

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 attendance 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 considered for acceptance into Oak Park. Each school district has their own policies governing interdistrict permits, but generally will provide you with a form that will be used to request your student's release. Generally, most districts will approve these transfers if you are employed by the requested school district, have child care arrangements within the boundaries of the school district you are requesting or the student wants to continue in OPUSD after moving. Parents have the right to appeal a denial by the resident district to the County Board of Education where they reside.
- 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 to Oak Park the following school year, we ask that you communicate that to the office manager at your school site and the Oak Park Unified district office.
- 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 for the upcoming year. If the number of requests exceed the capacity that has been established then a random, unbiased selection process (a lottery) will be conducted 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, if required, will be held at the **January 21, 2014** school board meeting on the campus of Oak Park High School in Room G-9 beginning at 5:30 p.m. 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> the day following the lottery. 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?*** Yes, waiting lists at each grade level will be established to fill vacancies as they occur. From experience, we know that parents will sometimes change their minds, so waiting lists help us to meet our enrollment targets. However, all waiting lists for District of Choice

applicants expire as of May 15 each year. According to the District of Choice legislation parents must be informed of acceptance or denial into our district by that date and, as a result, we can no longer maintain waiting lists for future openings. After that date parents can still apply for a traditional permit if openings occur at a grade level (see number 3 above for process).

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 the day following the lottery. However, this list will only show the relative standing of each family in the lottery. Actual acceptance into the district will begin in early February. *Specific* elementary school *assignments* (we have three elementary schools) will not be determined until later in the school year when we have a better idea of resident 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.
11. ***What happens if one of my children is accepted as the result of the lottery and the other one is not?*** Because the number of openings at each grade level varies this may happen. If one sibling is accepted and the other is not due to lack of space in a particular grade level, that student will be placed on the sibling waiting list in the order of their lottery number. The sibling waiting list has preference over the non-sibling waiting list.
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 for the new sibling to be considered for acceptance into the district.**
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, 2013 and will remain available for the duration of our open enrollment period through December 31, 2013. All applications must be submitted online and no later than the December 31 deadline.
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 projections for that school. Oak Park Unified will notify your district of residence just prior to May 1, 2014 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 Oak Park Unified .
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 mentioned, 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.