

HISD SCHOOL CHOICE FAQS

Updated January 18, 2024

HISD has included a list of the most commonly asked questions by families. This document will be updated weekly while the school choice application is open and kept on the School Choice website. Questions will be marked as “UPDATED” throughout the process. The document is organized in the following categories:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LEARNING ABOUT SCHOOLS 3

Where do I find information about different programs or schools?

School Choice vs Enrollment (e.g., when do I need to apply/reapply)

General Information:

Overview of Programs 6

What are the transfer options?

Additional Transfer types:

Space Available:

Boundary Option:

Hardship transfers 7

Program Options 8

NES/A

Vanguard/Gifted and Talented

Program Eligibility

Performing and Visual Arts

Montessori

Language

Open Enrollment

Vanguard

Academic Matrix

Using ChooseHISD Platform (School Choice Application)

SCHOOL CHOICE APPLICATION SUPPORT (Before Lottery/Phase 1)12

Submitting an Application

TABLE OF CONTENTS *(continued)*

SCHOOL CHOICE APPLICATION STRATEGY (Before the Lottery).....14

- Student Types
- Siblings
- Multiple Birth Siblings:
- Applicants of HISD staff
- Special Education

SCHOOL CHOICE APPLICATION STRATEGY (after the lottery).....17

- Parent Notification Day:
- Waitlist Information:
- Phase II & After the Lottery Runs
- School Choice Family Supports
- Transportation:
- Additional Topics
- Out of District Students:
- General Enrollment Information
- Zoned Family Information

LEARNING ABOUT SCHOOLS

The learning about schools section provides an overview of how to find more information about School Choice options and campuses.

WHERE DO I FIND INFORMATION ABOUT DIFFERENT PROGRAMS OR SCHOOLS

- For general information about school choice programs, please visit the School Choice website at houstonisd.org/schoolchoice or call the Office of School Choice at (713) 556-6734, or email schoolchoice@houstonisd.org
- For detailed information about a specific school, visit School Finder at <https://schoolfinder.houstonisd.org>.

SCHOOL CHOICE VS ENROLLMENT (E.G., WHEN DO I NEED TO APPLY/REAPPLY)

What is the difference between the School Choice process and the Enrollment process?

- The School Choice process allows you to apply for a school or program outside of your zoned campus offerings. Enrollment is the process that all students must follow in order to attend any school within in HISD.

May I visit campuses I am considering?

- Yes. Prior to applying to school choice programs, you may contact campuses regarding school tours.
- HISD sets dates for tours for all Magnet campuses. Magnet Tours for parents will be extended until Phase 1 closes on February 23, 2024. These tours will take place each Thursday allowing parents an opportunity to better understand each school and get a preview of what it has to offer their student.
 - Elementary and K-8 Magnet schools will offer tours on Thursdays at 9:00 AM
 - Middle and High Magnet schools will offer tours on Thursdays at 1:00 PM

General Information:

- Where do I find general School Choice information?
- To learn more about School Choice, visit the School Choice website., houstonisd.org/schoolchoice, email SchoolChoice@HoustonISD.org or call the Office of School Choice at (713) 556-6734.
- Learn more about HISD Vanguard (G/T) programs or call the Gifted and Talented Department at (713) 556-6954 or email GiftedandTalented@HoustonISD.org.
- What is the difference between the Magnet process and Program Choice process?
- All transfers to campuses are submitted through the School Choice application.
- The process is the same for all transfers. Magnet or Program Choice. Magnet is a specialized program at the campus that is the focus of the campus. Choice are programs at the campus that are not magnet.
 - For example: Lamar HS offers Business Administration as it's magnet, they also offer IB and CTE as Choice Programs.
 - For example, Black MS's Magnet is Vanguard, they also offer Dual Language as a Choice Program
 - During the selection process, applying to the campus with no program in the title indicates you are applying to the campus as a General Education student and is considered as a space available transfer which is also part of Program Choice.

If the student is already in school of choice and wants to apply to another school, do they lose their seats when they apply?

- Students do not lose their seat when they apply. However, if an offered seat is accepted, they will relinquish the current seat for the upcoming school year.

What if my student is not accepted into a Magnet or Choice Program that I want him or her to attend?

- Even if some School Choice programs fill up completely, there are usually similar programs at other schools with space available. HISD offers many specialized and unique programs throughout the district. Please attend the Space Available School Choice Fair on March 23, 2024, at Lamar HS 9am-12noon. All Magnet programs with space available will be on site to speak to you about their programs.
- If you are not offered placement, you will enroll at your zoned campus. Please contact your zoned campus for more information regarding enrollment.

If student is currently in a Magnet Pre-K, do the families need to reapply for Kindergarten?

- Students at Garden Oaks Montessori, Baker Montessori, Blackshear Montessori, Helms, Wharton, Arabic Immersion and Mandarin Immersion are considered Magnet Pre-K and do not need to reapply for Kindergarten. All other Pre-K students who wish to attend a campus for Kindergarten that they are not zoned to must reapply via School Choice. For non-zoned Pre-K students at a school interested in continuing at the same school for Kindergarten, priority will be given after the zoned students.

If I am enrolled in a Magnet program and I move outside of the HISD boundary, am I able to stay at my campus or must I reapply?

- Students on a Magnet transfer who move outside of the district will lose their magnet seat.
- Families whose child is on a Magnet transfer and move outside of the HISD boundary must enroll at their new zoned campus. If they wish to return to HISD they must reapply.

Transfer Procedures:

My student is currently enrolled at a school of choice on a transfer. Do I have to apply again to remain for the next school year?

- Except for Pre-K4, 5th, and 8th grades, students will not need to reapply, and their transfer will “roll over” to the next school year (few exceptions are our 6-12 campuses). The school can choose to non-renew the transfer, but only after the student is put on a growth plan and does not meet the criteria established by the school.

Why was my transfer denied?

- A student who meets the eligibility criteria and qualifications for a specific program shall be granted a transfer when there are seats available.

Who should I contact if I wish to appeal a denied transfer?

- The School Choice Operations department manages notifications and appeals. Parents can start the appeal process by emailing SchoolChoice@houstonisd.org with their student’s name, HISD ID, and a detailed explanation as to why they are requesting the denial to be reconsidered. The Appeal Committee will make a decision based on Board approved policy and school guidelines. After determination, the outcome of the appeal is final and cannot be appealed.

What if my student is not successful in our school of choice after enrolling?

- Upon entering a School Choice program, a transfer is approved for enrollment. Upon acceptance of placement, thematic Entrance Agreement is signed by parent/guardian and student. If a student is having difficulties in either the magnet or choice program, the student transfer may be in jeopardy of non-renewal. By HISD policy students are allowed one transfer per year.
- Parents may return to their zoned school for enrollment. If the elementary school grade level at their zoned campus is at capacity, the campus will redirect the family to the assigned HUB school. (The designated HUB school is assigned by the Executive Director of Support for the campus and is based on space availability.)

What happens if my student accepted placement in a program choice school, but he/she misses the first day of school?

- If there is an extenuating circumstance that prevents the student from attending the first day of school, please contact the school immediately. When they arrive to enroll, if space is still available, their transfer will be accepted with approval from the Office of School Choice. If space is no longer available, they will lose their seat and must enroll at their zoned school.

I missed the School Choice application submission window. What can I do?

- Attend your zoned campus.
- If you are new to HISD and your student did not attend an HISD school last year, then you are able to submit an application.
- If your student attended an HISD school last year and your student is eligible for any of the following transfer types: Boundary Option, Hardship, Homeless, Public Education Grant, you may submit an application.
- Language of Instruction, Special Education, and Violent Crime Victim transfers are considered Administrative transfers. These transfers must be submitted by campus staff on behalf of parents if space is available.
- If your student is not eligible or was enrolled in HISD during the previous school year, then a transfer application will need to be made during the student transfer application window for the following school year.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS

The overview of programs provides a summary of School Choice options by program or transfer type.

If a school has a “Magnet” (for example Vanguard) as well as a “Choice Program” (for example IB) does the campus reserve spots for kids for each program? Or are kids only placed in “Choice Program” only if there are unfilled Magnet seats?

- Each program has a separate application, and their lotteries are separate. Campuses may offer seats to their Magnet program prior to offering placement to their other programs and space available applicants. However, seats are not offered to those who did not apply to the program.
 - For example, if you have applied to Lamar HS for CTE or Space Available, you are not considered for the Magnet program and visa-versa.

WHAT ARE THE TRANSFER OPTIONS?

Potential choice options are as follows:

- **Career & Technical Education (CTE)** - Join a CTE POS at non-zoned High School
- **Dual Language** - Join dual language program at non-magnet, non-zoned school
- **Homeless** – McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act: the district shall serve homeless children according to their best interests and offer a transfer option
- **International Baccalaureate (IB)** – Join an IB program at a non-magnet, non-zoned school
- **Magnet** - Thematic programming infused in all subjects, affiliated with various careers, and designed for all students.
- **Magnet Prekindergarten** – Prekindergarten programs are considered part of the campus magnet program. There are 7 programs in HISD. There are 150+ non-Magnet Prekindergarten programs.
- **Military Academy** - Cullen Military Academy's primary mission is to cultivate exceptional students seamlessly transitioning into HISD's Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) programs and CCMR/CTE leadership foundational programs of study at the high-school level. Beyond that, the academy aims to produce graduates who have the foundation to become prime candidates for admission into elite military academies.

ADDITIONAL TRANSFER TYPES:

Space Available:

- Space Available transfers are found on the application as the School Name with no program listed.
- Space-Available Transfers give HISD Parent/Guardians the option of transferring their student to schools in the HISD that have been determined to have available space for district students.

Boundary Option:

- HISD residents in a limited number of school zones have the option to attend a designated relief school on a space available. The qualifying criteria for a Boundary Option transfer is an address zoned to the identified school. Only students zoned to assigned campuses may apply for boundary option transfers.
- This transfer only applies while the student is zoned to the assigned campus. If the student leaves the zone, they are redirected to enroll at their zoned campus.
- The following campuses offer boundary option transfers:
 - Pin Oak MS from Long MS, Pershing MS, & Meyerland MS
 - West Briar MS from Revere MS
 - Lamar HS or Westside HS from Wisdom HS
 - Shadowbriar ES from Ashford ES, Askew ES, Bush ES, Daily ES, & Walnut Bend ES

- Mark White ES from Briargrove ES, Emerson ES, Pilgrim ES and Piney Point ES.
- Baylor College of Medicine @ Ryan from Blackshear ES, Lockhart ES, & MacGregor ES
 - Only for applicants applying to 6th grade.

Hardship transfers

- Hardship transfers are only available after Lottery Notification Day.
- Hardship transfers are only available to students Kindergarten through grade 12.
- Hardship transfers are only available to campuses with an assigned attendance boundary.
- Hardship transfers do not apply to SUS (Separate and Unique Schools) or application only campuses.

Qualifying markers for an eligible hardship are as follows:

- **Parent Work Location**
 - School is enroute to parent/guardian's place of work.2-mile radius of school.
 - In direct route between school and work address.
 - Parents must provide their current work address.
 - The parent must complete the document supporting this request. The required document is found within the application.
- **Before/After School Care**
 - Parent must complete the document supporting facility/person providing the care. The required document is found within the application.
- **Grandparent Care**
 - only for students with Parent/Guardians living outside HISD's boundaries with a grandparent who lives within the boundaries of HISD.
 - The grandparent must provide a substantial amount of after-school care for the student.
 - The transfer is to the grandparents' zoned school.
 - The parent must complete the document supporting this request. The required document is found within the application.
- **Sibling Attending**
 - Sibling is currently attending the requested campus.
 - If a request is made outside of the requested academic session, the sibling must be attending the following school year.
 - Finish Cohort Final Year
 - Students wish to finish with their cohort in their final year at the campus attended during the previous school year and have moved outside of the school attendance zone.
 - 5th, 8th, & 12th grade students, single level campuses
- **Other**
 - Extenuating circumstances as approved by the Office of School Choice.

SPECIALIZED PROGRAM OPTIONS

HISD offers a variety of program options at each school. Below are some of the choice options provided at our campuses. Some programs require a qualifying matrix score. See resources for a detailed listing of eligibility requirements.

Academic Early College
Career and Technical Education (CTE)
Career Early College
Dual Language (DL)
Energy
Fine Arts or Performing Arts
Health Professions
International Baccalaureate (IB)
International Specialty

Language Immersion
Literature
Magnet Pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds
Military Academy
Montessori
Neighborhood Schools (Space Available)
New Education System (NES/A)
Single Gender College Prep
STEM/STEAM
Vanguard

NES/A

What are the implications for families that apply & accept placement at a non-NES campus during the 23-24SY that then becomes NES during the 24-25SY and may no longer offer the program they applied for?

- Once the NES school list is updated, parents are able to log into their account and adjust their campus programs accordingly. The updated NES school list is due to be released in February 2024, prior to the close of Phase 1.

VANGUARD/GIFTED AND TALENTED

Where do I find Vanguard information?

- Learn more about HISD Vanguard (G/T) programs or call the Gifted and Talented Department at (713) 556-6954 or email GiftedandTalented@HoustonISD.org.

What is the difference between Magnet and Vanguard (G/T)?

- Vanguard (G/T) programs are designed for gifted and talented (G/T) students. So, when you see the word Vanguard, just think G/T. All schools have a Vanguard (G/T) program. Vanguard is one choice of magnet programs, just like fine arts or STEM. Students must be identified as Gifted and Talent through GT testing and other GT matrix criteria to be eligible for a Vanguard Magnet program in all core content areas.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS

What are the criteria for a Fine Arts program?

- Only secondary fine arts programs have entering criteria, in the form of an audition.
- Within the School Choice application system, your student will be required to schedule an appointment to audition in their two focus areas.
 - Note: HSPVA has an audition scheduling process outside of the School Choice application system. Reach out to Jonathan Klein for more information.

MONTESSORI

What are the criteria for Montessori programs?

- Students PK-2 do not require experience for Montessori programs.
- Students 3-8 must provide documentation of experience within a Montessori program.

LANGUAGE

What are the criteria for Language programs?

- Students PK-2 do not require experience for language programs.
- Students 3-8 must complete a language test to determine eligibility.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

What are the criteria for Open Enrollment programs?

- Open Enrollment campuses do not have entry requirements outside of the application process.

VANGUARD

What are the criteria for a Vanguard Magnet?

- The student must be identified as Gifted and Talented in Reading and Math. Please see the GT website at www.houstonisd.org/GT or GiftedandTalented@HoustonISD.org for more information.

Does my child need to be GT to apply to Magnet programs?

- GT identification requirement is only for Vanguard programs. Students do not need to be identified as GT to apply to other magnet programs.

Are students identified as Gifted and Talented by other districts recognized by HISD?

- Please see the GT website at www.houstonisd.org/GT or GiftedandTalented@HoustonISD.org for more information.

My child just took the gifted and talented assessment. Do you know when parents should receive results?

- Please see the GT website at www.houstonisd.org/GT or GiftedandTalented@HoustonISD.org for more information.

•

My child was already identified as GT, do I need to re-test?

- No. Once a child is identified as GT in HISD, they will remain as GT until the student either graduates or leaves HISD.
- If your child was previously identified as GT and left HISD, please see the GT website at www.houstonisd.org/GT or GiftedandTalented@HoustonISD.org for more information.

ACADEMIC MATRIX

Which campuses require a matrix score?

- Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy and Mickey Leland College Preparatory Academy for Young Men require a matrix score for entering their programs beginning in 6th grade.
- Some secondary programs require matrix scores to qualify students. For specific programs, please review the information for the campus or program at SchoolFinder or Eligibility Requirements section under K-12 application on the School Choice website.

How are matrix scores determined for students that are new to Texas/HISD schools?

- The final report card and STAAR test scores from the previous school year from an accredited program. (For example, if you are applying for 9th grade, then 7th grade documentation used will be used to calculate the Matrix.)

How will students receive their matrix score information?

- Students who are currently enrolled in HISD, the current campus is able to print a copy for parents. However, when applying for programs, only those programs which your child qualifies for will populate into the application. Parents can also see the matrix score for their child, when they log in and apply.

Is the Academic Matrix Score automatically calculated and provided to the schools on our list or do we have to provide something with the score to these schools?

- When creating the student profile, currently enrolled students are considered Existing students. Those not currently enrolled are considered New students.
- Existing students will be automatically calculated. No documentation will be required to upload unless the student was not enrolled in HISD the previous school year.
- New students will need to submit the final report card and STAAR scores (if available) from the previous school year, by uploading them into the application under the “Next Steps” tab. The campus will calculate the matrix for eligibility.
- You can find the Matrix calculator online at the School Choice website under the Resources tab.

How is the Matrix calculated for students are new to Texas and have not taken STAAR?

- You will only need to submit the final report card from the previous school year. For example, if applying to 9th grade, you will need to upload your child’s final 7th grade report card.

USING CHOOSEHISD PLATFORM (SCHOOL CHOICE APPLICATION)

I cannot remember my login/password for my parent dashboard. How do I reset it?

- Use the “Forgot your password?” feature on the parent login website. You will receive an email to reset your password. Please check your spam box if you do not see an email. If you need further assistance, please email schoolchoice@houstonisd.org to request a password reset.

I am experiencing problems with the HISD website and dashboard. What should I do?

- Send an email to schoolchoice@houstonisd.org or call the Office of School Choice (713) 556-6734, explaining in detail the issues you are having. Please provide the student’s name and birthdate and student ID, if known.

The application asks for my student's student ID#. Where can I find that?

- The Student ID# is found on your student’s report card, progress report, test reports, and other communications from your student’s school. You can also find it online at HISD Parent Student Connect. If you are unable to find it, please contact your student’s current school.

How do I apply online?

- Go to the parent login at www.ChooseHISD.org. Parents who did not submit applications for the 2023-2024 school year will be required to create an account.
- To be considered in the lottery, applications must be submitted during Phase 1.
- Eligible students who apply during the Phase 1 application window will receive equal opportunity, no matter their submission date.
- Applications submitted during Phase 2 are considered on a space available, first come first served basis. There are no additional lotteries.

I made an error on my student’s application. Is there a way to fix it, or should I create a new one?

- If you are able to edit the incorrect information, you may update the application. If you need assistance, please contact School Choice at SchoolChoice@HoustonISD.org or by calling (713) 556-6734.

SCHOOL CHOICE APPLICATION SUPPORT (BEFORE LOTTERY/PHASE 1)

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

How many school choice programs may I apply to?

- You may apply to a maximum of 10 programs during each Phase.

Do some students have a better chance than others who have also submitted applications or all eligible students treated the same in the lottery?

- All eligible applicants who have submitted applications in Phase 1 have the same chance in the lottery.

What is ranking and how does it affect the application process?

- During the Phase 1 applications, parents may apply to up to 10 School Choice Programs and must rank their selections in order of preference. The School Choice process seeks to provide each applicant with the highest-ranked school to which they are eligible, and which has a seat available for them, given their lottery number and priority. As a result, it is very important that you consider the rank order of your selected programs carefully.
- When a student is offered placement at a program on Notification Day, the following happens:
 - They will not be considered for placement at lower-ranked programs. For example, if a student ranks 10 programs and is offered placement to the program ranked #3, they will not be considered for programs ranked #4-10. These campuses will have the status Assigned to Higher Ranked Choice.
 - They will be placed on the waitlist of higher-ranked programs. In the example above, a student offered placement to the program ranked #3 will be on the waitlists of the programs ranked #1-2.
- If a student is offered placement from the waitlist after Notification Day, all other waitlists will remain. Placement may still be offered from any of those selections if space becomes available (in the order of waitlist number)
- In Phase 2, placement is offered on a first come, first served basis AFTER the Phase 1 waitlist has been offered placement.

How would I know what programs are available at my school of choice?

- Only the programs you are eligible to apply to will populate in the application.
- Once you are in the application selection page, you can click on the next i to the school's name to see more information regarding the campus.
- Information about different programs can be found on the School Choice website at ChooseHISD.com.
- Visit the Find a School site at www.houstonisd.org/findaschool and select your campuses of interest. You can click on the campus for more campus information and to be redirected to the campus website.

Why can I not see programs I am interested in at a school, I know they have them?

- If your zoned campus offers the program (not Magnet), you are not able to apply to the same program at another campus.
- Your residence is outside of the HISD boundary.
 - Programs such as IB, Dual Language, CTE. Magnet programs and Space Available are open for Out of District students.
- The program is not offered to your child's grade level.
- Your child is not eligible for that program.

I have submitted my application; can I go in and make changes?

- If you have submitted a Phase 1 application, and the deadline has not passed, you may log in, click “Take Action” and Remove/Add/Re-rank your selections.
- If you have submitted a Phase 2 application, you may log in, click “Take Action” to Add/Remove selections prior to the deadline.
 - Note: During Phase 2, each changed is saved after you have clicked “Submit”. This will also change the submission date of the application.

How do I submit the required documentation when I apply online?

- When setting up your student’s profile, “existing” students, meaning those currently enrolled in HISD and who attended an HISD school last year, are not required to submit any documents to apply to most programs. The Application Matrix and Overall Core average will be automatically calculated and be viewable on the application portal for students who apply online with their HISD ID#.
- There are several options to submit documents for students who were not in HISD last year or for those who are missing documents.
 - Upload directly online by clicking on “Next Steps” in the student tile.
- Send by U.S. mail or drop off documents to the Office of School Choice:
 - Office of School Choice
Houston Independent School District
4400 West 18th Street
Houston, TX 77092

What do the different statuses mean in my selection tiles during Phase 1?

- Processing: The application has not yet been reviewed. Please verify you are not missing documentation by clicking on “Next Steps” in the student tile.
- Eligible: The application is eligible for the program and entry into the lottery
 - If eligibility is tied to a program (such as GT identified for Vanguard programs), the eligibility status will apply to all programs.
- Ineligible: The application is not eligible for the lottery or resubmission
 - If eligibility is tied to a program (such as GT identified for Vanguard programs), the eligibility status will apply to all programs.
- Qualified Pending: The offer is conditional upon qualifications.

SCHOOL CHOICE APPLICATION STRATEGY (BEFORE THE LOTTERY)

School Choice application strategies can be effective in assisting you in optimizing your chance of receiving a seat at your school of choice.

STUDENT TYPES

SIBLINGS

What does HISD consider Siblings?

- Siblings share at least 1 biological parent or guardian.

Can siblings share the same lottery ticket?

- Only siblings due to multiple births may share a lottery ticket.
- Twins, triplets, etc., you may apply to attend the same magnet program and be treated like other siblings. You may also choose for them to receive the same lottery position, meaning they will all be offered placement, or all placed on the waitlist. If they are on a waitlist, they will not be offered placement until there is room for all of them. Each sibling must have a separate application.

What is sibling priority?

- Sibling priority is offered to 25% of the entry grade (Pre-K, K, 6, 9 grades) seats available. Applicants who are applying to the school with an older sibling who currently attend next year will receive priority.
- Siblings must be noted in the application prior to submission.
- There is no priority for siblings applying at the same time.
- Sibling priority is only applied in Phase 1

If there is a 2nd grader magnet student enrolled, with an incoming Pre-K sibling, will they receive a seat?

- Sibling priority applies to those students entering Pre-K, K, 6th, and 9th graders only during Phase 1. There is no guarantee that a student will receive an offer. If they are not offered a seat, they will be placed at the top of the waitlist in the relative order they were selected through the lottery.

Does sibling priority apply only if the sibling is part of the program they are applying to, or does the sibling just have to be at the campus?

- They need to be at the campus. Sibling priority is not program specific.

Are siblings required to have the same requirements as their enrolled sibling?

- Only if they are applying to the same program. Some campuses do not offer space available.

What do I do if one of my students was accepted to a school of choice and the other has been denied by the same school?

- The parent may consider other transfer options at the school of choice. Both students may attend their zoned school together.

I have two siblings applying to the same school. Do they receive priority? If one is offered a seat will the other be moved up the waitlist?

- Sibling priority is only during Phase 1 and is for those applicants applying to Pre-K, K, 6, and 9th grades who have a sibling currently attending the school and will continue to attend the school in the school year which the applicant sibling is applying to.

MULTIPLE BIRTH SIBLINGS:

My children are multiple-birth siblings, how can I keep them together in the lottery?

- The parent must have applications for the children on the same account.
- The siblings must have the same date of birth.
- The siblings must apply to the same schools/programs.
- The sibling's selections must be in the same ranked order.
 - This linkage only applies in Phase 1 and does not apply to secondary fine arts programs.

What happens if one twin does not qualify in the GT test and the other does, but opt into multiple linkage?

- The eligible twin will be able to receive a seat. The linkage will work for the remaining schools.

Applicants of HISD staff

Per District Policy, an employee, as defined in the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Student Transfers System (STS), is a person who is employed by the receiving District and currently contributes to the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS). All out-of-district employee applications will be submitted to HISD Human Resources for review.

- All students not zoned to a campus must apply to attend a campus, including HISD employees.
- HISD employees who live outside of HISD boundaries are given the same priority in the lottery as those who live within HISD boundaries.
 - If the student is offered placement, the account holder must accept the offered placement prior to the expiration date.
 - If the parent, at any time during the student's enrollment, becomes unemployed by the district, their student should be enrolled at their zoned campus.
 - If the student is Pre-K and is not TEA eligible, the parent must pay tuition.
 - If the campus does not offer the grade-level (such as Pre-K3), or there is no space available, the student cannot be enrolled at the campus but can be referred to a nearby campus with space available.
- HISD employees should utilize their personal email address to complete the School Choice Application.
- Those HISD employees wishing their Kindergarten – 12th grade child to attend the campus at which they are employed should submit an application and speak to the campus principal to inquire if space is available. If space is available, the Campus Transfer Analyst may submit an Administrative Transfer and assist with enrollment.
 - The receiving school must have space available to accept the student.
 - The parent or guardian must have legal custody of the student and the requested school is the parent's or guardian's work location per HISD Human Resources

- Those HISD employees who are not campus-based may apply in Phase 1 to be considered in the lottery. If the student is Kindergarten – grade 12, they may also submit a hardship application for parent work location reason during Phase 2.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

If one of my children is ARD'd to attend a school, can the siblings and other students who reside in the home attend that same campus?

- Depending on whether the school has an entrance criteria requirement, K-12 grade siblings, or other students that reside in the same home as a special needs student, they can attend the same school.
- Is there a priority given to students with disabilities/special needs at schools that have programs for those students. For instance, my son is autistic & G/T. I saw that River Oaks has an Autism TREK. Would my son get priority there, or perhaps at TH Rogers?
- There are no priorities for students with disabilities /special needs. Special Ed students are placed at campuses via the end of year ARD. You may request a campus of interest during the ARD. Please contact the Special Ed Department for additional information.
- If a special education student accepts placement to a magnet program at a campus that does not offer the special education program that they need, what is the process.
- If a parent accepts placement and the campus cannot support the student's educational needs, the campus will hold an ARD to determine a campus that can support the student. Please contact the Special Ed Department for additional information.
- Can a special needs student apply to Magnet/Program Choice Transfers?
- Students with disabilities are required to follow the HISD application process for School Choice programs. A student with disabilities who meets the specified school choice criteria and is accepted for admission is

SCHOOL CHOICE APPLICATION STRATEGY (AFTER THE LOTTERY)

After the run of the lottery, there is a different strategy for apply to your schools of choice. The date in which you apply does impact your opportunity to be offered a seat, pending space.

Parent Notification Day:

- Parent Notification Day is the time that all official lottery outcomes are released to parents. Parents will be informed via email and their Parent Dashboard (ChooseHISD application).

WAITLIST INFORMATION:

How is the waitlist created and work?

- During the lottery, seats are filled. If there are more applicants than available seats, a waitlist is created for the respective program.
- Movement on the Waitlist is based on availability of seats. The movement of the waitlist is automated (23-24 enhancement). This means, there is no manual movement from the campus. Seats are offered by order of students on the waitlist.

What if there are more eligible applications than there are spaces at a particular school?

- If there are more qualified applicants to a particular school or program than seats available, the system will conduct a lottery to determine which applicants will receive an assignment to that school/program. Applicants who do not receive an assignment to the school/program will be placed on the waitlist.

Can I apply for the same school program in Phase 2 if I am already on the waitlist?

- To apply at a campus whose waitlist you are already on, you must remove the application from the waitlist. If you then reapply, you will be placed on the waitlist behind any other applications submitted in Phase 2.

How come someone else with a higher waitlist number than me was offered placement before me?

- Each campus has multiple programs at various grade levels and each of those options are independent lotteries and waitlists.
- For example purposes only, River Oaks Elementary offers General Education, IB Programme, and Vanguard Magnet. Each of these is a separate program with separate lotteries for each grade level. You may be on the General Education waitlist for grade 1 and the other applicant may have been on the Vanguard Magnet waitlist for grade 1. Because these are separate waitlists, they will only move when an offered seat has been declined for that specific waitlist.
- Regarding Pre-K, TEA eligible and TEA non-eligible as well as Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 are four separate lotteries with four separate waitlists. In accordance with TEA policy, TEA eligible applicants are offered placement prior to TEA non-eligible applicants. And Pre-K4 are offered placement prior to Pre-K3. Additionally, each of the above lotteries have a waitlist for English speakers and Spanish speakers.

If I am offered placement from the waitlist, should I wait the 5 days to accept in case a higher ranked school offers placement?

- No. You should accept the seat. Accepting the seat will not remove you from other waitlists and you will be able to accept the newly offered placement. If you do not accept and the offer expires, and you are not offered placement elsewhere, you are redirected to enroll at your zoned campus.

What if I am offered placement to the school I ranked first on my list, but I am interested in a school that I ranked lower which has a status of "Assigned to Higher Ranked Choice"? Can I get on the waitlist of a school I originally ranked lower?

- Yes. You may reapply to a lower ranked school. However, your application will be considered on a first come first served basis, after the Phase 1 waitlist is depleted and in order of the new submission date.

Can I be offered placement at more than one program at the same time?

- You may receive offers from more than one program at the same time. When you accept the offered placement to one program, the other offer will automatically decline.

I am on the waitlist for all the schools on my list. What should I do next?

- If you have not exceeded 10 applications, you may consider applying to schools with space available. To select additional programs, click on “Take Action” in the student tile to make your selections, make sure to continue all the way through to submit the applications.

Do waitlists close?

- If your student is currently enrolled in HISD, the application will retire a few weeks prior to the beginning of the school year. Please see the published application timeline. Once the waitlist is retired campuses can no longer offer seats to those students.
- The waitlist will not close for Pre-K Programs and new HISD students.

What happens if a seat becomes available at the campus after the waitlist has been retired?

- Those seats are filled with zoned students or students who are new to HISD.

Can I see changes to the waitlist on my online parent dashboard?

- Yes. You can monitor your parent dashboard for updates by clicking on “Next Steps” in the student tile. We also advise parents to watch for emails regarding offers.
- Applications move upward as offered seats are declined. Sibling priority may also affect waitlist movement.

If I am offered placement to a waitlisted selection, will I lose the other campuses I am waitlisted at if I accept the offer?

- No. You will remain on all other waitlists.

If I have accepted placement to one school, but another school calls me from the waitlist, may I accept the new offer?

- Yes. Once you accept an offer, or a new offer, any previous offers are automatically declined for the upcoming school year. If you receive a new offer, you cannot hold two seats at the same time and would need to decide to either keep your current transfer or take the new offer. You will have 5 calendar days from the date of offer to respond. You will see an expiration date on the school selection tile where you see the offered placement. If the placement is not accepted prior to the expiration date, the new offer will automatically decline, and the current placement will remain.

PHASE II & AFTER THE LOTTERY RUNS

What do the different statuses mean in my selection tiles during Phase II & after the lottery runs?

- Processing: The application has not yet been reviewed. Please verify you are not missing documentation by clicking on “Next Steps” in the student tile.

- **Eligible:** The application is eligible for the program and entry into the lottery
 - If eligibility is tied to a program (such as GT identified for Vanguard programs), the eligibility status will apply to all programs.
- **Ineligible:** The application is not eligible for the lottery or resubmission
 - If eligibility is tied to a program (such as GT identified for Vanguard programs), the eligibility status will apply to all programs.
- **Qualified Pending:** The offer is conditional upon qualifications.
- **Offered Placement:** You have been offered placement. You must sign the entrance agreement, upload your proof of residence, and accept prior to the expiration date.
- **Offer Accepted:** The offered placement has been accepted by the account holder.
- **Assigned to a Higher Ranked Choice:** You have been offered placement at a higher ranked choice and the lower ranked selections have been dropped.
- **Waitlisted:** There are currently no available seats. If a seat becomes available, those on the waitlist will be offered placement based on their waitlist number.
- **Removed:** The account holder has removed the selection from the waitlist.
- **Declined Placement:** The account holder had declined an Offered Placement.
- **Expired:** The offer to accept placement has expired.

I was offered placement to one of my ranked schools of choice. What should I do next?

- Accept the offered seat online prior to the expiration date. You will need to upload your current proof of residence, sign the entrance agreement, and click Accept. Offers not accepted prior to the expiration date are automatically declined and the opportunity is lost.
- If you choose to decline the seat, click Decline.
- If the seat is accepted, please contact the campus directly for further steps regarding enrollment.

I have been offered placement! I see I need to submit my Proof of Residence. What is considered Proof of Residence?

- You may upload any of the following documents:
 - Current lease agreement or
 - Current utility bill
 - Water or
 - Gas or
 - Electricity

When and how will I know if my student was offered placement to a school?

- If you applied in Phase 1 you receive an email notification prompting you to view the status of the application on the parent dashboard. However, you are encouraged to monitor your parent dashboard “Next Steps” to view changes in your application status. Depending on the email account holders email set up, some HISD emails will go to their spam/junk mailbox.

SCHOOL CHOICE FAMILY SUPPORTS

Transportation:

How do I know if my child is eligible to receive HISD transportation?

- Students on the following transfers who live more than 2 miles from the campus may receive HISD transportation: Boundary Option, Capped, CTE, Magnet, Military, IB, Homeless, Special Education and Violent Crime Victim.
 - During the 2024-2025, students on the Boundary Option and Military transfer will begin.
- Students who are enrolled in their zoned campus and who live more than 2 miles from the school.
- Transfers NOT eligible for HISD transportation: Pre-K, Grandparent in District, Space Available, Dual Language, Hardship, and PEG (Public Education Grant).

If I don't request transportation at the time I submit my student's transfer application, how can I request transportation later?

- If you did not select the transportation option when submitting a student transfer application, your student may not be guaranteed transportation. Please call the Transportation Department Customer Care Team at 713-556-9400.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Here you will find other topics that pertain to School Choice and may impact your experience.

OUT OF DISTRICT STUDENTS:

When can out-of-district students apply?

- Out-of-district applications may apply during Phase 1 or Phase 2.
 - Phase 1 priorities:
 - Priority Level 3-Applicants of HISD employees will receive the same priority as an in-district student.
 - Priority Level 4-Out of district students currently enrolled in HISD.
 - Priority Level 5- Out of district students not currently enrolled in HISD.
 - Phase 2-there are no priorities, as applications are considered on availability of space (seats).
- **Note: For magnet-only programs (schools that do not have an attendance zone, such as the Kinder High School for Performing and Visual Arts, Debakey, TH Rogers, etc.) out-of-district Magnet transfers must be approved by the Superintendent of schools, and tuition may be required.**
 - Tuition only applies for SUS (Separate and Unique Schools) campuses and is determined by the Superintendent each year.

GENERAL ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

ZONED FAMILY INFORMATION

How can I find my zoned school?

- Visit the Find a School site at <https://schoolfinder.houstonisd.org/> and enter your address. The Find a School tool will provide a list of your zoned elementary, middle, and high schools.

If my zoned school has a Magnet program, does my student need to apply to participate?

- To secure a seat in that specific program, yes. A good rule of thumb is if you see the program on your selection page, you should select it. Please contact the school for more details.

If I move into the attendance zone for the school I want my child to attend, is my child guaranteed placement?

- You will need to contact the campus regarding zoned family enrollment. Keep in mind, some magnet programs must be applied to if you want to participate, even if you are zoned.
- If after the start of the school year, and if the campus is an elementary school, the grade level may be at capacity. In that case, the campus will direct you to their HUB school for enrollment.

If my student is offered placement to a school that he/she is not zoned to, does my student still have the option to go to his/her zoned school?

- Yes. You do not have to attend a school for which you have been offered placement. However, if your student attends the school of choice and leaves the program voluntarily before the end of the school year, he or she may only return to his or her zoned campus.

Do I have to enroll my child each year?

- Each family must complete the registration/enrollment forms each year. You do not need to reapply for the same campus each year, with the exception of Pre-K, 5th, and 8th grades.

If I am enrolled as a zoned student and I move outside of the school's attendance zone, can I stay at the school?

- If the campus is not at capacity and with principal permission your child may remain at the campus for the remainder of the school year. To remain at the campus the following year, you will need to submit a School Choice application for consideration through the lottery. Otherwise, you will need to enroll at your new zoned campus.

I was attending my zoned school and moved during the school year. When I went to the zoned school to update my address, the school told me that my students could no longer be enrolled. What can I do?

- With the principal's approval, the school can use what is called a Moved Within Semester Transfer. This transfer will allow students who moved from their zoned school to remain until the end of the semester. Parents should apply for the following school year.

How would I know what programs are available at a school of choice?

- Once you are in the application selection page, you can click on the next i to the school's name to see more information regarding the campus.
- Information about different programs can be found on the School Choice website at **ChooseHISD.com**.
- Visit the Find a School site at www.houstonisd.org/findaschool and select your campuses of interest. You can click on the campus for more campus information and to be redirected to the campus website.