

Policy Manual of the Public Schools of Brookline

J 1 e. Assignment of Students to Schools/Buffer Zones

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Voted 10/6/81, #81-461; 5/7/84, #84-171; 5/11/93, #93-148; 6/7/01, #01-65, #01-66, #01-67; 6/14/01, #01-77; 2/7/02, #02-14; 3/25/04, #04-23 and #04-25)

1. Open Enrollment

Open enrollment is defined as a condition whereby a resident of the Town whose child does not reside in a specific elementary school district, may request admission to a school in that district.

While students have a right to attend the elementary school in the school district where they reside, the Brookline School Committee endorses a policy of open enrollment, subject to certain provisions set forth below which are designed to support the class size policies of the Public Schools of Brookline, to ensure even utilization of individual building resources and staff throughout the system, and to protect the educational well-being of the students. If a transfer is approved to one child in a family, there can be no guarantee that a sibling will be granted similar approval. Children of a resident who moves from one school district to another within the Town will be granted permission to remain in the former school district upon request to the Superintendent of Schools. The transportation of students to out-of-district schools shall be the responsibility of the student's family.

(The Open Enrollment section of this policy was temporarily suspended June 8, 2001, continuing through the 2001-2002 school year, to accommodate a Cap at Grades K-2 at Baker School. See School Committee Record of June 7, 2001, with a review by March 1, 2002.)

(On February 7, 2002, the School Committee voted to continue the temporary suspension of the Open Enrollment Policy (Policy J 1 e.1), through June 30, 2003, to accommodate the K-2 Cap at the Baker School. The decision about continuing the Cap beyond this date will be made by the Superintendent and the School Committee by March 1, 2003.)

(On February 27, 2003, the School Committee voted unanimously to eliminate the current year's enrollment cap at Baker School and not renew the suspension of the Open Enrollment Policy [Policy J 1 e. 1])

2. Out of District Transfer Requests

With respect to out-of-district transfer requests, the following will be considered:

1. The class size in the school district of the applicant, and that in the school being requested;
2. The overall crowding conditions and staff/pupil loads in the school district of the applicant and that in the school being requested;
3. The parents' reason for the request;
4. The educational well-being of the student, including the opinions of the Principals of both schools and other staff members.

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The Superintendent of Schools shall have the sole responsibility of reviewing and deciding out-of-district transfer requests and the assignment of new families residing in buffer zones, in accordance with School Committee policy.

3. Buffer Zones

The School Committee establishes certain "buffer zones", addresses on or near certain school district boundaries, as areas from which new students in that district may be assigned to either one of the two immediate school districts, consistent with the principles outlined above.

With respect to the assignment of new families residing in buffer zones:

1. The preference of the family will be considered in making the initial assignment.
2. Unless the family requests a different assignment, which will be considered according to the policy on out-of-district transfers, subsequent assignments of siblings in a given family will be made to the same school.

On the basis of near maximum capacity enrollments in the bordering school districts, the following areas, described on the attached maps (one overall town map and 8 close-up maps of each elementary school district, as shown in Appendix B) are designated as buffer zones, subject to annual review by the Superintendent of Schools and the School Committee (Action # 04-23, 3/25/04).

By Action # 04-25, on 3/25/04, the School Committee amended the buffer zone map to include the Cypress Loft Development as a triple buffer zone for Lincoln, Pierce, and Runkle Schools. This change is included in the overall town map. The location of the three schools is shown as shown in Appendix C.

(A map and full list of the school districts and buffer zones is also available from the Town's GIS Department, who request that they be informed of any future amendments voted by the School Committee to ensure accuracy. The map is available online at: <http://www.town.brookline.ma.us/gis/maplib-online.html>.