

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, including preschool, 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.

Preschool goals are defined in APS Policy 20-3.300 Early Childhood Preschool Programs.

This blend is provided to the extent possible given financial constraints and capacity limits. Information about preschool, neighborhood and option 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 guides decisions. It should be updated a minimum of every three years 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 area 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.
- Provides a rational and transparent process for admission to option schools/programs, which is differentiated to support the integrity of the instructional models.
- Offers preschool at each of the elementary option schools/programs.
- Adjusts enrollment levels at the option schools/programs as needed.

Transfer To A Neighborhood School That Is Accepting Transfers

Neighborhood schools accept transfers 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. Application

At the start of each school year APS publicizes the due date and the procedures for applying to an option school/program or a neighborhood school that is accepting transfers.

Parents/guardians submit applications to APS. If the number of applicants 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.
- Siblings who will be concurrently enrolled at the same **elementary** school will receive priority in admission.

C. Advancement in Grade Level

Once a student is admitted to an option school/program or accepts a transfer to a neighborhood school that is accepting transfers, 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 that is accepting transfers, unless otherwise directed by the School Board as part of another decision.

Reporting to the School Board

Each fall, the Superintendent will update the School Board on enrollment levels at each school/program and transportation and will make recommendations to achieve the goals stated in this policy. As a result of the annual update, the School Board may need to make adjustments to the policy and APS may need to make adjustments to the implementation procedures.

Appeals

Decisions made under this policy may be appealed to the Superintendent or his/her designee. Upon appeal, the Superintendent or his/her designee may grant administrative transfers. 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 written, clear and timely response to the appeal that is consistent with the policy. If families are dissatisfied with the response from the Superintendent/designee they may appeal in writing to the School Board for consideration.

Once a student is approved for an administrative transfer through the appeal process, enrollment will be continuous through the grade levels of that school/program, unless there is cause to discontinue.