the next school year submit a Parent Preference Form application by February. Students can apply to any grade-appropriate non-Charter school in the district. Priorities are given to students with a sibling who will be attending their first-choice school, students residing in the attendance zone, students living in Berkeley but outside of the school's attendance zone, and non-Berkeley residents with inter-district transfers. Transportation is provided to all elementary students who live in the school's attendance zone and over one mile away from their assigned school.

San Francisco Unified School District

SFUSD has all its students apply to school through a district-wide enrollment system that allows students to apply to any school in the district (excepting schools with additional enrollment requirements). Students can learn about SF schools and the enrollment process at the Public School Enrollment Fair held in October. Students then submit their form in January with up to seven school choices listed ("Round One" of enrollment). Priorities are given (in order) to students with an older sibling attending their first-choice school; special education students (in inclusion classes), and newcomer students requesting a language program. Schools with designated attendance areas give priority to attendance area students, as long as their assigned profile (based on a formula that takes into account academic and socio-economic factors) contributes to the (academic and socio-economic) diversity of the school. There is a "Round Two" of enrollment for those from the first round on waiting lists, those appealing their initial school assignment, and late applicants. 87% of incoming kindergarteners got one of their seven choices, while 93% of 6th graders and 94% of 9th graders got theirs. Elementary schools are served by school bus routes, transporting approximately 5,300 students to 64 schools. Discount public transit (Muni) passes are made available to middle and high school students.

San Jose Unified School District

All students in OUSD who will be attending a new school during the next school year submit a School Choice Application by mid-February. Students can apply to any grade-appropriate non-Charter school in the district. Priorities are given to students residing in the neighborhood, students requesting a Voluntary Integrative Transfer (based on socio-economic status), students with a sibling who will be attending their first-choice school, and all other students. Students who do not receive their first choice school are put on a waiting list for their desired school.

Los Angeles Unified School District

LAUSD assigns all students to their neighborhood schools; enrollment happens directly at the school sites. Students can opt out of their neighborhood school by participating in “Open Enrollment,” which assigns a designated number of seats by a random drawing. Applications are due in May.

Students can also apply for a permit to attend a non-neighborhood school in the event that they have a sibling attending the school, their child-care provider is located nearby, their parent’s place of employment is in another neighborhood, or with a Permit With Transportation (a voluntary integration program). To apply for a non-neighborhood school due to the Program Improvement designation of the neighborhood school, students must apply in January. Students attending a non-neighborhood school because of PI status will be offered paid transportation by the district.

Long Beach Unified School District

LBUSD has a “school of choice” system of enrollment. Applications are due in February; priority is given to neighborhood students; when a neighborhood school is overcrowded, attendance is determined by lottery. School assignment appeals are directed to the site administrator of the school of choice.

No details about priority for non-Program Improvement schools is available; only 11 of LBUSD’s 89 schools are designated PI.

San Diego Unified School District

Students are automatically assigned to their resident school. To attend a non-resident school, students can apply to one of three programs; Voluntary Enrollment Exchange Program, Program Improvement School Choice, or Open Enrollment. Enrollment is determined by space availability. Enrollment due to PI status (PISC) is limited to the amount of funding available for transportation. Open Enrollment applicants are given priority by sibling, gifted Cluster Program (elementary students only), all SDUSD open enrollment applicants, and then out-of-district applicants. Those in the Voluntary Ethnic Enrollment Program are also offered an opportunity to attend a non-neighborhood school; this process is separate from Open Enrollment.

Seattle Public Schools

Seattle's Open Enrollment application window is in January and February. To educate families about the available schools, Open House nights are arranged, and some areas host regional school fairs. All students submit an Open Enrollment application; priority is given to sibling, 'reference area' students, distance, and lottery. School buses are provided for all students who live over a mile away from their school (including those assigned to their reference area school).

	OUSD	BUSD	LBUSD	LAUSD	SDUSD	SFUSD	SJUSD	Seattle
District Enrollment	38,800	9,088	90,663	707,626	131,034	56,183	30,912	45,800
Application process	Students turn in an application in December/January to participate in the “Options” process.	Students turn in an application in January/February to participate in the first assignment lottery.	Students turn in an application in January/February to participate in the “School of Choice” enrollment process.	Students are assigned to their neighborhood schools; they can apply for non-neighborhood schools through an “open enrollment” program or by receiving a permit.	Students are assigned to their neighborhood schools; they can apply for schools outside their neighborhood through different programs, including “open enrollment.”	Students turn in an application in by January to participate in the initial round of the school assignment process.	New students and rising 5 th and 8 th grade students turn in an application in January/February to participate in the School Choice process.	Students turn in an application in January/February to participate in the open enrollment process.
Priority System	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Neighborhood siblings 2) Neighborhood students 3) Non-neighborhood siblings 4) Students whose neighborhood school is designated PI and who request a non-PI school 5) Lottery 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sibling 2) Neighborhood 3) Non-Neighborhood 4) Inter-district transfers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Neighborhood 2) Lottery 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Lottery 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) PI (students enrolling in non-PI schools through the PISC program get priority over open enrollment applicants) 2) Neighborhood 3) Siblings 4) Gifted Cluster Program (elementary) 5) General Open Enrollment applicants 6) Out-of-district requests 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Younger siblings 2) Special ed students in an Inclusion class 3) Students exiting a Newcomer program into a language program 4) Neighborhood students who contribute to academic diversity 5) Non-neighborhood students who contribute to academic diversity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Neighborhood 2) Students requesting a Voluntary Integrative Transfer 3) Sibling 4) Lottery 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sibling 2) Neighborhood 3) Distance (students residing closer to the school are assigned before those living farther away) 4) Lottery

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Appeals/Late applications	Late applications are placed on a first-come first-serve basis. Students are allowed to appeal their Options assignments	No information available.	Appeals can be made to the school site administrator.	No information available.	No information available.	Students submit appeals and late applications in the second assignment round. Appeals have priority over late applicants. After this round, placements are on a first-come first-serve basis.	Students who are not assigned to their first choice school are automatically placed on a waitlist for that school.	Students who do not receive their first choice school are placed on a waiting list for that school. Appeals are allowable in exceptional circumstances.
Participating schools	All non-Charter schools.	All non-Charter schools.	All non-Charter, non-Magnet schools.	Students opting for “open enrollment” are allowed to apply for designated seats in select schools.	School participation in “open enrollment” and other enrollment programs is based on seat availability.	All non-Charter public schools without additional application requirements.	All non-Charter, non-Magnet schools.	All schools in the district.
School Assignment process	Students are assigned using a lottery system that takes into account different priorities.	Students are assigned using a lottery system that takes into account different priorities.	Students are assigned using a lottery system that gives neighborhood students first priority.	Students are assigned to their neighborhood school. For open enrollment, a lottery assigns students to designated spots in select schools.	Students are assigned to their neighborhood school. For open enrollment, a priority system determines assignments.	Students are assigned by a formula that promotes academic diversity and takes into account different priorities.	Students are assigned using a lottery system that takes into account different priorities.	Students are assigned using a lottery system that takes into account different priorities.

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Neighborhood priority	Neighborhood students receive the highest priority in the lottery, with those with siblings being assigned first. If a neighborhood school is overcrowded, students may be assigned to the closest school.	Neighborhood students receive a priority after students with siblings have been placed.	Neighborhood students receive the highest priority; when a neighborhood school is overcrowded, students may be assigned to another school.	Students are automatically assigned to their neighborhood school.	Students are automatically assigned to their neighborhood school and are placed before non-neighborhood students in the enrollment process.	Neighborhood students receive a priority over non-neighborhood students after students with siblings, Inclusion students, and students requesting a language program are placed.	Neighborhood students receive the highest priority; when a neighborhood school is overcrowded, students may be assigned to another school.	Neighborhood students receive a priority after students with siblings have been placed. Non-neighborhood students are placed according to their geographic proximity to the school.

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Program Improvement (PI)	Students whose neighborhood school is designated PI receive a priority (after neighborhood students and students with siblings) to attend a non-PI school. Students can also appeal an assignment based on PI. Students are guaranteed placement in a non-PI school, but are not guaranteed placement in the non-PI school of their choice.	Students attending a PI school can request a transfer to a non-PI school in their attendance zone. Priority is given to those students who are low-achieving and low-income. When there are no non-PI schools available in the appropriate grade level, students may transfer out of the district.	No specific program for enrollment identified.	Students can participate in Public School Choice. Students in PI schools are given a selection of non-PI schools by the district. In the case of over enrollment, priority is given to those students who are lowest-achieving and low-income students.	Students enrolled at a PI school can participate in Program Improvement School Choice (PISC). Students are given a choice of non-PI schools based on the student's residency. Lowest-achieving, low poverty students receive priority; priority is given over students enrolling through open enrollment.	Students attending a PI school are eligible for Supplemental Education Services (SES, a program that gives extra support to students by making use of outside providers). In the event of over enrollment in the programs, priority will be given to those students who are low-achieving and low-income.	No information available.	Students who attend a "school in need of improvement" may be given the opportunity to transfer to another school or to receive services.
Transportation	Students attending a non-PI school due to the PI status of their neighborhood school are offered free public transportation.	Transportation is provided to all elementary students in the school's attendance zone who live more than one mile away from their assigned school.	Transportation eligibility is determined by schools.	Transportation provided to students who are re-directed.	Transportation provided under district guidelines (there must be at least 8 students to qualify for transportation).	No transportation for PI students is provided. Families are responsible for the transportation to the SES provider.	Transportation is provided to students who live a specified distance away from their assigned school.	Transportation is provided to all students who live more than one mile away from their assigned school.

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Board Policy	BP 5116.1 “The parents/guardians of any student who resides within district boundaries may apply to enroll their child in any district school, regardless of the location of residence within the district.”	BP 5116.1 “The Governing Board desires to provide enrollment options that meet the diverse needs and interests of district students. Students who reside within district boundaries may apply for enrollment in any district school. Students who reside within a given attendance zone will have priority to the schools in their attendance zone.”	No Board Policies or Procedures easily accessible.	No relevant Board Policies or Procedures easily accessible.	Refer to Board policies F-2350, H-1500, H-1501, H-2200, H-2575 “All students are required to attend the school serving the attendance area in which they reside unless they are enrolled in an approved integration program or accepted through established procedures covering inter-district or intra-district enrollments.”	Res. 68-22A1 Establishes “the five factors for the diversity index lottery” as 1. extreme poverty 2. socio economic status 3. home language 4. API of sending school 5. student’s academic achievement	AR 5116.1 “The Superintendent or designee shall identify those schools which may have space available for additional students.” BP 5116.11 “Board of Education Policy provides that elementary (K-5) students residing in the San Jose Unified School District will attend their neighborhood school. Under certain circumstances, and when space is available, a student may be granted an intra-district transfer to attend another district school.”	Policy D06.00, Rev. July 1985 “Students residing within the district’s boundaries are required to attend the school offering the appropriate grade level which serves their attendance area, unless specifically reassigned to some other school or exempted from attendance in accordance with established district procedures.”
Relevant California Education Code	35160.5 (b) On or before July 1, 1994, the governing board of each school district shall, as a condition for the receipt of school apportionments from the state school fund, adopt rules and regulations establishing a policy of open enrollment within the district for residents of the district. 48980. (h) The notification shall advise the parent or guardian of all existing statutory attendance options and local attendance options available in the school district. 48980. (i) It is the intent of the Legislature that the governing board of each school district annually review the enrollment options available to the pupils within their districts and that the districts strive to make available enrollment options that meet the diverse needs, potential, and interests of the pupils of California.							