

The Arlington Public Schools (APS) carries out a sustained, vigorous, inclusive, and culturally appropriate program to communicate clearly the attributes of all its schools and programs to assist families and students in making informed decisions. APS provides a range of learning opportunities to respond to the interests and needs of all students through

- a blend of neighborhood and option schools/programs.
- equitable access for all students.

This blend is provided to the extent possible given financial constraints and capacity limits. Information about neighborhood and options schools/programs, along with application processes periods and deadlines are widely communicated and published each year.

This policy is a living document with principles that guide decisions. It should be updated periodically to support the needs of all students and to reflect changes or growth in APS.

Neighborhood Schools

Neighborhood schools have attendance areas established by the School Board. Every student is guaranteed admission to the elementary, middle, and high school serving the attendance areas in which the student resides.

Option Schools/Programs

Option schools/programs provide specialized instructional programs. APS provides:

- Equitable access to option schools/programs for all students including students with disabilities and English learners.
- A rational and transparent process for admission to option schools/programs, which is differentiated to support the integrity of the instructional models.

Neighborhood School Transfers

Neighborhood School Transfers are available to the extent possible given financial constraints and capacity limits.

Admissions

Students may apply for:

- admission to option schools/programs or
- a transfer to a neighborhood school that is accepting transfers, based on the Superintendent's annual update to the School Board.

A. Option School Application

At the start of each school year APS publicizes the due date and the procedures for applying to an option school/program. Parents/guardians submit applications to APS. If the number of applicants for an option school/program exceeds the available seats, APS will:

- Conduct a random-double blind lottery to determine admission for the available seats.

- **Maintain a waitlist.**

B. Keeping Families Together

APS will keep siblings together to the extent possible given financial constraints and capacity limits.

- **Siblings are children who have at least one parent/guardian in common, and the parent/guardian has full or shared custody.** Twins/multiples are siblings who are concurrently enrolled in the same grade.
- Twins/multiples, although admitted as two, will be treated as one in all applications for option schools/programs.
- At the elementary level, siblings of older students who will be concurrently enrolled at the school will receive priority in admission.

C. Advancement in Grade Level in Option Schools/Programs and Neighborhood School Transfers

Once a student is admitted to an option school/program or accepts a neighborhood school transfer, enrollment will be continuous through the grade levels of that school/program, unless the school is involved in a boundary change. In such cases, the Board may make a different decision as part of the boundary change adoption.

Transportation

For students who are 4 years old or older, and live outside of their school's walk zone as **defined by APS Transportation Policy (50-5):**

- APS provides transportation to the student's neighborhood school or option school/program.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for transportation when the student accepts a transfer to another neighborhood school/program.

Reporting to the School Board

Each fall, the Superintendent will **update** the School Board on student enrollment **and make recommendations to achieve the goals stated in this policy.**

Appeals

Decisions made under this policy may be appealed to the Superintendent or his/her designee. The appeal shall be submitted **in writing, or by visiting the office of the Superintendent/designee and working with staff to complete an appeal. The Superintendent/designee will provide a clear, timely response to the appeal that is consistent with the policy. The decision of the Superintendent/designee shall be final.**

In the event that a student is admitted through the appeal process, enrollment will be continuous through the grade levels of that school/program, unless there is cause to discontinue.