

**POLICY RELATING TO PUPIL SERVICES**

**SCHOOL CHOICE**

The Wachusett Regional School District welcomes school choice students and recognizes the benefits of enrolling students into our schools from other cities and towns. Recognizing that any economic benefit of school choice will be offset by personnel costs, the District will not add personnel in order to accommodate school choice enrollment, except by specific vote of the School Committee. Projected school choice openings will be estimated as outlined in Massachusetts General Law 76, § 12B(c) and not exceed class size guidelines as outlined in WRSDC Policy 3510 *Policy Relating to Education Class Size*. Notwithstanding the above language, the School Committee maintains the right to opt-out of school choice in any given year.

The Wachusett Regional School District will utilize an application and lottery process to select school choice students. No student from outside the District shall be enrolled as a school choice student unless he/she has followed the appropriate protocols, including completion of an application, submission of an application by the established deadline and inclusion in the lottery. In extenuating circumstances, the Superintendent of Schools will have the final determination.

A deadline for acceptance of school choice applications shall be determined prior to the publication of applications, and clearly posted on the application, the District website and any other publication connected with school choice.

The District will select non-sibling students via a blind, random lottery. Current grades, state and local assessments, transcripts, letters of recommendation, or other auxiliary information will not be considered when selecting school choice students.

Siblings of school choice students currently enrolled in a school in the Wachusett Regional School District will be given priority when awarding seats under school choice for the following school year. Parents/guardians need to follow the application process for siblings, as they will be considered new school choice students.

The number of students accepted may differ from the number of additional seats available to non-resident students if, between the date of the projection and the running of the lottery, resident/school enrollment increases.

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***SCHOOL CHOICE (continued)***

All applicants who have applied for school choice will be notified in as timely a manner as possible of their child/children's school choice status (accepted, not accepted but on the waiting list).

The school choice acceptance letter will include instructions for enrolling each child in the school to which he/she has been assigned. The school choice wait list letter will include the child's/children's position on the waiting list, and an explanation of the waiting list process.

Any misleading information on the application could be cause for the District to withdraw its offer of school choice enrollment.

Families with a child or with children who have been accepted will also receive a "*School Choice Family Acceptance Form.*" Families will use this form to indicate whether or not they will accept the offer of school choice enrollment.

The District will maintain a waiting list of students who applied but were not accepted. The waiting list will be active until June 30th of the previous school year. If a seat becomes available, the District will contact the first family on the waiting list to offer school choice placement. If a family declines the offer of school choice, the District will contact the next family on the list until the seat is filled or all families have been notified. Only students who have applied for school choice for the upcoming school year will be included on the waiting list.

Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the parents/guardians. Families may request in writing permission to ride District-sponsored transportation to and from school from an established bus stop within District boundaries, for an annual fee which will be established by the District at the beginning of every school year. Such decisions shall be based upon available room with priority given to resident students. The District will not provide transportation from stops outside District boundaries for school choice students. The Superintendent of Schools has final authority to grant permission for transportation privileges.

School choice students are eligible to participate in any school-sponsored activity. Families are responsible for paying any student activity, sports or extra-curricular fees.

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***SCHOOL CHOICE (continued)***

School choice students are held to the same standards, both personally and academically, as any other student in the District. District policies apply to all students enrolled in our schools.

Once a child has been accepted to a district under the school choice program, he/she is enrolled until they graduate or transfer to another district.

School choice students may withdraw from Wachusett Regional School District at any time. If a student should withdraw and decides to return to the Wachusett Regional

School District, the application process must be followed once again, and re-admittance is not guaranteed.

On an annual basis, the Superintendent will provide to the School Committee the current status of school choice student numbers and anticipated vacancies.

First Reading: 4/28/14

Second Reading: 5/21/14

WRSDC Policy 6130