



Instructions for the School Choice Transfer Application

Questions?

Please contact the Office of School Choice and Parent Empowerment at 501-683-3162 or by email at ade.efa@ade.arkansas.gov

Important Deadlines and Application Submission

- The application period begins on January 1st and ends on May 1st.
- The application must be signed by the resident and nonresident district personnel.
- When the application has been signed and completed by the resident and nonresident district, please submit a copy to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. You may send it via e-mail: ade.efa@ade.arkansas.gov or postal mail:
 - Division of Elementary and Secondary Education
Attn: Public School Choice, Box 23
4 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

School Choice Transfer Type

- **Public School Choice of 2015 (*District to District transfer*)** – A parent or guardian may select this option when transferring from their resident district to a different district where they currently do not live. (A student may transfer using this option even if they do not currently attend the resident district.) Priority *may be* given to students who have siblings or stepsiblings who attend the nonresident district.
 - a. **Exemptions:**
 - A student cannot use Public School Choice to transfer to a different school within their district.
 - A student cannot use Public School Choice to transfer to a particular school within a different school district if transferring into the district.
 - A student cannot request to transfer to a different school that is under a current desegregation order. The current desegregation order list is [here](#).
- **Opportunity School Choice (*School-to-School transfer within the same district for most applicants*)** - A parent or guardian may select this option when transferring from one school within the same district to another school within the same district or out of certain school districts. You may qualify to transfer to a different school when:
 - a. **F-Rated School:** A student may transfer from an "F"-rated school within the same district that does not have an "F"-rating.
 - b. **Level 5 Support:** A student may transfer from a district that has been classified as a school district in need of Level 5-Intensive support to a school district that has not been classified as needing Level 5-Intensive support.
 - c. **Siblings:** Priority is not given to students who may have siblings or stepsiblings who attend the nonresident district.

- d. **Effective period:** Opportunity School Choice shall operate as an irrevocable choice for one year and remain in effect until the student graduates as provided by law.

Section A – Student Applicant Information

- *Student demographic information:* Please write your student’s name, date of birth, and current grade in school. The gender and ethnicity questions are required by state law (ACA 6-18-227[f][2][B]) and will be used for reporting purposes only.
- *Expulsions:* A nonresident school district may deny a school choice transfer application if the student is currently expelled from their resident school district. If your student is currently expelled, please write the date the student was expelled.
- *Sibling Information:* Please write the names and grades of siblings or stepsiblings who attend the nonresident school district.

Section B – Parent or Guardian Information

- *Contact Information:* Please write your name, address, phone number, and email address. Please sign the form.
- *Uniformed Service Family Information:* If you are a uniformed service member, please submit paperwork to show proof of residency on your assigned military base and current active-duty orders. Please turn in those documents with your completed school choice transfer form to the resident and nonresident school districts.

Section C – Resident School District of Applicant

- *Resident School District Information:* As the parent or guardian, you may write in the contact information for the resident school district.

The gray box is for district use only. Please have an employee at the resident district administrative office fill in the required information in that box. For your application to be complete, all the must be provided by the resident district.

Section D – Nonresident School District of Applicant

- *Nonresident School District Information:* As the parent or guardian, you may write in the contact information for the nonresident school district.

The gray box is for district use only. Please have an employee at the nonresident school district administrative office fill in the required information in that box. For your application to be complete, all the information must be provided by the nonresident school district.



Application for School Choice Transfer

Submission Deadline: May 1st

Uniformed Service families are exempt from the deadline

School Choice Transfer Type (please choose one)

Public School Choice () (District to District)	Opportunity School Choice () School to School within the Same District or District to District <i>if</i> the Resident District is in need of Level 5 Intensive Support
---	---

Section A – Student Applicant Information

Date: _____

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Sex: Female () Male ()

Is the applicant currently expelled? Yes () No ()

If yes, date of expulsion _____ (if applicable)

Please indicate race/ethnic origin:

2 or More Races ()	Asian ()	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ()
Hispanic/Latino ()	Native American/Native Alaskan ()	
White ()	African American ()	

Please list the student's siblings or stepsiblings currently attending the nonresident school district:

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Section B – Parent or Guardian Information

Parent Name: _____ Phone number: _____

Home Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Current active-duty uniformed service member? _____ Yes or No _____ (If no, skip to section C; If yes, please submit military transfer orders that include the date of arrival, parent/guardian name, and proof of residency to both resident and non-resident school districts along with this form.)

Section C – Resident School District of Applicant

District and School Name: _____ County: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ Phone Number: _____

Resident District Use Only

Date and Time Reviewed by District _____ LEA# _____

Student ID # _____ District Personnel Name _____

Signature _____ Title _____

Application status: Accepted () or Rejected () (due to a desegregation order of a federal court)

Date/Time Received: _____
(place date and time stamp here)

**Section D – Non-Resident School District of Applicant
(please write one school and/or district name)**

District and School Name: _____ County: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ Phone Number: _____

Non-Resident District Use Only

Date and Time Reviewed by District _____ LEA# _____

Student ID # _____ District Personnel Name _____

Signature _____ Title _____

Application status: Accepted _____ or Rejected _____ (indicate reason for rejection)

- Rejection due to capacity ()
- Rejection due to desegregation order of a federal court ()

If rejected, parent notified by: Staff Name _____

Date/Time Received: _____
(place date and time stamp here)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the differences between Public School Choice and Opportunity School Choice?

	Public School Choice	Opportunity School Choice
Law	Ark. Code Ann. §6-18-1901 et seq.	Ark. Code Ann. §6-18-227
Eligibility	<p>A public school choice program is established to enable a student in kindergarten through grade twelve (12) to attend a school in a nonresident district.</p> <p>A school district shall not deny a student the ability to attend a school in the student’s school district of choice unless there is a lack of capacity at the school in the student’s school district of choice.</p> <p>Students cannot use Public School Choice to transfer to a school within their resident district.</p>	<p>A student may only use Opportunity School Choice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To transfer from a public school that has a rating of “F” to a school that does not have a rating of “F” under Ark. Code Ann. §§6-15-2105 and 6-15-2106; or • To transfer from a school district that has been classified as a school district in need of Level 5-intensive support to a school district not classified in need of Level 5-intensive support under Ark. Code Ann. §§6-15-2913 or 6-15-2915.
Where is the Application?	<p>The school choice application can be downloaded from DESE’s website at https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/office-of-school-choice-and-parent-empowerment/school-choice</p>	
How to Apply	<p>Take the completed application for each child to the (1) resident district AND (2) nonresident district by MAY 1.</p>	
Lack of Capacity	<p>May include a claim of a lack of capacity by a school district only if the school district has the maximum student-to-teacher ratio allowed under federal law, state law, the rules for standards of accreditation, or other applicable regulations.</p>	<p>For the purposes of these rules, a school district may claim a lack of capacity if, as of the date the application for opportunity school choice is made, ninety-five percent (95%) or more of the seats at the grade level at the nonresident school are filled.</p>
Priority for Siblings	Yes	No
Application Period Begins	January 1	
Deadline to Apply	May 1	

What is “the Division” or “DESE”?

These terms refer to the Arkansas Department of Education Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

What does “lack of capacity” mean?

“Lack of capacity” for *Public School Choice* may be claimed by a school district only if the school district has reached the maximum student-to-teacher ratio allowed under federal law, state law, the rules for standards of accreditation, or other applicable regulations.

“Lack of capacity” for *Opportunity School Choice* may be claimed by a school district only if the nonresident school has reached the maximum student-to-teacher ratio allowed under federal law, state law, the Rules Governing the Standards for Accreditation, or other applicable federal regulations. For the purposes of these rules, a school district may claim a lack of capacity if, as of the date the application for opportunity school choice.

What is my “resident district” or “nonresident district” for school choice?

“Resident district” means the school district in which the student resides as determined under Ark. Code Ann. 6-18-202 and from which the student seeks to transfer.

“Nonresident district” means a school district other than a student’s resident district to which a student transfers or seeks to transfer.

What is the difference between an interdistrict transfer and an intradistrict transfer?

An interdistrict transfer is between two different school districts. An intradistrict transfer means a transfer between two schools within the same school district.

How do I find out if my school has a letter grade of “F” or my district is in need of Level 5- intensive support?

School letter grades are available on the Division’s My School Info website at <https://myschoolinfo.arkansas.gov>. Districts that are classified as in need of Level 5-intensive support are required to notify parents of this status and of the availability of the Opportunity School Choice option. Families may also find this information by contacting their resident district or by contacting the Division at the number listed at the end of this FAQ.

Can I apply for both types of school choice transfers in the same year?

Yes, if your student meets the eligibility requirements for both types of school choice. Your applications for Public School Choice and Opportunity School Choice must be sent to **both** your (1) resident and (2) nonresident districts. A copy of the signed form must be submitted to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Why is gender and race/ethnicity information collected on this form?

Information about a student’s gender, race, or ethnicity is collected for data-reporting purposes. The data is reported annually to the House and Senate Education Committees, as required by Ark. Code Ann. §6-18-227(f)(2)(B). This information cannot be used by districts in deciding whether to accept or reject an application.

Can a district deny my application for school choice?

Yes. A district may deny an application for Public School Choice or Opportunity School Choice if:

- a) There is a lack of capacity at the school in the student's district of choice; and
- b) There is an active federal desegregation court order.

A district *may not* deny an application for school choice based on an applicant's previous academic achievement, athletic or extracurricular ability, handicapping conditions, English proficiency level, or previous disciplinary proceedings, except for an expulsion from another district.

A school district receiving transfers under this rule *shall not* discriminate on the basis of gender, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, or disability.

For more information, see the DESE Rules Governing Public School Choice. The Rules can be found on the Division website at <http://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/offices/legal/currentrules> or by contacting the Division at the number listed at the end of this FAQ document.

What does "currently expelled" mean?

When a school district expels a student, the expulsion is for a set period of time. During that period of time, the student is considered "currently expelled." If a student is still within the time period of his/her expulsion, a nonresident district may deny his/her application for school choice transfer.

Is there anything I can do if my application is denied?

Families may appeal a denial to the State Board of Education. The deadlines and procedures for appealing are in the DESE Rules Governing Public School Choice. The Rules can be found on the Division website at <http://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/offices/legal/currentrules>.

If you feel the denial of your student's application is discriminatory, please contact the Division at the number listed at the end of this FAQ document.

Can I request a specific school?

Yes, but depending on the district's available space, you may be offered placement at a different school within the district of choice.

Opportunity School Choice allows a student to transfer to another district (an "interdistrict" transfer) or another specific school which may be in the resident district (an "intradistrict" transfer) or another district, so long as that school does not have a rating of "F" and the district is not in need of Level 5-intensive support. Under Opportunity School Choice, you should list the specific school you wish to attend. The district may be able to offer a different school placement if it lacks capacity at the requested school of choice.

Public School Choice transfer must be to another district (interdistrict). Although you may request a specific school, the district is not required to place you in the requested school. Districts may deny a request for a specific school while still granting the Public School Choice application for placement in a school not requested. Often, this is due to lack of capacity in the requested school.

Can my district decide not to participate in school choice?

No, however, some districts may claim a conflict with participation in school choice due to an active federal desegregation court order or court-approved plan.

These districts must notify DESE of this conflict annually. DESE reviews these requests and the relevant court orders and sends a letter to the district. These letters can be found on the Division's website at <http://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/offices/legal/school-choice> or by contacting the Division at the number listed at the end of this FAQ document.

Are there special school choice opportunities available for students of uniformed service members?

The deadline to apply for school choice is May 1, but students of uniformed service members may apply for school choice at any time during the year, so long as they meet the requirements below:

- a) Uniformed service member in full-time active-duty status;
- b) Surviving spouse of a uniformed service member;
- c) Reserve component uniformed service member during the period six (6) months before until six (6) months after a Title 10, Title 32, or state active-duty mobilization and service;
- d) Uniformed service veteran who is returning to civilian status at the conclusion of the uniformed service veteran's active-duty status.

Where can I find more information?

For more information, please see the DESE Rules Governing Public School Choice. The Rules can be found on the Division website at <http://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/offices/legal/currentrules> or by calling the Division at (501) 683-0087.