



## CPS Guidelines for High School Transfers

**Overview:** These guidelines codify and memorialize current best practices and policies for supporting high school students who are transferring. Section II, outlines newly created guidelines and policy regarding Options School transfers.

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### I. Best Practices For High School Transfers

CPS is committed to having strong, culturally relevant instructional cores, post-secondary preparation, social emotional learning, and mental health support in every traditional school (*defined as all charter, selective enrollment, and neighborhood high schools that serve 9-12th graders*). Via intentional teaming structures and robust MTSS processes, traditional schools should continuously be proactively identifying students who are in need of additional academic, attendance, behavior and/or re-engagement support. Through school interventions, the support of community partners, as well as the district (i.e. Office of Safety and Security, Office of Student Support and Engagement), traditional high schools are able to support the vast majority of their students in staying on track and engaged in a traditional high school.

If a student or parent determines that they would best be served by another traditional high school, the following process should be followed:

- 1) The school should meet with the student and parent/guardian to discuss the transition including:
  - a) Reason for requesting the transfer.
  - b) As applicable, review all interventions and supports that have been provided to the student at their current school with the aim of identifying if additional interventions/supports would help solve any of the root causes of why the student/family want to transfer.
- 2) The school should ensure all necessary contact information for the parent/student is updated in Aspen.
- 3) The sending school must gather all necessary documents needed for transfer including the student's academic transcript, current grades, attendance record, IEP/504 (if applicable), and immunization records which will be sent to the receiving school upon transfer.
- 4) The transfer documents should be sent to the receiving school, along with any additional information that may be helpful in the receiving school being able to best support the student.
- 5) A student's IEP or 504 plan should be finalized and in compliance before they transfer.
- 6) The receiving school should work with the student, family, and sending school to schedule an enrollment and orientation meeting within 24 business hours of the student being released from their prior school.
  - a) The student will need to provide all necessary documents needed to enroll (i.e. proof of age, proof of address, proof of guardianship, etc.)
  - b) The student, parent/guardian, and school should discuss specific supports the student may want and need in order to successfully acclimate and experience success at the new school.



- 7) The receiving school should provide additional onboarding and support of the student during their first semester at the new school. Examples of this may be mentoring or regular progress monitoring of the student by a counselor or other school staff member.
- 8) Students and parents must adhere to all rules and regulations regarding enrollment/admission into magnet, selective enrollment and neighborhood schools as outlined in the Enrollment and Transfers of Students in the Chicago Public Schools Policy Manual.

## II. Process for Transferring Students to an Options School

### **Overview**

For students who are not on track and/or engaged in a traditional high school, despite proactive and supportive interventions from the school, and for whom another traditional high school will not provide adequate support; the district offers a portfolio of Options Schools. Options Schools are primarily intended to:

- Re-engage older students (16+) who are not currently enrolled in school, particularly students who need a significant number of credits to graduate high school.
- Support students who have become off track and, even with moderate credit recovery (i.e. summer school, night school), will not be able to earn enough credits in a traditional high school setting to graduate within 4 years of when they were a freshman.
- Support students who need small classroom/school size and individualized support in order to graduate high school.
- Support students who will only be able to graduate high school with a non-traditional school day schedule.

To best meet the needs of this subset of students, there are a variety of Options School programs and offerings which include:

- Accelerated credit recovery
- Self-paced, computerized instruction so that students can recover credit at their own pace
- Flexible schedules (i.e. part day programs)
- Simpson Academy for pregnant and parenting mothers

Transferring to an Options School is a choice; students always have the right to choose to stay at their current school or choose another school that they feel better meets their needs. Parents have the right to select an Options School for their student, regardless of the student's circumstances, however, the guidelines below must be followed.

If a student/family arrives at an Options School seeking enrollment:

- For students not currently enrolled in a traditional high school; the Options School may immediately enroll the student (with the exception of 14/15 YO asking to enroll in ALOPs, for whom the process outlined in Section III must be followed).
- For students currently enrolled at a traditional high school, the high school must be contacted by the student/parent/Options School so that the traditional high school can request to transfer the student to an Options School.

### **Process for transferring a currently enrolled CPS student to an Options School:**

1. A student who is currently enrolled at a CPS high school may only be transferred to an Options School if approval is given from the Network.
2. In cases where the traditional school is initiating the transfer or if the student/family comes to the traditional school to initiate the transfer, the traditional school must submit an Options Transfer Request via the journal feature in Aspen in order to get approval from the Network. The Options Transfer Request will ask the school to identify the reason for the student's transfer, attempted interventions, as well as the party who initiated the transfer.



- The Network should approve any requests to transfer initiated by the student/family.
3. In the event that a currently enrolled student or parent goes directly to an Options School to enroll. The Options School must contact the appropriate Network designee to request a transfer. The Network designee will communicate with the traditional school, withdraw the student in Aspen and provide all transfer documents.
  4. Within 24 hours, the Network must review the request, follow up with the student/school if needed and based on the student's unique circumstances either approve or deny the transfer recommendation.
  5. If the recommendation is approved, the requesting (sending) school must meet with the parent/guardian and student to ensure:
    - The parent/guardian understands that transferring to an Options School is a choice, not a requirement and reviews the reason that the transfer is being recommended.
    - As applicable, review all interventions and supports that have been provided to the student at their current school with the aim of identifying if additional interventions/supports would help solve any of the root causes of why the student/family is being recommended or requesting to transfer.
    - The student and parent will be provided transparent and objective information about the Options Schools models and campuses in order to make an informed decision to find the best fit for the student.
    - The sending school assists the parent/guardian and student in 1) arranging an in-person, virtual or phone meeting with the Options School to ensure it is the best fit; and 2) ensure parents know all necessary documents needed for enrollment.
    - All necessary contact information for the parent/student is updated in Aspen.
    - The parent signs off acknowledging receipt of the information and is in agreement that it is in the best interest of their student to transfer the student to an Options School.
    - If the sending school is unable to reach the parent, the school must 1) document all attempts to reach the parent and 2) the school should ensure the student is in support of transferring to an Options School and should receive all of the necessary information described above.
  6. If the recommendation is denied, the Network will work with the school, student and family to develop a support and intervention plan for the student. The school will meet with the parent to complete the support and intervention plan within 2 weeks of receiving the network decision.  
[Student Support & Intervention Plan](#)
  7. Within one week of when the parent/guardian/student consents to the transfer, the sending school must gather all necessary documents needed for transfer including, but not limited to, transcript, current grades, attendance record, IEP/504 (if applicable), and immunization records which will be sent to the Options School upon transfer.
  8. Once the enrollment appointment is scheduled, the transfer documents are sent to the receiving school, and the sending school has received an acceptance letter from the receiving school, the sending school may officially "transfer" the student in Aspen utilizing code 36 - Transfer to an Options School.
  9. A student's IEP or 504 plan must be finalized and in compliance in order for the Options Transfer Request to be approved.
  10. The Options School should work with the student, family, and sending school to schedule an enrollment and orientation meeting within 24 business hours of the student being released from their prior school.
    - The student will need to provide all necessary documents needed to enroll (i.e. proof of age, proof of guardianship)
    - The student, parent/guardian, and school should discuss specific supports the student may want and need in order to successfully acclimate and experience success at the new school.



11. The Options school should provide additional onboarding and support of the student during their first semester at the new school. Examples of this may be mentoring or regular progress monitoring of the student by a counselor or other school staff member.

### III. Guidelines for 14/15 Year Olds Transferring to and/or Enrolling in an ALOP School

Alternative Opportunity Learning Programs (ALOP) are a specific type of Options School managed by independent operators designed to provide educational support for students who face challenges to successfully graduating from a traditional high school. Any school, student or family requesting for a 14/15 year old to enroll in an ALOP school must adhere to the following *guidelines*:

1. The student must speak with their current school counselor. The school must have documentation that all supports and interventions that would benefit the student have been attempted. Should the school, student, and parent agree an ALOP school is the best fit, the school should [complete the steps on this checklist](#) which includes completing the [14/15 YO ALOP Enrollment Request Form](#)

If the student is not currently enrolled in school, SOAR will work with the student to determine if an ALOP is the best fit for the student and if yes, SOAR will complete the [14/15 YO ALOP Enrollment Request Form](#)

If a student currently enrolled at a traditional High School tries to enroll directly in an ALOP, the ALOP should complete the [14/15 YO ALOP Enrollment Notification Form](#) to notify the Network Transition Specialist of the student's intent to transfer; they may not directly enroll the student.

2. Within 5 school days of the request, the Transition Specialist will
  - Conduct an interview with the parent/guardian and the current school to gather information about:
    - Whether or not the current school is unable to provide the support, services or learning environment needed for the student to be successful.
    - Whether or not a transfer to an ALOP will be in the student's best interest.
  - Consult with subject matter experts from various departments including ODLSS, OSEL, I&I and Student Outreach and Re-Engagement (SOAR).
  - Make a recommendation to the Network Chief/Executive Director of I&I regarding approval or denial of the transfer. The Network Chief/Executive Director of I&I will make the final determination regarding the student's placement.
3. Within 24 hours of the Network Chief/Executive Director of I&I's decision, the Transition Specialist will inform the student and their parent/guardian of the decision.
  - If approved, the Transition Specialist will connect the student's current school and ALOP campus for collective completion of the [Student Success Plan](#) with the goal of having the student enrolled at the ALOP campus within 3 school days of the decision.
  - If denied, the Transition Specialist will provide additional support to the current school in implementing interventions and creating a learning environment where the student will be successful.
4. For approved students, the Transition Specialist will conduct check-ins every 5 weeks on the student during their first 15 weeks to ensure they are remaining on track, receiving the support they need, and that their Success Plan is being implemented with fidelity.

### IV. Enrollment of Students in Detention Centers

CPS is committed to creating processes and structures that support our students involved in the justice system. Any student who has become detained and enrolled at Nancy B. Jefferson HS (NBJ) or York HS retains the right to return to their home school as defined by the school where they were actively enrolled prior



to detention. No student shall lose their seat at a selective enrollment, magnet, military or school by virtue of enrollment at NBJ or York. Per the Illinois Charter Schools Law, students previously enrolled in a Charter school are entitled to immediate re-enrollment upon release from NBJ or York without needing to re-apply unless expelled for cause. The only exceptions to a student's right to continue at their home school are the same as for any student--i.e. cases of approved emergency placement, network safety/disciplinary transfer, or CPS expulsion.

Students are always encouraged to return to their home school with the intent of maintaining stability and continuity in their educational environment. However, the Juvenile Justice (JJ) Team is dedicated to open communication with the student, family, school and the network to determine the best fit school where the student will be the most successful. The JJ team will communicate with the identified best-fit school to ensure they are prepared to receive and welcome the student. Any student who is returning to their home school upon release from NBJ must be re-enrolled by the home school within 2 school days of release. Schools are expressly prohibited from requiring any documentation for students returning to their home school from NBJ (including enrollment documentation that is required of a new student i.e. proof of address, proof of guardianship, proof of age) and from requiring any additional activity or agreement on the part of the parent or student. Rather, schools are to immediately re-enroll the student to ensure minimal disruption to the student's access to education. Restorative re-entry processes--including the completion of re-entry conferences and/or circles for returning students--is best practice and will be supported by the JJ team; however, they do not need to precede re-enrollment, and may not be required as a condition of re-enrollment.

Students who were not previously actively enrolled in a CPS school and students who are not returning to their home school must adhere to all rules and regulations regarding eligibility for enrollment/admission into magnet, selective enrollment, neighborhood and Options Schools as outlined in the Enrollment and Transfers of Students section in the Chicago Public Schools Policy Manual. In these cases, the family would need to provide all documentation required of a new student (i.e. proof of address, proof of guardianship, proof of age) to the school.

The Juvenile Justice (JJ) team will be responsible for the following communication with the school:

- The re-entry process expectations and plans for supporting the student upon reinstatement in their home school or enrollment in a new school.
- Scheduled court dates and preparation for possible release.
- Confirmation of the student's eligible release, their identification as the best school placement, and timeline for enrollment.
- JJ team will ensure schools have access to students' NBJ grades-in-progress, and all available contact information.

The network within which the school resides will be included in placement notification communications between the JJ team and the school. The Executive Director of Network Support will be included in placement notification communications for ISP schools.

- In the event that the school refuses to reinstate/enroll the student, the final decision will be made through a collaboration between the JJ team (Office of Student Support and Engagement) and the Network Chief.
  - The school law department will be consulted in cases of disagreement regarding student placement between the JJ team and the Network Chief.
- If deemed necessary for the student's best interest and to safeguard the student's right to continuous enrollment, the JJ team reserves the right to manually enroll the student in their home school. Circumstances that would necessitate this include, but are not limited to:
  - School unresponsiveness and delay beyond the mandated re-enrollment period.
  - The school refuses to enroll a student in opposition of the final decision made by the network and the JJ team.
  - The school requires documentation or activity on the part of the student or family as a condition of enrollment beyond what has been established in these guidelines.