

## **Section 7000 – Instructional Program**

7150-R Parental/Guardian Choice – Theme Schools

7150-R

### **Theme Schools**

#### **Establishment/Resources/Continuation**

1. Establishment of a theme school does not commit the District to a separate school facility for the Theme school. The District will place the Theme school in a facility to be shared with another school if needed to achieve school size targets.
2. Modified Theme schools, which include an attendance area and selects students city-wide, will be established when a theme is unable to draw sufficient enrollment to warrant a city-wide Theme school.
3. Student-administrator and student-teacher ratios should conform to the District's targets for class size and staffing.
4. While Theme schools will be expected to provide all services mandated for schools, they will not be expected to provide all the optional programs and services available in other GRPS schools.
5. Added costs of Theme schools should be related to the specific program/resource needs of the theme and will be allocated in accordance with available District resources.
6. The performance of the Theme school's students should reflect growth, using value-added standard. Failure to do so will place a Theme school under review, and if performance growth is not achieved, could result in closure.

#### **Curriculum**

1. Theme schools will participate in a regular curriculum review process to determine alignment between the GRPS curriculum and the Theme school's focus/theme/method.
2. The Theme schools staff's shall receive professional development necessary to fully implement the school's focus/theme/method.
3. Instructional materials, resources and student reporting systems should reflect the District curriculum and the Theme school's focus/theme/method of instruction, consistent with Board of Education policy.

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### Selection Process

1. There are two types of Theme schools: 1) those whose students enroll exclusively from a city-wide selection process, and 2) those whose students first enroll from their attendance area and then fill remaining openings with students from the city-wide selection process. The latter is considered a modified Theme school.
2. There should be no special admission requirements unless they are appropriate to the nature of the theme, e.g., a program for academically gifted students. In such cases the Board of Education must approve the use of an admission requirement.
3. Admissions should be open to the entire GRPS District during selection period.
4. Admission is open to students outside of the GRPS District, consistent with application timelines that first serve GRPS students.
5. Each Theme school is expected to recruit a diverse applicant pool, with the goal that each Theme school reflect the demographics of the District at each grade level. All parents/guardians interested in applying for a Theme school must complete a written application on behalf of their child and submit it to the Theme Schools office.
6. An initial round of selections will be conducted each spring for the following school year. All selections will be made by the Theme schools office using an automated, computerized, lottery-based selection system. Each school will be filled to its projected capacity. The Theme schools office will periodically refill schools throughout the school year, replacing students who either decline their initial selection or who leave at a later date.
7. Waiting pools will be maintained for each Theme school that has more applicants than seats available.
8. Applicants with a sibling attending the same Theme school for which the student is applying will be given preference when space is available; placement is not guaranteed. For purposes of this policy, a sibling will be defined as a brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, stepbrother, stepsister, or foster child living in a household with the same parent/guardian. Sibling preference supercedes all other preferences.

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9. Students presently in a Theme school who apply for a school with the same theme (e.g., Montessori) at the next level (i.e., elementary to middle or middle to high) will be given preference over other applicants when space is available; placement is not guaranteed.
10. Applicants have the right to an appeal based on special circumstances. Appeals will be heard by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
11. Students admitted to a Theme school may remain in that school as long as their parents/guardians reside in the District and the student has not been expelled under Board policy. Students may withdraw from a Theme school at any time, but must reapply if they wish to re-enroll at that school. Their application will have no preferential status over any other application for that school.
12. Students who attend a Theme school and who move to another District during the school year may remain in the Theme school if they receive an annual waiver from their new District of residence. The family must arrange its own transportation.
13. Students who live outside the District may apply for a Theme school through the KISD Collaborative Schools of Choice process. Once they apply through the Student Services Office, they will be provided a Theme Schools catalog and application. A round of county-wide selections will be made during the summer consistent with the timelines of the Schools of Choice process.
14. Students who live in the attendance area of a modified school, are enrolled there, and subsequently move out of that attendance area, may remain for the balance of that school year without completing an application. They will need to complete an application for the next school year if they wish to remain and will be given preference pending the availability of slots. Selection is not guaranteed.
15. The District will provide transportation to students enrolled in Theme schools under Board guidelines. Special education students will be bused as their IEP requires.

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### Voluntary Transfers

In order to maximize the number of choices available to parents/guardians, the Board permits voluntary transfers to schools outside of the student's attendance area. Transfers will be granted in an equitable manner, consistent with the transfer rules.

### Transfer Timelines

1. Transfer forms will be available at school buildings and at the administration building. Parents/Guardians may complete transfer forms throughout the year.
2. Transfer requests received between the third week of second semester and June 30th will be acted upon by July 7th.
3. Transfers received during July and August will be acted upon within 10 working days.
4. Transfers will be acted upon within 10 working days during the school year.
5. Actual movement of students will be limited to the beginning of a school year or semester break, unless extenuating circumstances require movement at other times.
6. Only one transfer request will be granted within a school year unless extenuating circumstances require additional transfers within a school year. Once granted, a transfer retains a student in the transfer, school through the highest grade available, unless the transfer is specifically revoked.
7. Revocation of a transfer will be invoked only at the end of a semester, unless extenuating circumstances require movement at other times. Revocations will be communicated to parents/guardians in writing at least one month prior to the end of a semester.

### High School Only

1. All Grand Rapids Public Schools high school student athletes who request a voluntary transfer from one high school to another within the Grand Rapids Public Schools District, shall be declared ineligible to participate in athletics for two semesters.
2. Students transferring into a school at the beginning of 9th grade will be eligible to play immediately.

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3. All non-Grand Rapids Public Schools high school student athletes who request a transfer to a Grand Rapids Public Schools high school, shall be ineligible to participate in athletics for one semester.
4. All other Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) rules remain in effect.

### Transfer Capacity

1. Principals determine their ability to accept transfers based upon the school's physical capacity to accommodate students. Standards for acceptable classroom space will be followed in determining capacity of a school. Programs within the building may not be displaced to create additional capacity.
2. Attendance area students may not be displaced by transfer students.

### Transfer Process

1. Both school buildings and Student Services will accept transfer forms. Transfer forms will be date/time stamped upon receipt. Principals are encouraged to make a written transfer recommendation on the transfer form prior to faxing it to Student Services.
2. The parent/guardian must sign all transfer requests before they are processed.
3. The determination of whether a transfer will be granted will be made collaboratively between the building Principal and the Coordinator of Student Services.
4. Transfers will generally be processed on a first-come, first-serve basis. Extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to: safety needs, child-care, academic/program need, educational/family continuity or sibling preference may over-ride first-come, first-serve.
5. Transfers that are the result of athletic recruiting are prohibited. (Coaches shall not communicate with athletes outside of their feeder pattern.)
6. Choice students must request a transfer if they desire to attend a school at the next level outside of their feeder pattern.
7. Special education students will be granted transfers following the same guidelines as regular education providing the IEP program is available and that space is

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- available. Student Services will make the decision after communicating with the appropriate special education supervisor.
8. Transfers are not allowed into Theme or modified Theme schools.
  9. Coding of transfers on the student records system is the responsibility of Student Services.
  10. Parents/Guardians will receive formal written notification of action taken on all transfer requests from Student Services.
  11. When transfers are not granted, parents/guardians have the right to meet with the Principal or the Coordinator of Student Services in order to understand the reason for the refusal.

### Renewal/Revocation of Transfers

1. Once granted, a school retains a student through the highest grade available, unless the transfer is specifically revoked.
2. Revocations of transfers may occur in cases where the transfer is clearly not in the best interest of the student educationally. This could include a significant shift in attendance patterns, serious disciplinary concerns, or similar kinds of severe disruptions to the student's education. Prior to a transfer revocation, the school must attempt to improve the problem situation through appropriate interventions. Revocations must be approved by Student Services and must be communicated to parents/guardians in writing at least one month prior to the end of a semester.
3. Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing of a transfer revocation and will have the option of meeting with the Principal or the Coordinator of Student Services to discuss the reasons for a revocation.

### Transportation

1. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent/guardian when a student is on transfer to another school. Special education students will be considered in a manner consistent with the IEP.

Rules Accepted: June 29, 2009