

OAK PARK UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

DISTRICT OF CHOICE TRANSFER APPLICATIONS

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

- 1. *What is a District of Choice?*** Senate Bill 680, signed by Governor Schwarzenegger on October 11, 2009, extended the Education Code provisions authorizing a school district to designate itself as a school district of choice thereby permitting students in other districts to attend the *district of choice* without residing in the district's boundaries. Oak Park Unified has been a District of Choice since the 2004-2005 school year.
- 2. *Do I need to be released from my district of residence in order to attend a district of choice?*** No, you do not need a release from your district of residence as long as your application for transfer is received by the District of Choice no later than December 31 of the year prior to the school year you wish to attend. Transfer applications received after the December 31 deadline cannot be considered for transfer under the *district of choice* legislation.
- 3. *Can I transfer to Oak Park Unified after December 31 of a school year?*** After December 31, you may apply for a regular interdistrict transfer under Education Code 46600, but you must first be released by your district of residence in order to be approved by Oak Park. Your district of residence can provide you with an interdistrict permit request and you would need to bring that approved form to Oak Park for consideration. Typically, most districts will approve these transfers if you work within the boundaries of the requested school district, are employed by the requested school district or have child care arrangements within the boundaries of the school district. Parents have the right to appeal a denial by either the resident district or the incoming district to the respective County Board of Education.
- 4. *Can I expect that my child will be able to attend the district of choice year after year?*** Once approved under the *district of choice* legislation, a student will be **automatically** renewed year after year until graduation from high school. If you know that you will NOT be returning the following school year, we ask that you tell the office manager at your school site.
- 5. *Are there limits on the number of students that Oak Park can accept?*** Yes, each year the governing board of education will establish a capacity at each grade level and estimate the number of new students that can be accepted as inter-district transfers. If the number of requests exceed the capacity that has been established then a random, unbiased selection process (a lottery) will be done at a public board meeting as required by the law.
- 6. *How will the lottery work?*** A random number will be assigned to each family. The number of openings at each grade level will be determined by the Board of Education prior to the lottery. If the number of applicants does not exceed the openings at a grade level, then all of the applications at that grade level will be accepted. If the number of applicants exceeds the openings at a grade level then a drawing will be held to fill the grade level to capacity.
- 7. *When and where will the lottery be held?*** The lottery will be held at the **January 17, 2012** School Board meeting on the campus of Oak Park High School in the pavilion beginning at 6:00pm. Transfer applicants and their families are NOT required to attend the meeting as the results will be posted on our web-site at <http://www.oakparkusd.org/interdistricttransfers> prior to January 21, 2012. The Oak Park High School campus is located at 899 North Kanan Road in Oak Park.
- 8. *Will there be any type of a waiting list?*** From experience, we know that parents will sometimes change their minds, so we will be able to fill those vacancies from the waiting list. The law is very specific about this deadline and our district will be audited for compliance so please do not ask us to consider an application received after the 12/31 deadline.

9. ***When will parents know if their student is accepted for enrollment into the Oak Park Unified School District?*** Results of the lottery will be posted on the OPUSD district website within a week following the lottery. However, any elementary school *assignment* (we have three elementary schools) will not be determined until later in the school year when we have a better idea of enrollment projections at each of the school sites.
10. ***Does each child in a family need a separate District of Choice Transfer Application?*** Yes, parents will need to complete a separate application for each student requesting a transfer to Oak Park Unified.
11. ***What happens if one of my children is accepted as the result of the lottery and the other one is not?*** While this may occasionally happen, it is rare. One lottery number will be assigned to each family. If one sibling is accepted and the other one is not, that student will be placed on the sibling Waiting List in the order in which they were drawn.
12. ***What if I have a child who is currently attending an Oak Park school as the result of a District of Choice Transfer in previous years and have another child who I would like to enroll as a District of Choice Transfer?*** The current law states that applicants who have siblings currently attending school in our district shall be given priority in the selection process. There is a similar provision for students of military personnel. As a result, the lottery for any openings at a grade level will first be drawn from among these applications. Your application must still meet the December 31 deadline in order to be considered.
13. ***Where can I get an application and when are they due?*** Applications will be available at <http://www.oakparkusd.org/interdistricttransfers> beginning November 1, 2011 and will remain available for the duration of our open enrollment period through December 31, 2011. All applications must be submitted online.
14. ***What do I tell my district of residence once I have been notified that I have been accepted into the Oak Park Unified School District?*** As a matter of courtesy you should communicate to your school site as soon as possible that you will not be returning to your resident district for next school year. This will allow your district to adjust enrollment for that school. Oak Park Unified will notify your district of residence just prior to May 1, 2012 that you have been accepted into our district as the result of a District of Choice Application and have plans to attend a school in the Oak Park Unified School District.
15. ***What if I change my mind, who should I notify?*** We hope that you are excited about the opportunities within our district. However, if you change your mind about attending one of our schools after you have received your acceptance, it is important that you notify Linda Gam in our district office **immediately** so that we will not include your student on the list that will be sent to your district of residence. You may contact Linda at lgam@oakparkusd.org
16. ***What are the next steps after being accepted into the District?*** We will email you pertinent timelines and information about enrollment and registration requirements once it has been determined that your student has been selected in the lottery. As previously highlighted, your student's assignment (to a specific elementary school) will not be made until later in the school year. However, we will make every effort to make these K-5 assignments as quickly as possible and communicate them to you. Since we only have one middle school and one high school in Oak Park, students applying for transfer into grades 6-12 will know the school he/she will be attending when you are notified of the acceptance.