

PROCEDURE TITLE: Administrative Guidelines for Evaluating Boundary Exception Requests		
ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE:	MOST RECENTLY AMENDED::	MOST RECENTLY REAFFIRMED:
POLICY/PROCEDURE MANUAL SUMMARY CATEGORY:		

I. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of these procedures is to set forth specific requirements regarding approval of requests for boundary exceptions.

II. Requirements

The attendance area for each school located in the county will be designated by the Board of Education. All requests for exceptions to this policy will be investigated by the pupil personnel worker serving the student's current or normally assigned school.

Student boundary exception decisions require balancing countywide considerations with those of the student and family. Building utilization, enrollment levels and the educational program needs of the individual student are considered in weighing the impact of a request to transfer a student from the home school to some other school of choice. Applications for a boundary exception will be processed on a first come-first served basis.

Boundary exceptions are granted only for one (1) school year. Requests for continuation of the boundary exception will require annual reapplication. The approval of a boundary exception in one year does not guarantee approval in any subsequent years.

The pupil personnel worker is sensitive to requests which may reflect a desire to avoid schools which may have a different social composition or to situations where a change is requested simply because of the parent's perceptions that one school is better than another. School preference is not a qualifying reason for a boundary exception.

Students who reside in Harford County but who reside outside the service area of the school in which they wish to enroll will not be admitted until the placement has been reviewed by the home school pupil personnel worker and Supervisor of Psychological and Pupil Personnel Services and approved by the Director of Student Services.

Qualifying Reasons

A boundary exception may be requested for one of the following reasons:

1. **Child Care:** These requests are generally for elementary school-aged children when the primary issue is the child's safety and welfare. A child care provider (Section IV of the application) is that person, nursery school, day care center, or other facility which directly provides child care for the referred child. Boundary exception requests made by Harford County Public School employees for childcare will be granted as an employee benefit.
2. **Curriculum:** These requests involve the pursuit of a program of instruction unavailable in the student's home school. A program is defined as a sequence of courses leading to a specific academic or vocational preparation or to the development of a specific interest or need. Consideration will not be given to a request based on a single course, athletic activities, or extracurricular activities as these do not constitute a program of instruction. Curriculum requests are granted only for the duration of the curricular program.
3. **Hardship:** These requests pertain to personal and family circumstances of an unusual and adverse nature which precludes the student's enrollment in his/her home school.
4. **Prekindergarten:** These requests are considered for children who meet program eligibility requirements and for whom there is available space at the receiving school.
5. **School Choice Option:** The No Child Left Behind Act Of 2001 provides students, in Title I schools, options to transfer to certain schools under specified circumstances. Please refer to the Administrative Procedures regarding Title I transfers for further information about such transfers.
6. **Other:** These are circumstances and situations where it is clearly evident that the student shall obtain educational benefit by virtue of the transfer. Supporting documentation will be required. Such requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.
7. **Liberal consideration** will be given to requests for a boundary exception to a school that is under capacity provided that there are no other limitations as described in 1.a. Limitations.

Review Process

1. **Limitations:** The Office of Student Services will review the reasons for the request and determine whether any limitations apply such as: school enrollment, grade level class size, program eligibility and capacity, and impact on building utilization and support services. If the request meets the guidelines and no limitations apply, the boundary exception is generally approved.
 - a. Factors limiting a boundary exception to a requested school:
 - school is at or over 95 percent of state-rated capacity based on adjusted enrollment
 - over enrollment of a particular grade level
Current class size/school capacity data must be included in the PPW narrative. Boundary exceptions will be viewed as adversely affecting class size if the average class size at any grade level meets or exceeds the following:

Kindergarten - 20
Grade 1 - 25
Grade 2 - 25
Grade 3 - 25
Grade 4 - 27
Grade 5 – 27
 - other school utilization concerns: program/course of study, staffing, school stability (renovation/redistricting)
 - requested school does not offer a program or supports necessary to implement an IEP for a student with a disability
 - b. Factors not generally considered as a hardship sufficient to override utilization concerns include but are not limited to:
 - desire to attend school with a particular peer group
 - desire to attend a particular program of study that is over operational capacity
 - desire to attend same school sibling attended or presently attends
 - school preference/convenience
 - desire for a more favorable child care arrangement (especially for middle and high school students)
 - requested school is less overcrowded than home school; however, both the home and requested school are at or over operational capacity
 - proximity of the home/work site to a particular school

- previous boundary exception to a feeder elementary or middle school
 - c. The Superintendent of Schools may issue directives that limit or encourage boundary exceptions in specific schools.
2. **School Age Child Care Programs:** Child care requests for students whose parents reside outside the school attendance area and seek to attend a school in order to utilize its before/after child care program will be considered only:
 - after August 1 of each year; and
 - if there is a vacancy and no waiting list exists; and
 - if the request does not adversely impact on class size or exceeds operational limits for staffing, etc.; and/or
 - cause the student enrollment to exceed capacity.
 3. **Conditional Approvals:** Special conditions (e.g., maintenance of satisfactory behavior, attendance and grades) may be issued by the Director of Student Services. Renewal of the boundary exception is based upon compliance with the special conditions. Special conditions will be described in the approval letter to the parent.

Conditional Attendance

1. If a family moves from one school attendance area to another in the county after February 1 of the school year, the children may continue in the school in which they are already enrolled for the remainder of the school year. This is not obligatory, but may be done at the option of the parents. The parents must take full responsibility for transporting such children to and from school or to the nearest bus stop.
2. Students who successfully complete the eleventh grade in a senior high school may continue to attend that school until they are graduated, even though their place of residence has changed to another school area in the county in the interim. This is not obligatory, but may be done at the option of the parents. The parents must take full responsibility for transporting such children to and from school or to the nearest bus stop. (*Adm. Handbook - see General Guidelines 3e*).

Transportation

Parents are responsible to provide transportation to the closest bus stop serving the school to which a boundary exception has been approved. This condition must be explained to the parents during the preliminary interview and again in the approval letter.

Renewal Certification

All boundary exceptions are reviewed on at least an annual basis. Parents and legal guardians of a student on a boundary exception will be notified in the approval letter that the transfer will automatically terminate at the conclusion of the school year. A new application must be submitted each year and will be evaluated on the basis of qualifying reasons and limitations. The pupil personnel worker will verify and update pertinent information upon which a request is to be evaluated.

In reviewing boundary exception requests for curriculum reasons, a copy of the final report card is to be included. It should also be verified that the student has scheduled the appropriate course(s) for the following school year.

Termination

Upon the written recommendation of the receiving school principal and pupil personnel worker, a boundary exception may be revoked by the Director of Student Services under any of the following conditions:

1. The stated reason for the boundary exception is no longer valid.
2. False information was given at the time of the boundary exception request.
3. There is noncompliance with school rules or special conditions established at the time of approval/renewal.

The parent will be notified in writing of the decision of the Director of Student Services.

Appeal Process

Appeals should be addressed in writing to the Superintendent of Schools within 15 days following notification of denial or termination of a boundary exception.

Approved By:

Dr. Jacqueline C. Haas
Superintendent of Schools

Procedure Action Dates		
ACTION DATE	ACTION DATE	ACTION DATE

Responsibility for Procedure Maintenance & References		
LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER NAME:	JOB POSITION OF LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER:	
PERSON RESPONSIBLE:	JOB POSITION OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE:	
DESIGNEE NAME:	DESIGNEE POSITION:	
REFERENCE 1 TYPE:	REFERENCE 1 NO.	REFERENCE 1 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 2 TYPE:	REFERENCE 2 NO.	REFERENCE 2 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 3 TYPE:	REFERENCE 3 NO.	REFERENCE 3 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 4 TYPE:	REFERENCE 4 NO.	REFERENCE 4 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 5 TYPE:	REFERENCE 5 NO.	REFERENCE 5 DESCRIPTION:
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