



## OAK PARK UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

### DISTRICT OF CHOICE

#### *Frequently Asked Questions and Answers*

1. ***What is a District of Choice (DOC)?*** Senate Bill 680, signed by Governor Schwarzenegger on October 11, 2009, extended the Education Code provisions authorizing a school district to become a school district of choice thereby permitting students in other districts to attend the District of Choice without residing in that district's attendance boundaries. OPUSD has been a District of Choice since the 2004-05 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 Oak Park Unified 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 an inter-district transfer under Education Code 46600, but you must first be released by your district of residence to be considered for acceptance into Oak Park. Each school district has their own policies governing inter-district permits, but generally will provide you with a form that will be used to request your student's release. 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.
5. ***Are there limits on the number of students that Oak Park can accept?*** Yes, each year the OPUSD 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. ***Do you know what grade levels will have openings before the lottery?*** For 2017-18 there will be limited space in certain grade levels. At the elementary level grades K and 4 will have the most openings. All other elementary grades will have limited space, but depending upon the number of applications the board may open up additional classes as space allows. For middle school Grades 7 and 8 applications are limited to siblings of current OPUSD students only while Grade 6 will have the most vacancies. Grade 9 will have the most openings at the high school while grades 10-12 will have limited space for new students.
7. ***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 applications does not exceed the openings at a grade level, then all of the applicants at that grade level will be accepted. If the number of applications exceeds the openings at a grade level then a drawing will be held to fill the grade level to capacity.
8. ***When and where will the lottery be held?*** The lottery, if required, will be held at the **January 17, 2017** school board meeting on the campus of Oak Park High School in Room G-9 beginning at 5:45 p.m. Transfer applicants and their families are NOT required to attend the meeting as the results will be posted on our website at the [District of Choice Information Center](#) the day following the lottery. The Oak Park High School campus is located at 899 North Kanan Road in Oak Park.
9. ***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, these wait lists expire on May 15 of each year since the DOC legislation requires that parents be informed of acceptance or denial into the district by that date. After May 15 parents can still apply for a traditional permit if openings occur later in the year at a grade level (see number 3 above for process).
10. ***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. Elementary school placements (we have three elementary schools) will not be made until later in the spring when we have a better idea of resident enrollment projections. **For placement in grades 10-12 at Oak Park High School students must have sufficient credits to be on track for graduation. Otherwise, they will be placed at either the Oak Park Independent School or Oak View HS depending upon their needs.**
11. ***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.
12. ***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 grade level, that student will be placed on a wait list in the order of their lottery number. Siblings of students currently attending OPUSD schools have priority.

- 13. 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. As a result, the lottery for 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.**
- 14. Where can I get an application and when are they due?** Applications will be available at the [District of Choice Information Center](#) beginning November 10, 2016 and will remain available for the duration of our open enrollment period through December 31, 2016. All applications must be submitted online and no later than the December 31 deadline.
- 15. 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 after May 15, 2017 that you have been accepted into our district.
- 16. 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 submitted your application or 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@opusd.org](mailto:Lgam@opusd.org).
- 17. 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. Your student's assignment to a specific school will not be made until later in the school year. We will make every effort to make these assignments as quickly as possible and communicate them to you.
- 18. I applied and was accepted into OPUSD under the DOC program and then moved into the community of Oak Park. Now that I have moved out of Oak Park within another school district's attendance boundaries, why is my DOC status gone?** When you gained District of Choice (DOC) status you were a resident of another school district. Upon moving into Oak Park you became a resident of this school district and were no longer eligible for the District of Choice program. Once you move out of Oak Park into another school district OPUSD cannot continue to enroll you without a permit from your new resident district. You also have the option to re-enter the DOC program for the next year and go through the same process as you initially did. There is no provision in the law to give you, as a former DOC participant, priority in the process.