

# *STUDENT ASSIGNMENT POLICY*



**A Culture of Educational Excellence!**

School Committee Approved March 23, 2017



*Springfield Public Schools  
(Springfield, Massachusetts)*

(Revised 2/16/2017)

Approved by School Committee March 23, 2017

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

*SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS*  
*STUDENT ASSIGNMENT: POLICIES, PROCESSES, AND PROCEDURES*

---

The Springfield Public School (“SPS”) Student Assignment process is governed by federal, state, and local mandates and policies.

The SPS Student Assignment process is comprised of three components:

1. Policies – Federal, state, and district assignment mandates
2. Processes – District methods and assignment types
3. Procedures – District assignment practices

The above serves to outline the parameters and practices which direct student assignments. A listing of the various assignment types with brief abstracts is provided for clarity and increased understanding.

The SPS Student Assignment Services department (SAS) is accountable for student assignments. It is the expectation that this Student Assignment Policy will provide a guide to the student assignment process and be of benefit to our stakeholders.

# Table of Contents

<b>RATIONALE</b> .....	5
<b>DEFINITIONS: Policy, Process, Procedure</b> .....	5
<b>POLICIES</b> .....	6
1. <u>FEDERAL POLICIES</u>	
A. McKinney-Vento Homeless Educations Assistance Act	
i. Liaison	
B. Foster Care	
C. Undocumented Students	
D. Special Education	
2. <u>STATE POLICIES</u>	
A. Massachusetts Schools of Choice	
B. Technical Vocational High School Admissions Criterion	
C. Homeschooling	
D. METCO	
3. <u>DISTRICT POLICIES</u>	
A. Age Requirements for Kindergarten and Grade One	
B. Pupil Progression Plan	
C. Student Assignment Plan	
D. High School Choice	
E. Sibling Preference	
F. Talented and Gifted Program	
<b>ASSIGNMENT PROCESSES</b> .....	14
1. Standard Student Assignments	
2. McKinney-Vento Assignments	
A. Continued McKinney-Vento	
B. Successor McKinney-Vento	
C. Termination of McKinney-Vento	
D. Remainder of the Year McKinney-Vento	
E. Foster Care	
3. Special Education Assignments	
A. Low Incidence	
B. Public Day	
C. Out of District	

4. English Language Learning Assignments
  - A. ELL Program Specific
  - B. Arabic, Burmese, Nepali, Somali and Vietnamese Program Specific
  - C. ELL Opt Out
5. Online Magnet & High School Balloting
6. Putnam Vocational Technical High School Assignments
  - A. Putnam Requirements Met by Student
  - B. Putnam Appeal
7. Magnet School Assignments
8. Pre-Kindergarten Assignments
  - A. PK Gerena & Zanetti Montessori
  - B. PK SPED
  - C. PK Peer Partner
  - D. Ells Early Childhood Assignments
9. Alternative School Assignments
10. Students of Concern Assignments
11. Department of Youth Services (DYS) Transition Assignments
12. Documented Medical Assignments
13. Documented Legal Assignments
14. Foreign Exchange Assignments
15. METCO Assignments
16. MSOC Assignments
17. Homeschooling Assignments
18. SPS Employee Offspring Assignments
19. Remainder of the Year Assignments
20. Returning to Previously Attended High School Assignments

**WAIT LIST POLICY** .....22

**STUDENT TRANSPORTATION PROCESSES** .....24

# **Rationale**

The Springfield Public Schools (SPS), the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the United States federal government implements policies which impact the SPS student assignment process. Over the years, these policies have undergone mandated modifications and periodic reviews. This document was established to provide a uniformed district student assignment process and provide a procedure for implementing the SPS Student Assignment Policy.

## **Definitions of Terms**

### **POLICY**

A plan of action formally adopted by a person, group or government.

### **PROCESS**

A set of established forms or methods for conducting the affairs of an organization such as a business, club or government.

### **PROCEDURE**

A customary way of operation, behavior or course of action.

# POLICIES

## 1. Federal Policies

### A. McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

The **McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act** (“McKinney-Vento Act”) is a federal law authorized under Title VII B of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act, originally authorized in 1987 and most recently reauthorized in December 2015 by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). It ensures immediate enrollment and **educational** stability for homeless children and youth. **McKinney-Vento** provides federal funding to states for the purpose of supporting district programs that serve homeless students.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“DESE”) has adopted Section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Act regarding the definition of homeless children and youth:

- *individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or have a primary nighttime residence in a supervised, publicly or privately, operated shelter for temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.*

This definition under the McKinney-Vento Act includes:

- children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals;
- children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above; and

- unaccompanied youth a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

In addition, according to McKinney-Vento, a **fixed residence** is one that is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change. A **regular residence** is one which is used on a regular (i.e., nightly) basis. An **adequate residence** is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments. Therefore, **children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate residence will be considered homeless.**

**Enroll** and **enrollment** shall mean attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

**School of origin** shall mean the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

Upon obtaining **Permanent** housing the student will no longer have the status of being “homeless”.

The McKinney-Vento Act also requires that:

- homeless students who move have the right to remain in their schools of origin (i.e., the school the student attended when permanently housed or in which the student was last enrolled, which includes preschools) if that is in the student’s best interest;
- if it is in the student’s best interest to change schools, homeless students must be immediately enrolled in a new school, even if they do not have the records normally required for enrollment;
- transportation must be provided to or from a student’s school of origin, at the request of a parent, guardian, or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the local liaison;
- homeless students must have access to all programs and services for which they are eligible, including special education services, preschool, school nutrition programs, language assistance for English learners, career and technical education, gifted and talented programs, magnet schools, charter schools, summer learning, online learning, and before and after-school care;
- unaccompanied youths must be accorded specific protections, including immediate enrollment in school without proof of guardianship; and
- parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youths have the right to dispute an eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision.

#### i. Liaison

The McKinney-Vento Act of 1987 and the reauthorized ESSA of 2015 Act requires every school district to designate a staff person as a liaison for students and families in homeless situations and the liaison serves as the Massachusetts Department of

Elementary and Secondary Education’s point of contact for education related issues regarding homeless students in the school district. The SPS Homeless Education Liaison whose role will be in part to ensure that:

- homeless student are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other agencies
- homeless students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school and receive educational services including pre-school and Head Start for which they are eligible;
- upon a homeless determination, students are afforded immediate enrollment and an appropriate school placement without required registration documentation, e.g. medical records, birth certificate, proof of residency, and previous academic records which would include special education (if applicable), discipline, and attendance records. The collection of registration documentation will take place at the assigned school in a timely manner.
- parents or guardians are informed of educational and related opportunities, such as access to school nutrition programs, available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- enrollment disputes are mediated and resolved; and
- parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, including to the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing needed transportation services.
- Is certified through Massachusetts Housing to make housing referrals and verification to HAP and HUD housing
- Ensure that school district staff receive professional development
- Maintain the privacy of student records, including information about a homeless child or youth’s living situation

In compliance with McKinney-Vento, SPS shall maintain a student’s education in his/her school of origin for the duration of homelessness or for the remainder of the academic school year once permanent housing is obtained with transportation provided by the Local Education Agency (“LEA”) of origin..

## **B. Foster Care**

The **2015 Every Student Succeeds Act** removed “awaiting foster care placement” from the definition of “homeless” for purposes of the McKinney-Vento Act by December 10, 2016.

*“Foster care”* is defined as “24 hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care responsibility.” This includes children in foster family homes, shelters, relative foster homes, group homes, and residential facilities —regardless of



whether the foster care facility is licensed or whether payments are made by the state.

ESSA requires that by December 10, 2016 all LEAs must:

- Collaborate with the state child welfare agencies to ensure school stability for youth in care including assurances that children enroll or remain in their “school of origin” unless a determination is made that it not in their best interest. That determination must be based on all factors relating to the child’s best interest including consideration of the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.
- *“School of origin” means the school in which a child is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care. If a child’s foster care placement changes, the school of origin would then be considered the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of the placement change.*
- Ensure that when a school change is warranted, children in foster care can enroll immediately in a new school even if the child cannot produce normally required enrollment documents and school records. Additionally, enrolling schools must immediately contact the school last attended by the child to obtain relevant academic and other education records.
- Develop and implement clear written procedures governing how transportation to ensure school stability will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of the children’s time in foster care in a cost effective manner and in accordance with the provisions of child welfare law that permit the use of certain Title IV-E funds for school stability transportation.
- Designate a Point of Contact (POC) who will “streamline interagency communication, help implement the new law, and, if a school change is warranted, help connect student with their new school community.
- Report annually on student achievement and graduation rates for students in foster care.
- Work in collaboration with child welfare agency to ensure effective, appropriate, and confidential data and information sharing between systems.

### **Transportation of Students in Foster Care**

The LEA and the Child Welfare agencies:

- Shall collaborate together to ensure transportation for children in foster care is provided, arranged, and funded if the LEA is receiving Title I funds.
- Shall develop and implement clear written procedures—developed with the relevant child welfare agencies—that ensure prompt and cost-effective transportation to ensure school stability by December 10, 2016.
- LEAs must ensure that transportation is provided for children in foster care even if it does not transport other students. These procedures must include provisions for students in care who move from one district to another or across state lines.
- Children are entitled to school stability transportation for the duration of their time in foster care.
- LEAs are urged to continue to prioritize school stability even when students exit care and to continue ensuring transportation through the end of that school year.

### **Point of Contact**

The reauthorized ESSA of 2015 requires that every LEA designate a staff person as a Point of Contact (POC) for Foster Care. The POC serves as the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s point of contact for education related issues regarding SPS students in Foster Care. The POC’s role will:

- Ensure that new and active students in Foster Care are immediately placed in school, following the appropriate federal, state and district regulations and guidelines
- Assist in the enrollment and address change process of students in Foster Care to ensure they are properly enrolled, transported, and have equal access to all Springfield Public Schools programs and services.
- Verify student statuses and attain records for all students.
- Support district administrators, principals, school personnel and stakeholders with questions/concern related to student and youth in the Foster Care program and provide support and assistance.
- Collaborate with the local child welfare agency, SPS Transportation Dept. to ensure that transportation is provided to the students immediately upon enrollment or an address change.
- Facilitate setup and follow up of transportation.

### **C. Undocumented Students**

SPS will enroll and assign undocumented students based upon the 1982 U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Plyler v. Doe*. The Court held, in part, that the equal protection provision of the Constitution's 14th Amendment requires public schools to admit undocumented students on the presumption that denial of public education to children whose parents brought them illegally to the United States is not a rational response to states' concerns about illegal immigration.

- **Exception:** Students on medical visas will not be registered into the SPS. They are only here for medical treatment and are expected to return to their native country once medical services are completed.

### **C. Special Education**

The U.S. Congress passed in 1975 Public Law 94-142, The Education of All Handicapped Children Act, which is the cornerstone of Special Education. Now codified as IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) the law requires states accepting federal money under the Act to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. It also requires that each student's educational plan be individualized to meet his or her needs and developed with parental involvement. Massachusetts' first major special education law was Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972.

## **2. State Policies**

### **A. Massachusetts Schools of Choice (MSOC)**

The Massachusetts school choice law (General Laws Chapter 76, Section 12B) was enacted in 1991 to allow parents to send their children to public schools in communities other than that in which they reside. School committees choose whether or not to become school choice receiving districts, and they may designate a maximum number of available school choice seats for an upcoming year. If there are more applicants than available openings, the selection of students must be conducted on a random basis, and must be free from discrimination. Tuition is paid by the sending district to the receiving district.

SPS allows eligible students from other communities to attend school in Springfield under MSOC. Currently, the SPS School Committee has decided to participate in MSOC Preschool through grade twelve with thirty seats allocated for the program. Parents/guardians seeking an SPS assignment through this program are limited in choices to schools that have less than 95% enrollment at the requested grade level. Eligible students admitted to the SPS under MSOC will be allowed to remain in SPS through grade twelve. Students who reside in Springfield and wish to attend school in another district must contact that district's school department to determine if they participate in MSOC. Enrollment is the responsibility of the receiving district. SPS does not provide transportation for the MSOC program.

The Superintendent of Schools will authorize the SPS Chief Financial and Operations Officer to notify the Springfield City Treasurer of the tuition due for the accepted student and the treasurer will bill the appropriate school system and/or parent or student.

### **B. Technical Vocational High School Admissions Criterion**

Vocational technical high schools have an admissions policy in compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 74, CRM 603 4.00 regulations governing vocational technical education as outlined in the, *Guidelines for Admission Policies of Vocational Technical Secondary Schools and Comprehensive Secondary Schools*. Students must meet approved admissions criteria or successfully appeal for entrance.

### **C. Homeschooling**

M.G.L., Chapter 76, Section 1 provides for homeschooling as an alternative to public or private schooling. Governing regulations require no child may begin a home school program prior to its review and approval by the School Committee, Superintendent or designee.

Parents who choose to homeschool their children must submit in writing their intent to homeschool with an educational proposal to the SPS Office of Academics. The proposal must include:

- Description of the academic background, life experiences and/or qualifications for those who will be instructing the child(ren), as they relate to the instructional program; and
- Description of the proposed curriculum (including each subjects' scope, major goals and objectives), and the schedule (including the number of hours of instruction); and
- Description of the educational materials and methods to be used; and
- Method of assessments to be used to ensure educational progress and attainment of minimum standards. An annual assessment of the child(ren)'s progress is due June of each year.

### **D. Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO)**

The METCO program is a state grant funded initiative established in the 1960's to provide enhanced educational opportunities for participating students. M.G.L., Chapter 76, Section 12A, provides for a school committee of any city or town or any regional school district to adopt a plan for attendance at its schools by any child who resides in another city, town, or regional school district in which racial imbalance exists. The program mission is to reduce the racial isolation of suburban school districts and to reduce segregation in city schools.

SPS students in grades kindergarten through twelve for the following academic year may apply to the METCO Program to attend school in a cooperating school district - Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, Hampden/Wilbraham, and Southwick/Tolland/Granville. All program costs and transportation are provided by the state. Applications are available each year online to interested parents/guardians and students through the SPS website from February 1<sup>st</sup> through April 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **3. SPS District Policies**

#### **A. Age Requirements for Kindergarten and Grade One**

- Students enrolling in kindergarten must be five years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year they are applying for.
- Students enrolling in grade one must be six years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year they are applying for.
- **There are no exceptions to this policy.**

#### **B. Pupil Progression Plan**

The SPS Pupil Progression Plan defines the expectations for the academic progress of all SPS students. This policy outlines the placement of students at a particular grade level. It describes the requirements all students must meet to be promoted as well as the criteria for graduation. The entire document may be viewed on the SPS website at:

<http://www.sps.springfield.ma.us/webContent/Policies/PupilProgressionPlan.pdf>

#### **C. Student Assignment Plan**

The Springfield School Committee implemented a Student Assignment Plan for the assignment of students in kindergarten through grade eight. The plan is based upon every address in the city being identified and aligned with one specific school. This school is referred to as the Boundary School. The Student Assignment Plan provides assurance that a student who lives at a specific address has a right to a guaranteed seat at his/her Boundary School. (This guarantee is dependent upon the Assigned School being programmatically and medically appropriate for the student.)

#### **D. High School Choice**

An online balloting process is utilized for selecting and submitting a student's high school choices during the High School Choice Process held annually. SPS parents of grade 8 students complete an online ballot to participate in the High School Choice process. Springfield residents not presently attending a Springfield Public School must be registered prior to submitting a ballot.

High School Choice options are limited to schools with grade nine as an entry level. Assignments are made based upon:

- Educational needs
- Sibling Preference Policy
- Entrance requirements (Applies to Roger L. Putnam Vocational-Technical Academy)
- Space availability

It may not be possible to accommodate all school requests during the High School Choice Process. When this occurs students may be placed on a waitlist. (See WAIT LIST POLICY on Page 21)

## **E. Sibling Preference**

Understanding the importance for many families to have their children in the same school, the SPS School Committee implemented the Sibling Preference Policy. This policy is in effect for the Magnet and High School Choice Process. The Sibling Preference Policy provides assignment preference to a younger sibling who has an *older* sibling currently attending the desired school AND will continue to be attending in the upcoming school year over students who do not have a qualifying sibling. (Siblings are defined as children who share at least one common parent/guardian and reside at the same address.) The sibling policy applies to entry grade levels at the designated magnet and/or high school. Appropriate entry grade levels are defined in the on line ballots. The parent/guardian must participate and complete an online ballot during the registration timeframe.

The Sibling Preference policy is also applied to the wait list. Identified qualifying siblings will be placed on the wait list in front of other applicants by the date of submitted Magnet & High School Wait List Request Form.

## **F. Talented and Gifted Program (TAG)**

The TAG program, located within the SPS Chestnut Accelerated Middle School, engages students in an accelerated program with opportunities for advanced classes in all academic areas. Potential TAG students are identified in grade five based upon academic performance and MCAS scores. Prequalified students are *invited* into the program. Student recommendations for admittance into the program may be made to the TAG principal. All recommended students must qualify and be accepted.

The parent/guardian may appeal any placement decision to or from the TAG program by following the appropriate appeals process and providing all necessary documentation for review.

Parent/guardians whose students are new to SPS must submit all required documentation to TAG Principal or designee. Student must qualify and be accepted.

**ALL** Assignments to TAG are made only for those students who *qualify and whose parent/guardian accepts the assignment.*

# **ASSIGNMENT PROCESSES**

## **1. Standard Student Assignments**

Standard Student Assignments are issued to students in grades kindergarten through grade eight in accordance with the provisions set forth in the SPS Student Assignment Policy.

## **2. McKinney-Vento Assignments**

### **A. Continuing McKinney-Vento**

Continuing McKinney-Vento assignments are issued to students who meet the criteria for homelessness and are remaining at the school of origin due to the designation as homeless.

### **B. Successor McKinney-Vento**

Successor assignments are issued to students after a McKinney-Vento assignment is in force **AND** a change in school is needed due to the completion of a terminal grade.

### **C. Termination of McKinney-Vento**

McKinney-Vento assignments may cease upon determination by the SPS Homeless Liaison that the student no longer meets the criteria under McKinney-Vento.

### **D. Remainder of the Year McKinney-Vento Assignment**

If a student becomes permanently housed during an academic year, the /guardian has the right to choose to keep the student at the school currently attended for the rest of the academic year with transportation.

*Remainders of the Year Assignments are contingent upon a parent/guardian's signed agreement to supply daily and timely transportation for the student. If a school notifies the Student Assignment Services department that the parent is not providing daily and timely transportation, the assignment will be revoked and the student will be immediately reassigned to the appropriate boundary school.*

## **3. Special Education Assignments**

### **A. Low Incidence (LI-SPED)**

LI-SPED assignments are issued to students who have an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) calling for intensive programming. These programs/services are available at designated schools throughout the district. Assignments to all LI-SPED programs are issued by the appropriate special education supervisor.

### **B. Public Day Schools (PDS)**

PDS Elementary, Middle, and High Schools are state approved public special education day schools. PDS provide full day special education services in a facility serving students with disabilities. PDS assignments are issued to students who have an IEP requiring the level of specialized services provided and are made by the appropriate special education supervisor.

### C. Out of District (OOD)

OOD assignments are issued for students whose IEP requires specialized services which are not available within the SPS. OOD assignments are made by the appropriate special education supervisor.

## **4. English Language Learner (ELL) Assignments**

- Elementary & middle school students will be assigned to their boundary school unless they require an ELL Program Specific Assignment.
- High school students with Program Specific needs will be assigned by the ELL Department.

### A. ELL Program Specific

ELL Program Specific assignments are issued to students in kindergarten through grade twelve. These students are assigned to a school that can provide for their programmatic needs. Assignment priority is given to schools that have available space at the required grade level.

### B. Arabic, Burmese, Nepali, Somali and Vietnamese Program

ELL Arabic, Burmese, Nepali, Somali and Vietnamese students will be assigned to designated elementary, middle, and high schools where a paraprofessional who speaks their specific language can facilitate clarification in the native language in the classroom as needed. These students will be assigned per district policy if a parent/guardian does not choose to attend program specific school(s).

### C. ELL Opt Out

Parents/guardians have the right to Opt-Out their child from an ELL program. When parents decline participation in a formal ELL program, the district must continue to ensure that the student has an equal opportunity to have his or her English language and academic needs met.

In the event a parent requests an ELL Opt-Out for their child who does not meet the English proficiency criteria for exit from a formal ELL program, the student will remain identified as an ELL student. ELL support will be provided within the mainstream program. Opt-Out designated ELL students will be required to participate in the ELL annual assessment process until he/she meets the English proficiency criteria.

## **5. Online Magnet & High School Balloting**

The online magnet & high school balloting process takes place annually. This process determines assignment of students into magnet and high schools.

- The ballot must be completed by the student's legal parent/guardian.
- Parents must enter higher grade siblings' student ID# for them to qualify under the sibling preference policy as previously outlined.



- It is not possible to accommodate all High School Choice assignment requests. When this occurs students will be placed on the wait list for their first choice. (See Wait List Policy on page 21)
- Students whose parent/guardian does not participate in online balloting will be assigned to schools with available seats.

Balloting is only available at the entry grade level to each of the following Magnet and High Schools:

- Gerena – Preschool 3 year old
- Zanetti – Preschool 3 year old
- Kensington – Kindergarten
- STEM – 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- Renaissance – 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- Conservatory – 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- Duggan – 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades
- Central – 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- Commerce – 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- Putnam – 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- Science & Technology – 9<sup>th</sup> grade

## **6. Putnam Vocational Technical Academy Assignments**

### **A. Putnam Requirements Met by Student**

Student Assignments are issued to students who qualify for admission into Putnam Vocational Technical Academy (“Putnam”) through an approved admissions policy.(See State Policies for Vocational High School Admissions Criteria)

- A “point score” is calculated for each of the four areas below. Students may earn a total of up to 80 points which is the maximum score.
  - Scholastic achievement (ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies) – 25 points available
  - Attendance – 25 points available
  - Discipline – 25 points available
  - Counselor recommendation – 5 points available
- A student who enters the SPS district from an approved and accredited vocational technical program which aligns with the Putnam program requirements may be considered for admission to Putnam.

8<sup>th</sup> grade students desiring admission to Putnam must indicate their preference via the High School Balloting process that occurs annually. Prior to this process each year, the district will determine the Putnam qualifying score and will publish the score with the High School Choice materials and on the High School Balloting website. Any students with a score higher than the qualifying score will be eligible for admission to Putnam. However, if more students have a qualifying score than there are available 9<sup>th</sup>

grade seats at Putnam, admission will be determined by lottery among those with a qualifying score.

It may not be possible to accommodate all Putnam assignment requests during the High School Choice process. When this occurs students may be seated on a wait list if they meet the qualifying score. (See Wait List Policy Page 24)

### **B. Putnam Appeal**

An Appeal may be requested by a parent if there is a question regarding a student's earned Putnam score and the scoring process. A completed *Putnam Appeal* form must be submitted to the Principal of Putnam within 15 business days of the issuance of assignment letters. Appeals will be reviewed and findings provided in writing to the parent within 30 days.

## **7. Magnet School Assignments**

The SPS receives federal magnet grants to develop and implement programs at specific schools in accordance with federal guidelines. Federal Magnet programs are available in elementary, middle and high schools. The magnet schools incorporate unique themes within the standard curriculum and provide families with a variety of educational options.

Magnet school assignments are based upon a parent's expression of interest in a school(s) magnet theme which is articulated and facilitated through an online balloting and lottery process held annually in December and January. Magnet assignments are made based upon parent request, Sibling Preference Policy, and available space. Non SPS students must first be registered for the SPS in order to participate in the online Magnet School balloting process.

Magnet seats are limited. As such, it may not be possible to accommodate all Magnet School assignment requests. When this occurs students will be placed on a wait list. (See Wait List Policy Page 21)

## **8. Pre-Kindergarten (PK) Assignments**

### **A. Pre-Kindergarten Gerena and Zanetti Montessori**

(See Magnet School Assignments)

### **B. Pre-Kindergarten SPED**

Three and four year old children who have been evaluated by SPS SPED department and found to be in need of special education services are eligible to participate in SPS Special Education PK program.

### **C. Pre-Kindergarten Peer Partner**

Three and four year old children without disabilities are assigned to Pre K as peer partners through an application process. Peer Partner seats are limited. As such, it may not be possible to accommodate all requests. When this occurs students may

be seated on the Pre-K Peer Partner wait list. Pre K peer wait list is determined and held by SAS.

#### D. Ells Early Childhood Assignments

##### i. Ells Pre-Kindergarten Half Day Program (AM/PM Sessions)

Peer partner seats are available for three and four-year-old children through an application process. Special Education students are assigned by the Early Childhood SPED Supervisor.

##### ii. Ells Pre-Kindergarten Full Day Program

A limited number of full day slots are available for children who are four years old by September 1. Children who are currently attending the Ells Early Childhood program are given priority. A lottery will be conducted when there are more requests than seats available. Special Education students are assigned by the Early Childhood Supervisor.

##### iii. Ells Kindergarten

Kindergarten eligible children currently assigned to the Ells PreK full day program are eligible to attend the Ells Kindergarten program. Additional spaces will be available for children currently attending the Ells PreK half day program. A lottery will be conducted when there are more requests than seats available.

##### iv. Ells First Grade

Kindergarten and First grade classrooms at ELLS are limited.. Children assigned to Ell Kindergarten are eligible to attend Ells first grade. A lottery will be conducted when there are more requests than seats available.

### **9. Alternative School Assignments**

Springfield High, Balliet Middle, Liberty Preparatory High, Gateway to College HCC Campus & STCC Campus and Early College High schools are alternative schools that provide at-risk youth the opportunity to matriculate in accordance with the standards and curriculum frameworks established for all SPS students. The programs provide a comprehensive array of services to support a student's remediation of issues that cause school failure. Students who enroll into the SPS from an alternative placement will be assigned directly to an alternative program. Referrals for documented at-risk students currently enrolled in a "traditional" SPS program must be submitted by a student's current school to the appropriate alternative program administrator for placement consideration.

### **10. Students of Concern Assignments (SOC)**

Students entering or returning to the SPS with a felony charge or conviction will be referred to the appropriate Student Assignment Services Administrator. A record of information voluntarily disclosed by the student, parent/guardian, and/or agency will be referred to the SOC team for appropriate placement.

## **11. Department of Youth Services (DYS) Assignments**

DYS students entering or returning to the SPS will be referred to the SOC team for appropriate placement

## **12. Documented Medical Assignments**

Documented medical assignments are issued for students whose parent/guardian provides written documentation from a licensed medical professional. The documentation must detail the student's medical needs and indicate how the student's assigned school cannot adequately accommodate these needs. These documents should be submitted to the 504 Designee at the student's assigned school. All documentation may be subject to an annual review and approval by authorized school department personnel.

## **13. Documented Legal Assignments**

Documented Legal assignments are issued to students when a parent/guardian provides official documentation to support a change of assignment.

Documentation **required for a legal transfer are:**

Police report

- Restraining or Harassment Prevention Order
- Court Orders
- Other supporting documentation (i.e.: school reports and medical reports)

All documented legal assignments are to go through the Student Assignment Services department.

## **14. International Foreign Exchange Assignments**

The SPS will accept a total of eight foreign exchange high school students in grades eleven or twelve from no more than four placement agencies on a first come, first serve basis. Students will be admitted tuition free for a period not to exceed one school year and must meet all registration requirements. International Foreign Exchange assignments are issued based upon space availability and on an equitable base.

## **15. METCO (Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity)**

Springfield residents who have children in grades kindergarten through twelve must complete an online registration for their children. Applicants must have an SPS student ID number in order to complete an online ballot to enter the lottery for the METCO Program. Springfield residents in grades kindergarten through twelve for the following academic year may apply to the METCO Program to attend school in a cooperating school district - Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, Hampden/Wilbraham, and Southwick/Tolland/Granville. All program costs and transportation are provided by the state. Online registrations are available each year to interested parents/guardians and students through the SPS website from February 1<sup>st</sup> through April 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **16. Massachusetts Schools of Choice (MSOC) Assignments**

The SPS allows eligible students from other communities to attend school in Springfield under MSOC. Currently, the SPS School Committee has decided to participate in MSOC

Preschool through grade twelve with thirty seats allocated for the program. Eligible students seeking an SPS assignment through this program are limited in choices to schools that have less than 95% enrollment at the requested grade level. Eligible students admitted to the SPS under MSOC will be allowed to remain in SPS through grade twelve.

## **17. Homeschool Assignments**

In accordance with state law, no child may begin a home school program prior to its review and approval by the School Committee or Superintendent (or designee).

Parents who choose to homeschool their children must submit in writing their intent to homeschool with an educational proposal to the SPS Office of Academics. The proposal must include:

- Description of the academic background, life experience and/or qualifications of those who will be instructing the child(ren), as they relate to the instructional program; and
- Description of the proposed curriculum (including each subjects' scope, major goals and objectives), and the schedule (including the number of hours of instruction; and Description of the educational materials and methods to be used; and
- Method of assessments to be used to ensure educational progress and attainment of minimum standards. An annual assessment of your child's progress is due June of each year.

## **18. SPS Employee Offspring Assignments**

Any student whose parent/guardian is an SPS employee is subject to the same assignment policies and procedures applicable to all SPS students, with the following exceptions:

- Student whose parent/legal guardian is employed by the SPS and resides in the City of Springfield may be allowed to attend the school where the parent/guardian is employed or any SPS school as long as the school is appropriate for the student's needs.
- The SPS employee must have legal custody of the student, and the student must reside at the same Springfield address as the SPS employee.
- The parent/guardian must be responsible for providing daily transportation to and from school.
- Enrollment at the requested grade level of the desired school must be below 95%.

If the parent/guardian separates employment with the SPS, they will have the following options:

- The student may stay at the assigned school for the remainder of the academic year, and the parent/guardian must continue to be responsible for daily transportation.
- At the conclusion of the academic year if parent/guardian still resides in Springfield, student will be assigned to boundary school if in grades K-8.

- If parent/guardian moves outside of Springfield during the academic year, then parent/guardian has two options:
  - Immediately apply for school of choice into Springfield. If Enrollment at the requested grade level of the desired school is below 95%, School of Choice will be granted.
  - Un-enroll student from SPS School and enroll in district parent/guardian now resides in.

### **19. Remainder of the Year Assignments**

Students holding boundary assignments who have moved outside of the boundary are given the option of staying in place for the remainder of the year only beginning the Monday following the February school vacation. Student’s attendance and tardies must be in good standing to grant a remainder of year assignment. Students will be reassigned to the appropriate boundary school for the next school year.

*Remainders of the Year Assignments* are contingent upon a parent/guardian’s signed agreement to supply daily and timely transportation for the student. If a school notifies the Student Assignment Services department that the parent is not providing daily and timely transportation, the assignment will be revoked and the student will be immediately reassigned to the appropriate boundary school.

### **20. Returning to Previously Attended High School Assignments**

Students who attended a SPS high school and left the district will be assigned back to the same school upon reentry to the SPS. Students who have been assigned to a high school but never entered or attended the assigned SPS high school, are not eligible to return to the previous assigned high school.

## **Wait List Policy**

It may not be possible to accommodate all school requests during the Magnet & High School Choice Process. When this occurs the following process is adhered to:

- Wait lists will be “generated” from applicants who are unsuccessful in obtaining first choice assignments.
- Applicants will be ranked according to random sequenced numbers utilized for the selection process.
- Additional students will be added to the wait list according to the documented date of a submitted *Magnet & High School Wait List Request* form.
- Additional Putnam applicants will be added to the Putnam wait list by date of application, if they meet the Putnam qualifying score.

- The Sibling Preference policy will be applied to the wait list and identified qualifying siblings will be placed on the wait list in front of other applicants by the date of submitted Magnet & High School Wait List Request Form.
- Applicants who remain on the wait list at the end of the academic year AND who have been promoted will remain on the wait list for the same school in the following year.
- Applicants who are RETAINED at the end of the academic year MUST reapply for the wait list. They will then be placed on the appropriate grade wait list according to the documented date of a submitted *Magnet & High School Wait List Request* form.
- Magnet and High School assignments will be made based on available space throughout the year.
- Putnam assignments will be made:
  - 9<sup>th</sup> Grade based on available space
  - 10<sup>th</sup> Grade through the first marking period only
  - No grade 11 or 12 assignments will be made into Putnam due to vocational programming and graduation requirements, unless the student is coming from a comprehensive Chapter 74 program, where they have demonstrated success.
- There will be NO TRANSFERS for 12<sup>th</sup> grade due to programming and graduation requirements.

**The Student Assignment Services department will accept Magnet & High School Wait List Forms when new Assignment Letters are generated and up until the online balloting process begins for entry grade levels at Magnet & High Schools. will accept Magnet & High School Wait List forms throughout the year for non-entry grade levels at the Magnet & High Schools.**

*Magnet and High School Wait List Request* forms are available at the Student Assignment Services department, in your student's school or on the Springfield Public Schools website, [www.sps.springfield.ma.us/pic/picforms](http://www.sps.springfield.ma.us/pic/picforms)

Non-Springfield Public School students must have a Springfield Public School ID number. If they do not currently have one, then they need to complete a short form registration at the Student Assignment Services department in order to request placement on a wait list. Please contact the Student Assignment Services department for additional information: 413-787-7276 or [www.sps.springfield.ma.us/pic](http://www.sps.springfield.ma.us/pic)

Students are removed from the wait list for the following reasons:

- The student is awarded an assignment to the wait list school.
- An assignment is offered to the wait list school but is refused by the parent.
- The parent requests that the student be removed from the wait list.
- The student is retained and no longer in the appropriate grade for the wait list.

- The student no longer is enrolled in any school in the district or at any school assigned by the district.
- Student Assignment Services department is unable to contact the parent at the phone numbers listed in the data base.

## Student Transportation Processes

Student school assignments and school transportation are closely aligned.

### 1. Massachusetts

State law provides that students who live within a school district's jurisdiction and attend any Department of Education approved school located within that jurisdiction, are entitled to no-cost transportation to and from school, if:

- They are required to attend school (i.e., they are between the ages of 6 and 17); and
- They are in **kindergarten through grade-6**; and
- They live **more than 2 miles** from the school that they attend.

### 2. Springfield Transportation Policy

The city of Springfield's transportation policy is more generous than the state's requirements.

- A. Springfield provides no-cost transportation in accordance with home-to-school walking distance rules for students in:
- **Grades K through 5** if the walking distance (as determined solely by the SPS Transportation Department) from their residence address to their assigned school site exceeds 1.5 miles.
  - **Gerena Montessori is a PK-5 school. Gerena Grades K through 5** if the walking distance (as determined solely by the SPS Transportation Department) from their residence address to their assigned school site exceeds 1.5 miles and the student has a magnet assignment.
  - **Zanetti Montessori is a PK-8 school. Zanetti Grades K through 5** if the walking distance (as determined solely by the SPS Transportation Department) from their residence address to their assigned school site exceeds 1.5 miles and the student is has a magnet assignment.  
**Zanetti Grades 6 through 8** if the walking distance (as determined solely by the SPS Transportation Department) from their residence address to their assigned school site exceeds 2 miles and the student has a magnet assignment.
  - **Grades 6 through 12** if the walking distance (as determined solely by the SPS Transportation Department) from their residence address to their assigned school site exceeds 2 miles.
- B. Springfield provides no-cost transportation outside the home-to-school



walking distance rules for students:

- With a transportation accommodation as outlined in an IEP, a 504-Plan, or a documented medical requirement,
- In Pre-school with IEPs that incorporate a transportation accommodation.

C. Springfield provides **NO transportation** regardless of home-to-school walking distance rule for the following student assignments:

- Pre-school Non SPED
- Former McKinney-Vento students who obtain permanent housing and choose a remainder of the year assignment. (As determined by the SPS McKinney-Vento Liaison.)
- Legacy
- Remainder of Academic Year
- School Choice Inside or Outside of Springfield
- METCO
- SPS Employee Offspring in grades Pre-K through 8
- Documented Legal Assignments Pre-K through 8
  - Exceptions to this rule will be determined at time of reassignment.

D. Pickup and Drop-off locations:

- A designated bus stop that is not more than one mile walking distance from the student's residence address.
- Door-to-door transportation from a student's residence address **ONLY**.
- Pre-K SPED (Special Education) transportation to and from an in-Springfield daycare provider address may be substituted for a Pre-K student's residence address. Transportation will be provided between the daycare address and the student's assigned Pre-K school. The SPS **will not** provide transportation to different inbound and outbound addresses; pickup and drop-off will **only** be provided to the same address.