

Enrollment in the school system generally is limited to those students who meet the domicile or residence requirements outlined in policy 4120, Domicile or Residence Requirements. However, on occasion, special circumstances may warrant a student's enrollment in a different school system. The board, in its discretion, may admit non-domiciled students into the school system and may release domiciled students to another school system in accordance with this policy.

All discretionary admissions decisions will be made in a manner that is not arbitrary, capricious, discriminatory, prohibited by state or federal law, or for personal or political reasons.

**A. ADMISSION CRITERIA**

The board may choose to admit a non-domiciled student only if the following conditions are met.

1. The parent, legal guardian, legal custodian, or other adult meeting the requirements of Board policy 4120, section C.6, explains in writing why, in the opinion of the parent, legal guardian or legal custodian, the student needs to attend school in the school system. An explanation of need will be considered valid grounds for discretionary admission only if there are compelling, specific circumstances indicating that the student should attend school in the school system.

Any reason having to do with athletics or participation in athletics is not a valid or sufficient explanation of need.

2. The Watauga County Board of Education (the "board") must have determined that space is available in the school system and in the particular school or program in which the student seeks to enroll.
3. The student must demonstrate that he or she was in good standing in the previous school attended by that student, in terms of academics, discipline, and other measures of standing and progress in the school system. The student also must satisfy the requirements in policy 4115, Behavior Standards for Transfer Students.
4. The student must furnish a transcript and other student record data, including evidence of compliance with the North Carolina immunization requirements.
5. If the student is transferring from another school system in North Carolina, the student must submit a release approved by the board of education of the school system from which the transfer is being made. If the student's discretionary admission request is granted, the admission will be subject to the terms and conditions agreed to in writing between the board and the board of education of the other school system.

6. If the student does not reside within the assignment area of the school the student will attend, the parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian must agree to provide transportation to and from school.
7. If the student is asserting residency in the geographic area served by the school system, sufficient evidence, such as a copy of utility bills, must be provided.
8. The parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian may be required to pay tuition.

## **B. DISCRETIONARY ADMISSION DECISIONS**

### **1. Application and Decision**

Non-domiciled students who meet the admission criteria may submit a written application for discretionary admission to the superintendent or designee. The application must be accompanied by all required supporting documents, as described above in Section A. Applications from students who are residents of the geographic area served by the school system will have first priority. After reviewing the application and supporting documents, the superintendent or designee shall make a recommendation to the board to approve or deny the discretionary admission request. The board may grant admission for up to one full school year. Students who are admitted based upon false or misleading information on their application will have their application voided and acceptance rescinded.

The board will provide a written response to an applicant within 30 working days of receipt of the information required under this policy. Final decisions regarding discretionary admissions may be delayed until the board has determined whether space is available in the requested school. Therefore, the written response may provide either a final decision or a notification that a final decision is pending until the board determines space availability.

### **2. Renewals**

An application must be submitted each subsequent school year in which admission is desired. For the renewal of admission in subsequent school years, the student must continue to meet all admission criteria and be in good standing in terms of academics, attendance, and discipline.

## **C. RELEASE TO ANOTHER SCHOOL SYSTEM**

A student domiciled in the school system may request a release from the board to attend a school in a different school system in North Carolina. The student must have both approval of the board to release the student and approval of the receiving board of education to admit the student. The decision whether to admit the student is made under the policies of the receiving board of education.

The superintendent or designee may develop and administer a procedure to implement this policy.

Legal References: G.S. 7B, art. 35; 35A, art. 6; 50-13.1 to 13.3; 115C-47(68), -231, -364 to -366.1

Cross References: Behavior Standards for Transfer Students (policy 4115), Domicile or Residence Requirements (policy 4120)

Adopted: April 13, 2015

Replaces: Policy 5.02.60, Tuition for Discretionary Admission (in part)

Revised: May 8, 2023; December 11, 2023 (Legal references only)