



Board of Education

INFORMATION

TITLE: Board Policy 4.5 School Choice

DATE: November 17, 2025

RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATOR: Dr. Michael Farrell
Executive Director of Student Services

BACKGROUND/CONSIDERATIONS:

The new school choice laws in Arkansas, notably the comprehensive LEARNS Act of 2023 and Act 732 of 2025, introduced changes to public education, expanding both interdistrict and intradistrict transfer options.

The law now explicitly allows students to transfer to other public schools within their own resident district, whereas previously choice primarily focused on transfers between districts. Districts are required to establish policies for these transfers and publicly post them.

The annual application window for public school transfers has been moved to January 1 through June 1 each year (previously January 1 to May 1).

Districts must notify parents of acceptance or rejection of an application within 15 calendar days of receipt.

Applications can be rejected if the school lacks capacity (defined as over 95% staffing capacity) or would necessitate additional services not currently provided. Decisions can be appealed to the State Board of Education.

Once a school choice application is approved, the placement remains in effect until the student graduates or leaves the district. Specific criteria in regard to Changing School Athletic Participation (CSAP) must be submitted prior to June 1 for transferring students in grades 7-12 to maintain eligibility for varsity athletics.

School districts are required to publish their capacity, acceptance policies, and deadlines, and report all approval and denial data to the Department of Education.

RECOMMENDATION: This update is intended to provide the School Board with information about the upcoming changes in district procedures as a result of new changes to school choice laws in Arkansas.

This is an information item. No action is needed.