

BOARD AGENDA ITEM
March 10, 2015

SUBJECT:

Changes to Policy JFABC – *Admission of Transfer Students* – **Final Reading**

BACKGROUND:

Policy JFABC pertains to the admission of transfer students under various considerations. Recently the administration, with the concurrence of Cabinet, has suggested an amendment to policy in order to deal with transfers to a school which might have a “magnet” designation. (This designation may also broaden the school’s ability to seek certain grants.)

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

Presently the School District has no school committed exclusively to a *magnet* designation so that attendance is only by application and acceptance. Nevertheless, a school such as East Aiken School of the Arts which features not only a regular curriculum, but infuses the same with unique curriculum aspects (such as the arts emphasis), could reasonably be considered to have a magnet designation. That designation may offer an attraction to certain students who are zoned for other schools and who may want to attend the school of magnet designation in order to take advantage of its unique offerings. Accordingly, the Administration recognizes a need for an additional category of transfer requests to include transfers into schools with a “magnet school” designation. The amendments to Policy JFABC approved on February 24 on first reading and included in the attachment would accomplish and facilitate that additional category. The school does not depart from its designation as a duly zoned elementary school. Attendance will continue to be primarily related to the attendance zone for students at this school, but the amendments proposed would also accommodate those desiring to transfer into the school based upon its *magnet* designation. Transfers into the school will still be on a space available concept. The policy as amended, essentially allows approvals based upon a chronological order of application for transfers. The language is broad enough to provide a lottery system in the future, but that would be unlikely unless the school’s makeup eventually went to a pure magnet designation, at which time the specific school was no longer part of the zoned school concept. Since the policy changes are based on space availability, it is not likely that this will have any significant impact on the school’s population for the time being.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt on final reading Policy JFABC, as amended

ATTACHMENT:

Policy JFABC, as amended

PREPARED BY:

William H. Burkhalter, Jr. (at administration’s request)

ADMISSION OF TRANSFER STUDENTS

Code **JFABC** Issued **2/12**

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for admission of transfer students to the district.

Students are assigned to schools according to the location of the residence of their parents/legal guardians, unless specifically authorized to attend a different school. The board has the authority to transfer and assign students within the district. Student transfers will comply with adopted board policy and state laws.

Disciplinary transfers

The board, or its designees, may make disciplinary transfers to another school in lieu of suspension or expulsion, but only after a conference or hearing with the parents/legal guardian.

Disciplinary transfers of students may be based on the commission of a crime, gross immorality, gross misbehavior, persistent disobedience or for violation of the written rules, policies, or regulations established by the Aiken County Board of Education or the South Carolina State Board of Education.

Intra-district transfers

Student transfers from one school to another within the school district will be considered if at least one of the following criteria is met:

- Children or wards of persons who are employed by the School District of Aiken County will be permitted to attend school at the facility where the parent/guardian works or at the nearest school to the parent's work site on a space available basis. Transportation will be furnished by the parent/guardian.
- Students who need special services may be transferred based on the recommendation of the executive director of special programs. Such recommendation will be based on psychological tests, evaluations by the district testing staff and written justification attached to the transfer request form.
- Medical/psychological problems may be criteria for student transfers provided the request clearly identifies how the school assignment can, or will, have a material effect on the student's medical condition. Such a transfer request must be accompanied by a physician's or appropriate health care professional's statement supporting the transfer request.
- Hardship may be considered as criteria for student transfer. Problems such as those related to parent's work schedule, availability of child care services near another school and transportation difficulties may be considered as hardships.
- Rising seniors are excluded and may remain at their current school with due notification of their intent to the appropriate academic officer.

Requests for transfers will be submitted by the parent/guardian on the appropriate form to the area office serving the school to which the student is currently assigned. The form may be obtained at the area office or from any school in the district. The academic officers may make decisions regarding the transfer requests and, in so doing, will follow the criteria set forth above. Decisions within a given area may be appealed to the respective area advisory council for final determination of the issue.

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For requests that involve a transfer between two administrative areas, the same procedures will be necessary for each area. All area council decisions involving requests between areas may be appealed to the Aiken County Board of Education. Students do not need to attend for these appeals.

Students must transfer from one school to another immediately upon change of the parent's residence unless the parent elects for the student to remain until the end of the current school year in the original school. In such cases, transportation will be furnished by the parent/guardian.

Transfers into schools with *Magnet School* Designation

- If a regular District school is also designated as a magnet school by the District, applications for student attendance from outside its zone will be subject to the following procedures:
 - 1) Attendance will be by regular attendance zone with an application process available for those desiring to transfer into the school.
 - 2) Parent applicants must acknowledge that they have familiarized themselves with the school's curriculum requirements and stepped-up parental involvement expectations.
 - 3) Up to the point of the school's designated class-level capacities, acceptance of qualified applications will be based upon chronological order of application.
 - 4) Priority consideration may be given for an applicant with a sibling already enrolled in the school.
 - 5) Thereafter, acceptance of qualified applications for student spaces in excess of available spaces will be based upon chronological date (and time) of application at any time a space becomes open. However, a lottery system may be utilized by the school's administrative staff, with the academic officer's concurrence, if it becomes apparent that it is a more equitable choice.
- Application for transfers **from** a school with *Magnet* designation will be the same as other applicable sections of this policy.

Except as stated above, students will not be allowed to transfer from their designated attendance areas.

Transfers into the district

Students who have been in attendance at a school in another district will be accepted automatically by this district on the following basis:

- Students must be residing with a parent/legal guardian who is a legal resident of this district. The existence of a legal guardianship will be recognized upon the filing of an appropriate order or decree from a court of competent jurisdiction with the appropriate academic officer.
- Students who have been expelled from their previous school district of residence may not be admitted to this district's schools immediately upon request. In such cases, the student and his/her parent/guardian must submit an admission request to the Aiken County Board of Education.
- If not residing with parents/legal guardian, the student's admission will be governed by policy JFAB.

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Transfers pending move of parents/guardians

Students may be enrolled for a new school year, or upon initial entry during the school year, at a school in an attendance zone into which the parent/guardian plans to move after the beginning of the school year, or after the date of the initial entry, subject to the following conditions.

- The residence which the parent/guardian plans to occupy is under construction, being renovated/repared or is in the process of being purchased/obtained prior to the first day of attendance at a school in the attendance zone of such residence.
- Notarized verification of the date construction or renovations/repairs began and the date the residence will be ready for full-time occupancy will be provided by the contractor or builder before the student is allowed to enroll.
- If an existing residence is purchased, or in the process of being obtained, but occupancy cannot be gained prior to the student's first day of school in the new attendance zone, notarized verification of the date of availability for occupancy will be provided by the realtor, or previous owner, prior to such school attendance.

Transfers out of the district

Requests, not due to residential change, for students to transfer out of the district must be presented in written form with detailed justification to the director of administrative services who will submit the request along with appropriate recommendations for approval or denial to the board. If the student is released, the School District of Aiken County will assume no responsibility for tuition to the receiving district.

Transfers due to change of residence of parents/legal guardian, or change of legal guardian, will be granted provided the student has completed all payments due and returned textbooks and library books. No transcripts or records will be furnished to receiving schools until the above requirements are met.

Transfers in connection with juvenile authorities

The administration is authorized to make approvals at its discretion of temporary or permanent intra-district transfers in connection with requests from the department of social services or from juvenile authorities, provided that any intervention by such agency or authority on behalf of a student is appropriately authenticated and documented to the satisfaction of the administration.

Duration of approved transfers

Once a transfer has been approved, it may remain in effect through the terminal grade of the school to which the transfer is approved. That is through fifth grade in elementary schools, through eighth grade in middle schools and through graduation in the high schools. At the end of the terminal grade in elementary school and in middle school, the student will be assigned to the school serving the attendance area in which the student resides. Exceptions are temporary assignments of kindergarten classes for housing purposes only.

This policy does not apply to the assignment of preschool disabled children, all special education placements, four-year-old classes and kindergarten. Area advisory councils and/or the appropriate academic officers may make exceptions to student assignment as required to appropriately house students in the facilities available with due notification to the parents/guardians of the affected students.

Adopted 9/9/75; Revised 1/10/84, 7/26/88, 7/23/91, 11/24/92, 4/23/02, 2/7/12

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Legal references:

A. S. C. Code, 1976 as amended:

1. 59-19-90(9) - School trustees have power to transfer and assign pupils: (see 59-19-510 for right to appeal).
2. 59-19-510 - Right to appeal to county board of education; petition.
3. 59-63-30 - Qualifications for attendance.
4. 59-63-40 - Discrimination on account of race, creed, color or national origin prohibited.
5. 59-63-210 - Grounds for which trustees may expel, suspend or transfer pupils; petition for readmission.
6. 59-63-250 - Transfer of pupils.
7. 59-63-470 - Transfer of pupils when enrollment of such pupils threatens to disturb peace.
8. 59-63-480 - Attendance at schools in adjacent county.
9. 59-63-490 - Transfer to adjoining school district.
10. 59-63-500 - Transfer without consent of school district of residence
11. 59-63-510 - County board of education authorized to order transfer.
12. 59-63-520 - Consent required for transfer.