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**Board Governance Policy Cross Reference:** [1, 12, 13, 14](#)

**Administrative Procedures Cross Reference:**

[Student Registration](#)

[Transportation Eligibility](#)

**Form Cross Reference:**

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**Legal/Regulatory Reference:**

[Manitoba Regulation 468/88](#), sections 42(1), 42(2) (Education Administration Miscellaneous Provisions Regulation)

[Manitoba Regulation 259/2006, section 11\(1\) \(Funding of Schools Program Regulation\)](#)

[The Public Schools Act](#), sections 41(5.1), 41(6), 58.3, 58.4, 58.5 and 58.9

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The Interlake School Division (ISD) recognizes and supports the provincial Schools of Choice initiative facilitating parental/student choice, within limits, in selecting the public school best suited to the student's learning requirements. Only those students who qualify under "right to attend school" legislation may exercise choice.

Parents must apply to potential receiving schools **no later than May 15** by completing, signing and submitting one of the following application forms for admission to a school of choice:

**1. Within-Division/District**

If a student wishes to attend a school other than the designated school within the same school division/district, **please fill out, sign and submit three copies** of a [School of Choice Within-Division/District](#) application form to the potential "receiving" school no later than May 15. Forms filled out online will automatically print the required number of copies. Please sign all copies. The application form is also available at the receiving school division/school administration office.

**2. Out-of-Division/District**

If a student wishes to attend a school in a school division/district other than the home school division, **please fill out, sign and submit four copies** of a [School of Choice Out-of-Division/District](#) application form to the potential "receiving" school no later than May 15. Forms

filled out online will automatically print the required number of copies. Please sign all copies. The application form is also available at the receiving school division/school administration office.

It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that all forms are filled out correctly and completely and are submitted on time to the receiving school. Parents must decide on the school to be attended as soon as is reasonably possible and notify the schools involved.

The Schools of Choice initiative does not apply to students who wish to attend a school because the recognized program they wish to attend is not offered by their designated school (e.g. French Immersion program).

Upon receipt of a school of choice application form, schools are to immediately forward the application to the Superintendents' Department Administrative Assistant prior to providing any response. The Superintendents' Department will engage with the School Administrator and will provide the applicant's family with a standard email regarding process.

Responsibilities and obligations of parents, students and schools as they relate to Schools of Choice are outlined in the question and answer guide that follows.

#### **A. Schools of Choice**

**1. What is the basic right to attend?**

Every school board shall designate a school to which a resident student is entitled to attend. A student may choose not to attend his or her designated school.

**2. What is a "designated school"?**

A designated school is generally the closest school to the student's residence within their home school division which offers the most appropriate education required by the student and which has available space. Parents will still have the ability to choose a school other than the one designated by the school board. A few conditions may apply, as outlined in this guide.

**3. What is "choice"?**

Choice means the ability to choose a school to be attended inside or outside of the home school division. If a student wishes to attend a school other than the designated school because it is, for example, more convenient for parents for after-school child care purposes, this could be considered a reason to exercise school choice as long as conditions in #9 below are met.

**4. What is a "sending" or "home" school division?**

The sending or home school division is the division in which the student resides (or age of majority student resides), where school taxes are paid and where the student would ordinarily attend school.

**5. What is a "receiving" school division?**

The receiving school division is the division, other than the home division, where a student chooses to attend.

**6. Where do parents find information to help them choose a school?**

School boards will publish or make available to parents and students information about their schools, programs, and enrollment procedures.

**7. If a student does not want to exercise school choice, will this affect his or her right to attend the designated school?**

No. Divisions must give priority to students identified to attend the designated school.

**8. Is there priority of admissions under schools of choice?**

Schools will enroll students in the following order of priority:

- students designated to attend that school;
- students residing in the school division; and
- other Manitoba students.

**9. Is a school required to accept a student who wishes to exercise his choice?**

A school will enroll a student unless:

- space is not available; or
- special equipment or physical facilities required by the student are not available; or
- enrolling the student would be detrimental to the continuity of his or her education; or
- the program is not suited to the age, ability, or aptitude of the student; or
- enrolling the student would be detrimental to order, discipline and well-being of the students in the school; or
- proper notification is not provided by the parent or student.

**10. Who decides if there is space?**

The school division decides if space is available using the following guidelines:

- if classes have 20 or more students, classes will be declared full and applications will be denied;
- exceptions are:
  - Brant-Argyle School where the guideline is 15 students per classroom
  - students attending the French Immersion Program at École R. W. Bobby Bend School, École Stonewall Centennial School and Collège Stonewall Collegiate;
  - ISD students transferred on recommendation of the Student Services Administrator for academic or social reasons.

**11. If there are more applications than vacant seats, how are the vacant seats filled?**

Vacant seats will be filled according to the following criteria:

- a) Students residing in the school division will be given priority;
- b) Once a) is applied, if there are still more applications than vacant seats, the date in which application was received will be used to prioritize applications. Applications will only be received in the school year prior to the year of registration at the school.

**12. Who decides if a program is suitable for a student?**

The school, in consultation with parents/guardians and students, will determine if a program is suitable for the learning requirements of students. Schools will consult with the Student Services Administrator regarding student-specific needs.

**13. Can a student be refused admission to a school of choice on the basis of past academic performance?**

No, except where the student is applying for specialized programming that has criteria or prerequisites that have been met by students already enrolled in that program.

**14. Can a student be refused on the basis of past disciplinary problems?**

A request can be denied if, in the opinion of the receiving division, disciplinary problems can be addressed only through additional support, which is available in the home division, and if the home division chooses not to pay for such support outside its boundaries.

**15. How does a student apply for school of choice? Are there any forms to fill out?**

Yes, there is an application form to fill out and submit to the school of choice.

Parents must apply to potential receiving schools **no later than May 15** by completing, signing and submitting one of the following application forms for admission to a school of choice:

**a) Within-Division/District**

If a student wishes to attend a school other than the designated school within the same school division/district, **please fill out, sign and submit three copies** of a [School of Choice Within-Division/District](#) application form to the potential “receiving” school no later than May 15. Forms filled out online will automatically print the required number of copies. Please sign all copies. The application form is also available at the receiving school division/school administration office.

**b) Out-of-Division/District**

If a student wishes to attend a school in a school division/district other than the home school division, **please fill out, sign and submit four copies** of a [School of Choice Out-of-Division/District](#) application form to the potential “receiving” school no later than May 15. Forms filled out online will automatically print the required number of copies. Please sign all copies. The application form is also available at the receiving school division/school administration office.

**16. Can a student apply to more than one school at a time?**

Yes, provided that proper notification to potential receiving schools is given and that application deadlines are met in all cases. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that all forms are filled out correctly and completely and are submitted on time to receiving schools. Parents must decide on the school to be attended as soon as is reasonably possible and notify the schools involved.

**17. When are students notified if they have been accepted into their school of choice?**

The receiving school must advise the parents and sending school no later than June 30 whether or not the student has been accepted.

**18. Can parents still apply to a school of choice after the May 15 deadline?**

Applications for the upcoming school year must be submitted by May 15<sup>th</sup>. Late applications will not be considered and appeals will not be heard regarding missed deadlines.

**19. If a school of choice does not work out, or if a parent changes their mind, can a student return a) to their former school division and b) to their former school?**

- a) A student who has chosen to attend a school of choice may withdraw from that school and return to the home division. The home school division shall, at that time, designate a school for the student.
- b) There is no guarantee that the designated school will be the school previously attended by the student. If the student chooses a different school in the home division from the one designated, their enrollment is subject to space and programming considerations, as noted in item 9, above.

**20. Does a student have to reapply every year to continue to attend the school of choice?**

School of Choice applications approved in K – 12 are considered continuous (i.e. once a student has exercised choice and is accepted into that school, they are entitled to attend that school). The student is assumed to be in attendance at that school year after year unless they wish to exercise choice and leave. Prior to a student moving from one school to another school, a new application must be submitted (e.g. moving from École R. W. Bobby Bend School as a school of choice to École Stonewall Centennial School as a school of choice).

School divisions will keep track of local demographic trends so that schools can enroll designated and non-designated students alike. Boards are permitted to slow or stop movement of non-designated students into division schools so that designated students can be accommodated.

**21. Does this mean that the brothers and sisters of a student exercising choice will be accepted into the same school?**

Admission of a student because of choice does not guarantee that brothers and sisters will have access to the school.

**22. If a school denies a parent's request for admission under school of choice, is there an avenue of appeal?**

Excluding applications that have missed the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline, appeals of school decisions are to be submitted in writing to the Superintendents' Department. Within the framework of legislation and regulation, school boards have the final authority in the decision to admit students to a school.

## **B. Fees**

**1. Will parents pay fees to exercise school choice?**

No, not in most cases, provided that deadlines have been met. Parents will not be required to pay a fee to enroll their child(ren) in one of the four programs recognized by Manitoba Education in a school of choice inside or outside the home division. (The four recognized programs are English, Français, Immersion or Technology Education.) Instead, the home division will pay an annual transfer fee to the receiving division in an amount to be determined by the department.

**2. Are transfer fees automatically sent to the receiving school division on parents' or students' behalf?**

Yes. Once choice has been exercised within deadlines, a transfer fee is paid by the home division. If a student returns to the home division during the year the transfer fee, or a portion of it, may be returned to the home division at the discretion of the receiving division.

The sending division is not obligated to pass on the transfer fee to the receiving division if the parental confirmation date is missed.

### **C. Transportation**

**1. Will students receive transportation to their designated school?**

Yes, if a student is eligible based on distance, the school division will transport or provide for the transportation of the student. Transportation funding is given to the school division if the student is eligible and is transported to school on a school bus on an approved route. An eligible student lives at least 1.6 kilometers away from their designated school.

A designated school will be identified for the purpose of determining eligibility for transportation funding. The designated school is the closest school that has space and offers the appropriate education required by the student, as determined by the board, that is accessible via an approved school bus route.

**2. Will a student receive transportation to a school of choice within the home school division?**

Interlake School Division will provide transportation to the school of choice if:

- the school of choice is more than 1.6 km from the student's place of residence; and
- transportation is provided on an existing approved route; and
- pupil can be picked up/dropped off at an existing pick up/drop off location; and
- there is room on the bus; and
- the request is approved by the Transportation Supervisor.

**3. Will a student be transported to a school of choice outside the school division?**

Not in urban settings and generally, not in rural settings. Only in rural settings where a student lives closer to an out of division school than to the designated school in the home division by road route, chooses to attend out of division and is eligible for transport will a student be considered for transport to a school of choice outside the school division. The receiving division may transport the student and if it does so may claim a transported pupil grant from the Department.

**4. What is a grant-in-lieu?**

A grant-in-lieu is money equivalent to the per pupil transportation grant normally given to a school division by the Department.

**5. Will grants-in-lieu be paid to support transportation to schools of choice?**

Only in rural settings, as noted in Point 3, above. If the receiving rural division chooses not to transport, and the student wishes to attend the out-of-division school, the parent or student will be entitled to a grant-in-lieu paid by the receiving division.

**6. How much is a grant-in-lieu and who can claim it?**

The grant-in-lieu is \$345 per rural student, and is claimed by the receiving division and then turned over to the parent or student.

**7. If the home school division does not offer a program and the student must go out of the division, is this student eligible for transportation?**

Yes. This is a situation where a program is not offered locally and is different from choice. Transportation support and eligibility for room and board does not change from the current situation under this example ("program not offered locally").

**D. Taxation and Election Issues**

**1. If a student goes to school in another division, do his or her parents still have to pay school taxes to the school division where they live?**

Yes. Parents will still be required to pay the school tax levied by the division where they live.

**2. If a student goes to school in another division, can that student's parents vote in school board elections in the division where they live?**

Yes. All residents in a school division are allowed to vote in school board elections.

**3. If a student goes to school in another division, can that student's parents vote in that division's school board elections?**

No. The parents must be residents of the school division to be able to vote in board elections.

**4. If a student goes to a school other than his or her designated school either in the home division or in another school division, can his or her parents be members of the choice school's Advisory Council on School Leadership (Parent Advisory Council)?**

Yes. All parents of students in a school can put their names forward for election as members of the school's Advisory Council.