

Policy 5006: Option Enrollment

A. Process and Time Lines to Option In

For a student to attend Cozad Community Schools as an option enrollment student, the student's parent or legal guardian must submit an application to the Board of Education of Cozad Community Schools between September 1 and March 15 for enrollment during the following and subsequent school years (the "application period"). In the event a student relocates from the Cozad Community Schools District to a different school district and wishes to attend Cozad Community Schools as an option student, the application period is within thirty (30) days after the relocation. In the event the Cozad Community Schools District merges with another school district and a student wishes to attend Cozad Community Schools as an option student, the application period is within thirty (30) days after the effective date of the merger.

Upon receipt of an application, the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall provide the resident school district with the name of the applicant on or before April 1 or, in the case of an application submitted after March 15, within sixty days after submission.

Provisions for Waiver of Application Deadline

The application deadline will not be waived by the School Board for applications to option into the Cozad Community Schools District, except in the following circumstances:

1. Siblings: The application deadline will be waived where the application is for a student who is the sibling of a student attending [Name] Public Schools as of the time the application is filed, provided the application is filed at least 30 days prior to the semester in which first enrollment is sought. A "sibling" for this purpose means a child who resides in the same household on a permanent basis with a student who is currently attending [Name] Public Schools and who has the same natural or adoptive parent or who is a stepbrother or stepsister.
2. Kindergarten: The application deadline will be waived where the application is for a student who is seeking to enroll and attend the Kindergarten grade level provided the application was filed on or before June 1 prior to the first semester of the next school year.
3. Release Approval: For the foregoing exceptions, the application must contain a release approval from the resident district.
4. Other Conditions: The waiver of the deadline in the above circumstances does not require acceptance of the application, as such applications may be rejected for reasons other than late filing.
5. Capacity: For the foregoing exceptions, the application deadline shall not be waived if the application is for enrollment in any program, class, grade level or school building or in any special education programs operated by this School District which have been determined by the School Board to be at capacity in accordance with the capacity standards (Appendix "1"), and no waiver of the deadline shall be made for such an application regardless of whether such capacity determinations are declared invalid for any reason.
6. Capacity for Late Filed Applications: Where an application is filed for enrollment in the same school year in which enrollment is sought, the "projected enrollment" determinations made

pursuant to paragraph D shall be replaced with the “actual enrollment” as of the first day of school for the year of application, as determined by the Superintendent or the Superintendent’s designee, but only in the event such actual enrollment is higher than the projected enrollment. Actual enrollment shall include all students in attendance and all students registered to attend (even if not in actual attendance on the first day).

B. Rejection of Applications; Reasons

1. Capacity: An option enrollment application shall be rejected in the event the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or school building or the availability of appropriate special education programs operated by the School District would be exceeded by acceptance of the application, and an option enrollment application shall be rejected in the event the application is for enrollment in a program, class, grade level, or school building which has been declared unavailable to option students due to lack of capacity.
2. Timeliness: An option enrollment application shall be rejected in the event the application is not filed on a timely basis and the filing deadline has not been waived.
3. Previous Option Enrollment: An option enrollment application shall be rejected in the event the student has previously filed an option enrollment application for enrollment in any School District and has had such application accepted, unless a statutory exception to the “one-time” rule is applicable to the student’s circumstance.
4. Other Reasons: An option enrollment application may be rejected in the event the Superintendent, the Superintendent’s designee, or the School Board determines: The application is not submitted on a form prescribed by the State Department of Education, is not completely and accurately filled in, is not received within the time required by law, or any additional information requested to be supplied is not supplied to the School District within the time lines indicated; or in the event acceptance of the application is not required by law. Matters which are legally prohibited from being considered as standards for acceptance or rejection of applications (including “previous academic achievement, athletic or extracurricular ability, disabilities, proficiency in the English language, or previous disciplinary proceedings” and further including, without limitation, race, national origin, and gender) shall not be considered as reasons for acceptance or rejection.

C. Priority of Acceptance

Priority shall be accorded in the following order: (1) first, to those applications required to be given priority by law, (2) second, to those with a sibling in attendance at [Name] Public Schools, with priority within this group being given to those who had earliest filed applications, and (3) third to those without an option student sibling in attendance at [Name] Public Schools, with priority to those within this group to those who had earliest filed applications.

Filing date determinations are made by the Superintendent, or the Superintendent’s designee. In the event applications within a group are received at the same or substantially the same time, priority as between such same-date applications shall be determined on the basis of random drawing.

D. Determination of Capacity

The School Board will determine and set, on an annual basis, the maximum number of option enrollment applications the School District will accept in any program, class, grade level or school building or in any special education programs operated by this School District, based upon available

staff, facilities, projected enrollment of resident students, projected number of students with which this School District will contract based on existing contractual arrangements, and availability of appropriate special education programs, and may declare a program, class or school unavailable to option students due to lack of capacity. Such determinations may be made in the form of an Appendix "1" to this Policy. The determination and declaration made for any school year shall continue in effect for the next and subsequent school years unless otherwise determined and/or declared.

E. Releases for Options Out

A request for release of a resident student of the Cozad Community Schools District who submits an enrollment option application after March 15 or any other statutory deadline will be granted only on the following conditions:

1. Kindergarten: A release will be granted where the application is for a student who is seeking to enroll and attend the Kindergarten grade level provided the application was filed on or before June 1 prior to the first semester of the next school year.
2. Siblings: A release will be granted where the application would allow the student to attend the same school as a sibling, provided the application is filed at least 30 days prior to the semester in which first enrollment is sought. A "sibling" for this purpose means a child who resides in the same household on a permanent basis with a student who is currently enrolled in the option district and who has the same natural or adoptive parent or who is a stepbrother or stepsister.
3. Educational Programming: A release will be granted where the needs of the student require the District to obtain additional staffing or equipment and it is in the best interests of the District and the student to enroll in the option district. The determination of whether this condition is met shall be made by the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.
4. No Pending Expulsion: The deadline shall not be waived if the administration is considering or has recommended expulsion of the student at the time the application is filed, and the administration determines it is appropriate to complete the expulsion process.

The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee is hereby authorized to execute such releases on behalf of the School Board and the School District, subject to subsequent ratification by the School Board.

F. Notification of Acceptance or Rejection

In the case of an application to option enroll into the Cozad Community Schools District, the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall notify, in writing, the parent or legal guardian of the student, and the resident school district whether the application is accepted or rejected on or before April 1 or, in the case of an application submitted after March 15, within sixty days after submission.

If an option enrollment application or a request for release is rejected by the Cozad Community Schools District, the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall provide written notification to the parent or guardian stating the reasons for the rejection and the process for appealing such rejection to the State Board of Education. Such notification shall be sent by certified mail.

G. Applications Subsequent to Relocations or Mergers

An option enrollment application does not require a release and shall be accepted or rejected within forty-five days after filing in the following circumstances:

1. the student relocated to a different resident school district after February 1, or
2. the student's option school district merged with another district effective after February 1, and
3. the application is for attendance during the immediately following and subsequent school years.

H. Status of Option Student

A student who is admitted under the enrollment option program shall be treated as a resident student, and in such regard shall be required to provide such enrollment information and documentation as is required for enrollment of other students (e.g., certified birth certificate and evidence of physical examination, visual evaluation and immunization), shall be required to be enrolled on a full-time basis, and shall be required to adhere to student conduct rules. The building assignment for an option student, as well as classroom and grade level assignments, shall be determined by the administration.

An option student shall not be entitled to transportation except as required by law.

Transportation or transportation reimbursement will be provided in the following circumstances:

1. The Cozad Community Schools District may, upon mutual agreement with the parent or legal guardian of an option student, provide transportation to the option student on the same basis as provided for resident students. The school district may charge the parents of each option student transported a fee sufficient to recover the additional costs of such transportation.
2. Option students who qualify for free lunches are eligible for either free transportation or transportation reimbursement from the option school district.
3. For option students receiving special education services, the transportation services required in the student's Individualized Education Plan shall be provided by the resident school district.

I. Information Regarding Schools, Programs, Policies and Procedures.

As part of the option enrollment program, the administration shall make information about the Cozad Community Schools and its school, programs, policies and procedures available to all interested persons and shall have a copy of the option enrollment policy and regulations available at each school building.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 79-232 to 79-246

Adopted 6/1/97 Updated 12/8/98 Updated 10/11/04 Updated 10/14/ 09
Updated 2/15/2010 Adopted 9/19/2013 Revised 9/14/16