



Hernando School District

School Board Workshop

Agenda - Final

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

2:00 PM

District Office-Board Room
919 N. Broad Street
Brooksville, FL 34601

CALL TO ORDER

PRESENTATIONS

1. [26-3170](#) Review and tentative approval of the 2026-2027 Magnet Program Procedures

Attachments: [2026-2027 Outline of Revisions](#)
[2026-2027 Magnet Program Procedures Strikethrough Copy](#)
[2026-2027 Magnet Program Procedures Clean Copy](#)
[Budget Sheet](#)

2. [26-3171](#) Review and tentative approval of the 2026-2027 Controlled Choice Plan

Attachments: [2026-2027 Controlled Choice Plan Outline of Revisions](#)
[2026-2027 Controlled Choice Plan Strikethrough copy](#)
[2026-2027 Controlled Choice Plan Clean Copy](#)
[Budget Sheet](#)

GENERAL COUNSEL

ADDENDUM ITEMS

GOOD OF THE ORDER/BOARD DISCUSSION

School Board Comments

ADJOURNMENT

The next School Board Meetings are scheduled for August 26, 2025:

2:00 PM - Workshop

6:00 PM - Regular Meeting

Mission Statement

The Hernando County School District Collaborates with students, parents and other community stakeholders to effectively prepare all students for a successful transition into a diverse and changing world.



Hernando School District

School Board Workshop

Agenda Item # 1. 26-3170

8/12/2025

Title and Board Action Requested

Review and tentative approval of the 2026-2027 Magnet Program Procedures

Executive Summary

The Supervisor of School Choice, on behalf of the Superintendent of Schools, hereby requests the Board to review and grant tentative approval for the 2026-2027 Magnet Program Procedures for the 2026-2027 Magnet Lottery.

My Contact

Dawn Williams
Supervisor of School Choice
352-797-7026 ext. 70448

2023-28 Strategic Focus Area

Priority 4: Community Connection

Financial Impact

The cost of this agenda item is \$0, see attached budget sheet. The cost for the previous year was \$0.

If expenditure is not currently budgeted, this will serve as the budget amendment when Board approved. If the agenda item includes the purchase of goods or services, the funds requested are an anticipated amount and may fluctuate depending on such factors as current market conditions, product availability, additional funding sources, and the needs of the District. Should the actual cost exceed the anticipated amount, the Board approves the additional cost, after review by the superintendent, but not in excess of the funds available in the site's approved annual budget.

2026/2027 Magnet Program Procedures Outline of Changes

Updated all the dates to reflect the 2025-2026 school year.

Updated Matt Goldrick's job title.

Added a footer indicating that school boundaries may change due to School Board action.

Hernando County School District

Magnet Program Procedures ~~2026-2027~~²⁰²⁵⁻



~~2026~~

Definitions:

For the purposes of this document, the following terms apply:

- “Lottery system” refers to the computer program that handles the lottery.
- “Staff’s child” refers to the child of the person who is employed with the Hernando County School Board and whose sole employment is at the school of application.
- “Committee” refers to the Portfolio and Audition Committee composed of a representative from the Department of Academic Services, the school, and when possible a volunteer from the community.
- Residency shall be defined as the home for which the parent/guardian files homestead exemption, leases or rents, and lives in the residence on a full-time basis.

Application Procedures: (Refer to page 8 for the timeline)

Chocachatti, Challenger, and Nature Coast Technical High School applicants will complete an *online application. Chocachatti and Challenger applicants wishing to also apply by portfolio must submit the portfolio at the designated location by the deadline. Parents without a computer or Internet access may seek assistance from their nearest school, public library, or District Office.

1. An application is required for:
 - a. A student wishing to submit a portfolio;
 - b. A student wishing to participate in the lottery;
 - c. A student who is a child of staff at the school of application.
2. There will be one application per student per school.

*Parents must create an account at [Hernandoschools.schoolmint.net](https://hernandoschools.schoolmint.net).

**Parents who do not receive a confirmation email and/or text message should resubmit

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their application.

3. Applicants for kindergarten must have attained the age of 5 years on or before September 1st of the school year for which they are applying. Applicants for 1st grade must have attained the age of 6 years on or before September 1st of the school year for which they are applying (per FS 1003.21).
4. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of selected applicants must provide proof of full-time residence at the time of enrollment at the school. (Please refer to Hernando County's Registrar Manual.) Residents of Hernando County are given preference for admission pursuant to F.S. 1002.31.
5. Portfolios for Challenger and Chocachatti must be submitted at the designated location on the dates and times established by the Superintendent (see page 8). A random identifier number will be assigned to each portfolio submitted.

Application Period:

Refer to the timeline on page 8.

Continuity of a Magnet Program Enrollment:

1. Enrollment at a school outside of your attendance zone is a privilege. Once approved, it will continue as long as the student's attendance, conduct, and scholarship are satisfactory. In accordance with the District's Choice Plan (page 4 of Controlled Choice Plan), the decision to rescind a School Choice approval requires discussion with the parent and the school administration, and between the administration and the Supervisor of School Choice. A student whose reassignment has been rescinded by the principal will return to his/her zoned school the following year.
2. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of each magnet program student must certify his/her residency in Hernando County each year before the start of school on the Intent to Return Form. If the student's county of residence has changed, and a resident of Hernando County is on the wait list for the seat, the out-of-county student's seat will be rescinded. Families are encouraged to immediately notify the school in the event that there is an address change.
3. Children of staff members who voluntarily leave or transfer are withdrawn at the end of that school year unless a waiver is obtained due to special circumstances via the District Hardship Committee. This will not apply to staff children who are admitted by portfolio or lottery.
4. Enrollment in the magnet program will be terminated if:
 - a. False information was provided on the application form;
 - b. Parent/Guardian fails to provide residency certification, which is stated on the Intent to Return form;

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- c. The student withdraws from the school. This includes enrollment in full-time online courses, or programs available at the school of choice.
5. The school board retains the right to consider appeals if a student's seat has been rescinded for attendance, repeated violations of the Student Code of Conduct, and/or scholarship. The procedure for requesting an appeal is to contact the Supervisor of School Choice. The Supervisor of School Choice will explain what will be needed from the parent(s)/guardian(s) based on the reason for the appeal. Upon receipt of the appeal documentation, the Supervisor of School Choice will convene the Appeal Committee to review the appeal documentation. The members of the Appeal Committee are the Executive Director of Student Support Services, the Director of Student Services, and the Supervisor of School Choice. The decision of the Appeal Committee shall be provided in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student.
 - a. If a parent(s)/guardian(s) does not agree with the Committee's decision to revoke magnet school attendance, they must provide a written appeal within ten (10) calendar days of the receipt of the Appeal Committee's decision with supporting documentation (e.g., legal, medical) to the Supervisor of School Choice.
 - b. The Supervisor of School Choice will forward the appeal and the original denial paperwork to the Executive Director of Student Support Services for distribution to the Superintendent and Board.
 - c. The Board shall have a hearing within thirty (30) business days to consider the appeal, which at the parent(s)/guardian(s) election shall be closed to the public to protect student privacy information.
 - d. A decision shall be made by the Board and communicated in writing to the Superintendent, the Executive Director of Student Support Services, the Supervisor of School Choice, and the parent(s)/guardian(s).
 - e. If an appeal is granted, the student will be subject to the provisions of the Magnet policies, Under Continuity of Magnet Program Enrollment, for conditions of continued attendance.

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Preference for Selection:

1. The order of preference is as follows:
 - a. Children living within the designated school zone (Nature Coast Technical High School);
 - b. Dependent children of: active duty military personnel; members or veterans of the uniformed services who are severely injured *and* medically discharged or retired for a period of one year after military discharge or retirement; members of the uniformed armed services who die on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty, for a period of one year after death **with an application within the application period**. Eligible children not placed by lottery or portfolio procedures will be placed at the top of the lottery waiting list (per FS 1000.36 and 1003.05);
 - c. Children of staff at the school;
 - d. Portfolios/auditions (according to the Board's established percentages)*;
 - e. Lottery*

**Effective July 1, 2023, HB 633, in part, amends section 1003.05, Florida Statutes, to require dependent children of active-duty military personnel who meet eligibility criteria for special academic programs offered through public schools to be enrolled in such a program if the student's parent is transferred to the state during the school year.*

The bill also provided that a student whose parent is on active duty and is transferred within the state after the controlled open enrollment window may enroll in any school within the state.

**Pursuant to F.S. 1002.31, non-residents of Hernando County cannot displace Hernando County residents. As such, students not residing in Hernando County will be moved to the bottom of the waiting list for admissions.*

2. The Board may require that the school grant preferences to students who apply from schools that exceed instructional capacity.
3. If an application is submitted and the student is accepted and the child is retained, and there is no opening at that grade level, then he/she will be placed at the top of the waiting list immediately following students designated as eligible for military preference for the school year in which the application was made.
4. If you apply for children who are designated as multiples (e.g., twins, triplets) and all of the children are not placed via lottery or portfolio, the other child/children will

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be placed on the wait list immediately following students designated as eligible for military preference. Applications during the application period for each child are required in order to claim multiples' preference.

Selection Procedures:

1. Portfolios and Auditions:

- a. Each school with a magnet program will post an orientation presentation on each of their websites.
- b. Portfolios shall not include the student's name or any identifying information other than photographs and/or videos related to the application process. All portfolios will be assigned an individual number when submitted.
- c. Established selection percentages are the following for each school:
Chocachatti – 70% lottery and 30% portfolio/auditions
Challenger K-8 – 70% lottery and 30% portfolio
Nature Coast Technical High School – 100% lottery for non-zoned students.
- d. Portfolio and audition specifications will be provided by the schools in their orientation presentations posted on their school's websites in October/November. The portfolio process will be different for each school based on the programs of the school, but in all cases the Division of Teaching and Learning staff will direct and coordinate the process.
 - i. Portfolios for Chocachatti Elementary School may include a recorded media audition or an art portfolio as specified in the online presentation. These auditions/portfolios will be reviewed and scored by representatives from the Fine Arts Department at the school under the direction of the Supervisor of School Choice. Students will then be accepted based on their final score and availability at the respective grade level.
 - ii. Portfolios for Challenger will include a collection portfolio for Kindergarten and first grade and a written portfolio for grades 2-8 as specified in the online presentation. These portfolios will be reviewed and scored by representatives from the school under the direction of the Supervisor of School Choice. Students will then be accepted based on their final score and availability at the respective grade level.
 - iii. There will be no portfolios for Nature Coast Technical High School. Students living outside of the school zone will be selected via lottery.
- e. Final decisions on which students will be accepted by portfolio for each program will be made by a School Portfolio Committee under the direction of the Supervisor of School Choice. The committee will include the Principal or designee; staff from the school; volunteers and/or retired educators from the

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community; and the Supervisor of School Choice.

- f. Portfolio ratings are assigned by the committee. Applicants are placed by the committee according to their rating and will be marked accepted in the lottery system before the lottery is run.
- g. Portfolio applicants not selected will be automatically placed in the lottery.

Portfolios submitted for Chocachatti and Challenger K-8 can be picked up by the end of the first year. Portfolios must be picked up by the parent before July 1, ~~2026~~~~2026~~ or they become the property of the Hernando County School Board

and may be destroyed in accordance with Board policy and Florida law.

2. Lottery System:

- a. The lottery system will not operate to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability/exceptionality, history in alternative education settings, or free-lunch status.
- b. Lotteries for all schools will have the same rules.
- c. Lotteries for Nature Coast, Chocachatti, and Challenger will be drawn during the month of December.
- d. The computerized lottery system will fill openings in random number order. At the high school level, all efforts will be made to give students their first program choice.
- e. Selected applicants for whom there is no opening are placed on a waiting list.
- f. Notification to selected applicants will be made through email and/or text message. Parents will need to accept or decline via their SchoolMint account. (Refer to page 8 for timeline.)

3. Waiting List:

- a. The District will maintain a waiting list of students who applied, but were not selected, for future vacancies. As vacancies occur, the school will select students from the waiting list by grade level and/or program in the order in which they appear.
- b. Students that have accepted a seat in the ~~2026-2027~~~~2024-2025~~ lottery will be removed from all other magnet program waiting lists for the ~~2026-2027~~~~2024-2025~~ school year.
- c. The ~~2026-2027~~~~2024-2025~~ waitlist for the ~~2024-2025~~ school year will expire on the last Friday in March 202~~7~~~~5~~.

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- d. The waiting list will be the only source of admission after the lottery.
- e. Waiting lists are only kept for the current school year. Any student remaining on a waiting list not selected must re-apply if they wish to be considered for the following school year.

Enrollment/Withdrawal Procedures:

1. The parent(s)/guardian(s) must accept placement within five (5) working days of notification or they will forfeit their seat. (Refer to page 8 for the timeline.)
2. During the school year, students selected from the waiting list have up to five (5) working days to accept placement and complete enrollment or they will forfeit the seat.
3. A student who does not enter/attend the magnet program within five (5) working days of the start of the school year will be withdrawn unless there is a documented hardship for delayed enrollment.
4. Students who withdraw and enroll in other options (e.g., private school, home education, virtual school) and then wish to re-enroll into a Hernando County public school will return to their zoned school. Students who withdraw and enter their zoned school or another school of choice and then wish to re-enroll in a Magnet school are subject to the next available application period. In accordance with FHSA rules and state statutes, students returning to their zoned school for any reason are ineligible to participate in a sport that is already in season.

* Magnet schools are exempt from school choice hardship requests. The only way into Chocachatti and Challenger K8 is through portfolio or lottery. The only way into Nature Coast Technical High School is through the lottery or if a student lives in the Board approved school attendance zone.

Promoting Parent Involvement:

1. The parent(s)/guardian(s) at Chocachatti and Challenger will be required to volunteer a minimum of 8 hours. If the commitment is not met before the last grading period, the parent or guardian must meet with an administrator or his/her designee to agree on a necessary plan of action.
2. There is a mandatory nominal fee for a safety and security background check for all school volunteers.

Transportation:

Limited transportation options are available for students accepted into magnet programs.

Area bus stops for Hernando County Students are designed to service as many students as possible with a minimum number of stops. Therefore, bus stops may be further than 1.5 miles from the students' residences. It may be necessary for parents to transport their child to and from their assigned bus stop. Hazardous walking conditions to/from bus stops do not apply to these students .

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~~2026-2027~~**2025-2026**

**Magnet Programs
Awareness Activities,
Dates and Deadlines**

| | |
|---|---|
| Chocachatti Elementary School 4135 California St. Brooksville, FL 34604 352-797-7067 | Orientation Presentation will be available for viewing and acknowledgment starting on October 13th , 2025 2024 , at https://www.hernandoschools.org/schools/chocachatti-elementary-school |
| Challenger K-8 School Of Science & Mathematics 13400 Elgin Blvd. Spring Hill, FL 34609 352-797-7024 | Orientation Presentation will be available for viewing and acknowledgment starting on October 13th , 2025 2024 , at https://www.hernandoschools.org/schools/challenger-k-8 |
| Nature Coast Technical High School 4057 California St. Brooksville, FL 34604 352-797-7088 | Orientation Presentation will be available for viewing and acknowledgment starting on October 13th , 2025 2024 , at https://www.hernandoschools.org/schools/nature-coast-technical-high-school |
| <p><u>Application</u> Available on hernandoschools.schoolmint.net</p> <p>Families must create an account in order to submit an application. All notifications will be made through the SchoolMint program. No applications will be accepted prior to October 13th</p> | |
| Online application for NCT, CES, and CK8 | <p>October 13th – November 13th</p> <p>Parents without a computer or Internet access may seek assistance from their nearest school, public library, or District Office.</p> |
| <p><u>PORTFOLIO Submissions</u></p> | |
| CES – Grades K-5 | <p>Portfolios will be submitted electronically via Google Share Drive. Portfolios must be submitted by November 13th, 20252024.</p> <p>An application must be on file for the portfolio to be accepted.</p> |
| CK8 – Grades K-8 Submitted at: District Office, 919 N. Broad Street, Brooksville, FL 34601 (8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.) | <p>Portfolios need to be dropped off at the HCSD Office on one of the following days: Tuesday, November 18th and Thursday, November 20th from 8:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. each day.</p> <p>An application must be on file for the portfolio to be accepted.</p> |
| CES and CK8 Portfolio Reviews | <p>December 20252024</p> <p>December 20252024</p> |
| <u>Lottery</u> CES – Grades K-5; CK8 – Grades K-8; NCTHS | |
| <u>NOTIFICATION</u> Parents notified of selection by: | <p>December 19th</p> |
| <u>INTENT TO ATTEND</u> Parent accepts/declines the seat and enrolls in the School by: | <p>January 12th</p> <p>Any seats not accepted by the deadline will be filled using the wait list.</p> |

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EQUITY

It is the policy of the School Board of Hernando County, Florida, not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, or handicap in its educational programs or employment practices. By operating in this manner, the School Board adheres to the provisions of Federal Law and other applicable laws.

Specifically, Hernando District Policy states, "It is the policy of the Hernando County School Board not to illegally discriminate or to allow its employees to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability, pregnancy, military status, ancestry, or Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) in its educational programs or employment practice." The District also provides equal access to its facilities to the Boy Scouts and other identified Title 36 patriotic youth groups, as required within 34 C.F.R. 108.9.

In accordance with Florida Administrative Code, national origin minority or English Language Learners (ELL) students shall not be subjected to any disciplinary action because of their appropriate use of a language other than English.

To file concerns, please follow the complaint procedures found in School Board Policy.

Compliance officers for Employee related issues are the Director of Human Resources 352-797-7005 [and](#) the [Director of Labor Relations and Supervisor of Professional Standards](#) 352-797-7005~~19~~. Compliance officers for student related issues are the Director of Student Services 352-797-7022 and the Director of Exceptional Student Services 352-797-7008.

See School Board Policy 1122, 3122 and 41~~22~~³³. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

THE POLICY OF NONDISCRIMINATION OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HERNANDO COUNTY

GENERAL: It is the policy of the Hernando County School Board not to illegally discriminate or to allow its employees to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability, handicap or other legally protected status in its educational programs or employment practices. By operating in this manner, the School Board adheres to the provisions of Federal Law and other applicable laws.

EMPLOYMENT: Neither the Hernando County School District nor its employees shall illegally discriminate in its employment policies and practices on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, age or any other legally protected status as defined by applicable law.

STUDENTS: The Hernando County School Board prohibits exclusion of any student from participation in or the denial of the benefits of any educational program or activity as well as any and all forms of illegal discrimination against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital

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status, disability or other legally protected status as provided by applicable law.

PRECEDENCE: This policy shall take precedence over any other statement in the policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Hernando County School Board wherever such may appear unless in conflict with any collective bargaining agreement.

In accordance with Florida Administrative Code, national origin minority or English Language Learners (ELL) students shall not be subjected to any disciplinary action because of their appropriate use of a language other than English.

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F.S. 1000.05

It is the policy of the Hernando County School district not to illegally discriminate or allow its employees to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability or GINA in its educational programs or employment practices.

For questions regarding equity within the school system, please contact Matthew Goldrick; by email goldrick_m@hcsb.k12.fl.us, phone 352-797-7005, or mail 919 N. Broad St. Brooksville, FL 34601. To file concerns, please follow the complaint procedures found in School Board Policy.

See School Board Policy 1122, 3122 and 4122. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

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**Hernando County School
District**

Process for Board Consideration of Hardship Appeals

1. If a parent contacts school board member (s), send to Executive Director of Student Support Programs.
2. Executive Director sends to Supervisor of School Choice.
3. Has the parent/guardian already contacted the Supervisor of School Choice? (If not, Supervisor of School Choice takes the appeal to the District Hardship Committee). If yes, proceed to next step.
4. Does the request demonstrate a documented hardship for the student that is otherwise prohibited by the Controlled Choice and/or Magnet policy? If not, refer back to Supervisor of School Choice. If yes, proceed to next step.
5. Parent provides a written appeal with supporting documentation (e.g., legal, medical) to the Supervisor of School Choice, who will forward the appeal and the original hardship denial paperwork to the Executive Director of Student Support Programs for distribution to the Superintendent and Board. The board shall have a hearing within thirty (30) business days to consider the appeal, which at the parent/guardian(s) election shall be closed to the public to protect student privacy information. A decision shall be made by the Board and communicated in writing to the Superintendent, Executive Director of Student Support Programs, Supervisor of School Choice, and the parent/guardian. Decisions of the Board shall indicate the term of the approval (e.g., current school year only, through the highest grade level). If an appeal is granted, the student will be subject to the provisions of the Choice and/or Magnet policies. Please refer to the Controlled Choice Plan and/or Magnet Program Procedures for conditions of continued attendance.

F.S. 120.57(2)

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Hernando County School District

Magnet Program Procedures 2026-2027



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**Effective July 1, 2023, HB 633, in part, amends section 1003.05, Florida Statutes, to require dependent children of active-duty military personnel who meet eligibility criteria for special academic programs offered through public schools to be enrolled in such a program if the student's parent is transferred to the state during the school year.*

The bill also provided that a student whose parent is on active duty and is transferred within the state after the controlled open enrollment window may enroll in any school within the state.

**Pursuant to F.S. 1002.31, non-residents of Hernando County cannot displace Hernando County residents. As such, students not residing in Hernando County will be moved to the bottom of the waiting list for admissions.*

2. The Board may require that the school grant preferences to students who apply from schools that exceed instructional capacity.
3. If an application is submitted and the student is accepted and the child is retained, and there is no opening at that grade level, then he/she will be placed at the top of the waiting list immediately following students designated as eligible for military preference for the school year in which the application was made.
4. If you apply for children who are designated as multiples (e.g., twins, triplets) and all of the children are not placed via lottery or portfolio, the other child/children will

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be placed on the wait list immediately following students designated as eligible for military preference. Applications during the application period for each child are required in order to claim multiples' preference.

Selection Procedures:

1. Portfolios and Auditions:

- a. Each school with a magnet program will post an orientation presentation on each of their websites.
- b. Portfolios shall not include the student's name or any identifying information other than photographs and/or videos related to the application process. All portfolios will be assigned an individual number when submitted.
- c. Established selection percentages are the following for each school:
Chocachatti – 70% lottery and 30% portfolio/auditions
Challenger K-8 – 70% lottery and 30% portfolio
Nature Coast Technical High School – 100% lottery for non-zoned students.
- d. Portfolio and audition specifications will be provided by the schools in their orientation presentations posted on their school's websites in October/November. The portfolio process will be different for each school based on the programs of the school, but in all cases the Division of Teaching and Learning staff will direct and coordinate the process.
 - i. Portfolios for Chocachatti Elementary School may include a recorded media audition or an art portfolio as specified in the online presentation. These auditions/portfolios will be reviewed and scored by representatives from the Fine Arts Department at the school under the direction of the Supervisor of School Choice. Students will then be accepted based on their final score and availability at the respective grade level.
 - ii. Portfolios for Challenger will include a collection portfolio for Kindergarten and first grade and a written portfolio for grades 2-8 as specified in the online presentation. These portfolios will be reviewed and scored by representatives from the school under the direction of the Supervisor of School Choice. Students will then be accepted based on their final score and availability at the respective grade level.
 - iii. There will be no portfolios for Nature Coast Technical High School. Students living outside of the school zone will be selected via lottery.
- e. Final decisions on which students will be accepted by portfolio for each program will be made by a School Portfolio Committee under the direction of the Supervisor of School Choice. The committee will include the Principal or designee; staff from the school; volunteers and/or retired educators from the

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community; and the Supervisor of School Choice.

- f. Portfolio ratings are assigned by the committee. Applicants are placed by the committee according to their rating and will be marked accepted in the lottery system before the lottery is run.
- g. Portfolio applicants not selected will be automatically placed in the lottery.

Portfolios submitted for Chocachatti and Challenger K-8 can be picked up by the end of the first year. Portfolios must be picked up by the parent before July 1, 2026 or they become the property of the Hernando County School Board and may be destroyed in accordance with Board policy and Florida law.

2. Lottery System:

- a. The lottery system will not operate to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability/exceptionality, history in alternative education settings, or free-lunch status.
- b. Lotteries for all schools will have the same rules.
- c. Lotteries for Nature Coast, Chocachatti, and Challenger will be drawn during the month of December.
- d. The computerized lottery system will fill openings in random number order. At the high school level, all efforts will be made to give students their first program choice.
- e. Selected applicants for whom there is no opening are placed on a waiting list.
- f. Notification to selected applicants will be made through email and/or text message. Parents will need to accept or decline via their SchoolMint account. (Refer to page 8 for timeline.)

3. Waiting List:

- a. The District will maintain a waiting list of students who applied, but were not selected, for future vacancies. As vacancies occur, the school will select students from the waiting list by grade level and/or program in the order in which they appear.
- b. Students that have accepted a seat in the 2026-2027 lottery will be removed from all other magnet program waiting lists for the 2026-2027 school year.
- c. The 2026-2027 waitlist for the school year will expire on the last Friday in March 2027.

Please note: School boundaries may change due to School Board action.

- d. The waiting list will be the only source of admission after the lottery.
- e. Waiting lists are only kept for the current school year. Any student remaining on a waiting list not selected must re-apply if they wish to be considered for the following school year.

Enrollment/Withdrawal Procedures:

1. The parent(s)/guardian(s) must accept placement within five (5) working days of notification or they will forfeit their seat. (Refer to page 8 for the timeline.)
2. During the school year, students selected from the waiting list have up to five (5) working days to accept placement and complete enrollment or they will forfeit the seat.
3. A student who does not enter/attend the magnet program within five (5) working days of the start of the school year will be withdrawn unless there is a documented hardship for delayed enrollment.
4. Students who withdraw and enroll in other options (e.g., private school, home education, virtual school) and then wish to re-enroll into a Hernando County public school will return to their zoned school. Students who withdraw and enter their zoned school or another school of choice and then wish to re-enroll in a Magnet school are subject to the next available application period. In accordance with FHSA rules and state statutes, students returning to their zoned school for any reason are ineligible to participate in a sport that is already in season.

* Magnet schools are exempt from school choice hardship requests. The only way into Chocachatti and Challenger K8 is through portfolio or lottery. The only way into Nature Coast Technical High School is through the lottery or if a student lives in the Board approved school attendance zone.

Promoting Parent Involvement:

1. The parent(s)/guardian(s) at Chocachatti and Challenger will be required to volunteer a minimum of 8 hours. If the commitment is not met before the last grading period, the parent or guardian must meet with an administrator or his/her designee to agree on a necessary plan of action.
2. There is a mandatory nominal fee for a safety and security background check for all school volunteers.

Transportation:

Limited transportation options are available for students accepted into magnet programs.

Area bus stops for Hernando County Students are designed to service as many students as possible with a minimum number of stops. Therefore, bus stops may be further than 1.5 miles from the students' residences. It may be necessary for parents to transport their child to and from their assigned bus stop. Hazardous walking conditions to/from bus stops do not apply to these students .

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| 2026-2027 Magnet Programs Awareness Activities, Dates and Deadlines | |
|---|--|
| Chocachatti Elementary School 4135 California St. Brooksville, FL 34604 352-797-7067 | Orientation Presentation will be available for viewing and acknowledgment starting on October 13, 2025, at https://www.hernandoschools.org/schools/chocachatti-elementary-school |
| Challenger K-8 School Of Science & Mathematics 13400 Elgin Blvd. Spring Hill, FL 34609 352-797-7024 | Orientation Presentation will be available for viewing and acknowledgment starting on October 13, 2025, at https://www.hernandoschools.org/schools/challenger-k-8 |
| Nature Coast Technical High School 4057 California St. Brooksville, FL 34604 352-797-7088 | Orientation Presentation will be available for viewing and acknowledgment starting on October 13, 2025, at https://www.hernandoschools.org/schools/nature-coast-technical-high-school |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Application Available on hernandoschools.schoolmint.net</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Families must create an account in order to submit an application. All notifications will be made through the SchoolMint program. No applications will be accepted prior to October 13th</p> | |
| Online application for NCT, CES, and CK8 | <p style="text-align: center;">October 13th – November 13th</p> Parents without a computer or Internet access may seek assistance from their nearest school, public library, or District Office. |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>PORTFOLIO Submissions</u></p> | |
| CES – Grades K-5 | Portfolios will be submitted electronically via Google Share Drive. Portfolios must be submitted by November 13, 2025. An application must be on file for the portfolio to be accepted. |
| CK8 – Grades K-8 Submitted at: District Office, 919 N. Broad Street, Brooksville, FL 34601 (8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.) | Portfolios need to be dropped off at the HCSD Office on one of the following days: Tuesday, November 18th and Thursday, November 20th from 8:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. each day. An application must be on file for the portfolio to be accepted. |
| CES and CK8 Portfolio Reviews | <p style="text-align: center;">December 2025</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Lottery</u> CES – Grades K-5; CK8 – Grades K-8; NCTHS</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">December 2025</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>NOTIFICATION</u> Parents notified of selection by:</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">December 19st</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>INTENT TO ATTEND</u> Parent accepts/declines the seat and enrolls in the School by:</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">January 12th Any seats not accepted by the deadline will be filled using the wait list.</p> |

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EQUITY

It is the policy of the School Board of Hernando County, Florida, not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, or handicap in its educational programs or employment practices. By operating in this manner, the School Board adheres to the provisions of Federal Law and other applicable laws.

Specifically, Hernando District Policy states, "It is the policy of the Hernando County School Board not to illegally discriminate or to allow its employees to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability, pregnancy, military status, ancestry, or Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) in its educational programs or employment practice." The District also provides equal access to its facilities to the Boy Scouts and other identified Title 36 patriotic youth groups, as required within 34 C.F.R. 108.9.

In accordance with Florida Administrative Code, national origin minority or English Language Learners (ELL) students shall not be subjected to any disciplinary action because of their appropriate use of a language other than English.

To file concerns, please follow the complaint procedures found in School Board Policy.

Compliance officers for Employee related issues are the Director of Human Resources 352-797-7005 and the Director of Labor Relations and Professional Standards 352-797-7005. Compliance officers for student related issues are the Director of Student Services 352-797-7022 and the Director of Exceptional Student Services 352-797-7008.

See School Board Policy 1122, 3122 and 4122. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

THE POLICY OF NONDISCRIMINATION OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HERNANDO COUNTY

GENERAL: It is the policy of the Hernando County School Board not to illegally discriminate or to allow its employees to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability, handicap or other legally protected status in its educational programs or employment practices. By operating in this manner, the School Board adheres to the provisions of Federal Law and other applicable laws.

EMPLOYMENT: Neither the Hernando County School District nor its employees shall illegally discriminate in its employment policies and practices on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, age or any other legally protected status as defined by applicable law.

STUDENTS: The Hernando County School Board prohibits exclusion of any student from participation in or the denial of the benefits of any educational program or activity as well as any and all forms of illegal discrimination against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital

Please note: School boundaries may change due to School Board action.

status, disability or other legally protected status as provided by applicable law.

PRECEDENCE: This policy shall take precedence over any other statement in the policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Hernando County School Board wherever such may appear unless in conflict with any collective bargaining agreement.

In accordance with Florida Administrative Code, national origin minority or English Language Learners (ELL) students shall not be subjected to any disciplinary action because of their appropriate use of a language other than English.

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F.S. 1000.05

It is the policy of the Hernando County School district not to illegally discriminate or allow its employees to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability or GINA in its educational programs or employment practices.

For questions regarding equity within the school system, please contact Matthew Goldrick; by email goldrick_m@hcsb.k12.fl.us, phone 352-797-7005, or mail 919 N. Broad St. Brooksville, FL 34601. To file concerns, please follow the complaint procedures found in School Board Policy.

See School Board Policy 1122, 3122 and 4122. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

Please note: School boundaries may change due to School Board action.

**Hernando County School
District**

Process for Board Consideration of Hardship Appeals

1. If a parent contacts school board member (s), send to Executive Director of Student Support Programs.
2. Executive Director sends to Supervisor of School Choice.
3. Has the parent/guardian already contacted the Supervisor of School Choice? (If not, Supervisor of School Choice takes the appeal to the District Hardship Committee). If yes, proceed to next step.
4. Does the request demonstrate a documented hardship for the student that is otherwise prohibited by the Controlled Choice and/or Magnet policy? If not, refer back to Supervisor of School Choice. If yes, proceed to next step.
5. Parent provides a written appeal with supporting documentation (e.g., legal, medical) to the Supervisor of School Choice, who will forward the appeal and the original hardship denial paperwork to the Executive Director of Student Support Programs for distribution to the Superintendent and Board. The board shall have a hearing within thirty (30) business days to consider the appeal, which at the parent/guardian(s) election shall be closed to the public to protect student privacy information. A decision shall be made by the Board and communicated in writing to the Superintendent, Executive Director of Student Support Programs, Supervisor of School Choice, and the parent/guardian. Decisions of the Board shall indicate the term of the approval (e.g., current school year only, through the highest grade level). If an appeal is granted, the student will be subject to the provisions of the Choice and/or Magnet policies. Please refer to the Controlled Choice Plan and/or Magnet Program Procedures for conditions of continued attendance.

F.S. 120.57 (2)

Please note: School boundaries may change due to School Board action.

A. Item Currently Budgeted -

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------------|---|---|---|--------------------------------|---|--------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Account Name | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Account Number | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Fund | | Function | | Object | | Cost Center | | Project | | Sub Project |
| Original Approved Budget | + | Budget Amendments | - | Expenditures / Encumbrances To Date | = | Current Available Budget | - | Present Request | = | Remaining Balance Available | | |
| \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------------|---|---|---|--------------------------------|---|--------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Account Name | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Account Number | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Fund | | Function | | Object | | Cost Center | | Project | | Sub Project |
| Original Approved Budget | + | Budget Amendments | - | Expenditures / Encumbrances To Date | = | Current Available Budget | - | Present Request | = | Remaining Balance Available | | |
| \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | |

B. Item Currently Not Budgeted -**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----|-------|--|----------|--|--------|--|-------------|--|---------|--|-------------|
| Funding Source | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Account Name | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Account Number | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Fund | | Function | | Object | | Cost Center | | Project | | Sub Project |
| Amount | \$ | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----|-------|--|----------|--|--------|--|-------------|--|---------|--|-------------|
| Funding Source | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Account Name | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Account Number | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Fund | | Function | | Object | | Cost Center | | Project | | Sub Project |
| Amount | \$ | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |

C. History

Check one:

Prior Year Budget:**New for Current Year:**

Prior Year Approved Budget: \$ _____

Prior Year Actual Spent: \$ _____

**** WHEN ITEM NOT CURRENTLY BUDGETED IS APPROVED BY THE SCHOOL BOARD, THIS WILL SERVE AS THE BUDGET AMENDMENT****



Hernando School District

School Board Workshop

Agenda Item # 2. 26-3171

8/12/2025

Title and Board Action Requested

Review and tentative approval of the 2026-2027 Controlled Choice Plan

Executive Summary

The Supervisor of School Choice, on behalf of the Superintendent of Schools, hereby requests the Board to review and tentative approval for the 2026-2027 Controlled Choice Plan.

My Contact

Dawn Williams

Supervisor of School Choice

352-797-7026 ext. 70448

2023-28 Strategic Focus Area

Priority 4: Community Connection

Financial Impact

The cost of this agenda item is \$0, see attached budget sheet. The cost for the previous year was \$0.

If expenditure is not currently budgeted, this will serve as the budget amendment when Board approved. If the agenda item includes the purchase of goods or services, the funds requested are an anticipated amount and may fluctuate depending on such factors as current market conditions, product availability, additional funding sources, and the needs of the District. Should the actual cost exceed the anticipated amount, the Board approves the additional cost, after review by the superintendent, but not in excess of the funds available in the site's approved annual budget.

2026-2027 Controlled Choice Plan Outline of Revisions

Updated application dates and lottery date to reflect the 2026 school year.

Updated Matt Goldrick's job title.

Added a footer indicating that school boundaries may change due to School Board action.



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HERNANDO COUNTY CONTROLLED CHOICE PLAN

~~2025-2026~~
2026-2027

The School Board of Hernando County employs what is commonly referred to as a Neighborhood School concept. Students are assigned to school attendance zones based on the student's legal residential address. A Controlled Choice Program is designed to give all parents the opportunity to select a school other than their child's zoned school. Approval to attend a school outside of a student's zone can be rescinded due to poor attendance, grades, or behavior or if the student withdraws from a program (e.g., AICE, IB) on which approval was based.

Examples of School Choice Options:

- Controlled Parental Choice
- Career Technical Programs
- International Baccalaureate Program
- Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education Program
- Thematic Programs
- Magnet Programs (refer to Magnet Program Procedures)
- Hernando eSchool (contact 352-797-7072 for application information)
- McKay and Family Empowerment Unique Abilities (FES UA) Scholarships (contact www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/ for application information)
- Charter Schools (contact Charter School for application information)

Controlled Parental Choice

⇒ Applications are required when:

- a. The request is for initial entry of a student in a school other than his/her zoned school.
- b. Boundary changes place a student in a different neighborhood school, and the parents want their child to remain at the school the student was previously zoned for before the changes were made.

Please note: School boundaries may change due to School Board action.

- c. There is a change of home address which places the student in a different neighborhood school and the parents want their child to remain at the school. The principal must agree, and the approval is limited to the remainder of the school year.
- d. A school is severely overcrowded, there are no other alternatives for relief, and the Superintendent has deemed that the impact of student reassignment must be reviewed and reconsidered.
- e. A parent of a Hernando County student is requesting attendance in another county or a parent living in another county is requesting attendance in a Hernando County School.

Application Process

⇒ Controlled Parental Choice, non-Magnet Career Technical Programs, Cambridge AICE, International Baccalaureate, and Thematic Programs:

- a. Access to applications for Controlled Parental Choice, as well as Career Technical Programs, Cambridge AICE, International Baccalaureate, and Thematic Programs when not available at the zoned school are available online during the open enrollment period which is established yearly by the School Board. Access to applications for Home School families seeking to participate in interscholastic sports at their non-zoned school are available during the open enrollment period established yearly by the School Board. Parents without a computer or Internet access may seek assistance from their nearest school, public library, or District Office.
- b. Parents should complete an online application from January 6th through March 6th as established by the School Board. Application is available on www.hernandoschools.schoolmint.net. Families must create an online account in order to submit an application. All notifications will be made through the SchoolMint program. No applications will be accepted prior to January 6th.
- c. No applications are available outside of the open enrollment period. A documented hardship application can be obtained through the School Choice office. Cambridge AICE and International Baccalaureate applications are not subject to open enrollment period. You must be accepted into the respective program first.
- d. Schools at capacity, which is defined as 90% of state-determined utilization, are not available for Controlled School Choice. These will be determined by the Superintendent's office (refer to the Capacity Report posted on the Controlled Choice webpage at www.hernandoschools.org).
- e. Parents will be notified through parental email address provided on the SchoolMint application on or around March 13th.

⇒ Magnet Programs

- a. Parents are to complete the application process during the Magnet School's

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open enrollment period established yearly by the School Board.

Please note: School boundaries may change due to School Board action.

- b. Refer to the approved Magnet Program Procedures for further details on their application process. The current procedure can be found under "Students and Families" on our website at www.hernandoschools.org.

Preference for Admission

(in no particular order and pending available capacity)

- ⇒ Dependent children of active duty military personnel; members or veterans of the uniformed services who are severely injured *and* medically discharged or retired for a period of one year after medical discharge or retirement; and members of the uniformed services who die on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty, for a period of one year after death (F.S. 1000.36 and 1003.05).
- ⇒ Children who have been relocated due to foster care placement in a different school zone.
- ⇒ Children who move due to court ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent.
- ⇒ Siblings residing at the same address, requesting to be assigned to the same school with the exception of a student who is exiting fifth, eighth, or twelfth grades or enrolled through a specific program such as Magnet, International Baccalaureate or Career Technical Programs.
- ⇒ Children of Hernando County School District Employees.
- ⇒ Residents of Hernando County, pursuant to F.S. 1002.31 (2)(e).

Continuity of School Assignment

- ⇒ Once a School Choice assignment has been approved, a student may remain in attendance up to the highest grade level offered in the chosen school. The principal has the right to rescind approval due to poor attendance, grades, and/or behavior.
- ⇒ Once a student is approved and registered for a controlled parental choice, magnet or theme program, he or she will no longer be eligible for any other school choice options for that school year.

Change of Residence

- ⇒ Parent(s) / guardian(s) who can demonstrate they are purchasing, building or renting a home in a different zone from where they are currently living (original electric or water bill in their name, rental agreement, notarized statement from a landlord, deed or construction contract showing commencement of construction) **do** require an application through School Choice Special Circumstances procedures to attend new zoned school.
- ⇒ Parent(s) / guardian(s) who move and wish their child(ren) to remain at the current school for the balance of the school year must request reassignment for special

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circumstances through the School Choice Department and receive approval from the District Hardship Committee. **If approved, attendance will be for the balance of current school year only.**

Transportation

- ⇒ The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for providing transportation when their student is approved to attend a school outside of their attendance zone. Transportation will be provided to certain Exceptional Education Students when required by their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Rescinding of Approved School Choice

- ⇒ Approval of a School Choice application may be rescinded if:
- a. False information was provided (F.S. 837.06 and F.S. 92.525 – providing false information is a criminal act); F.S. **837.06 False official statements.**— [Whoever knowingly makes a false statement in writing with the intent to mislead a public servant in the performance of his or her official duty shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.](#)
 - b. It is determined by the Superintendent and/or the Principal that enrollment at a requested school is having a negative impact on the student's educational progress;
 - c. The student withdraws from a course of study that was the basis for enrollment at the requested school (e.g., Career Technical Programs, Cambridge AICE, International Baccalaureate);
 - d. The student does not maintain any of the following: academic requirements for the course of study, earn passing grades for promotion in grades K – 8 and in grades 9 – 12, a 2.0 grade point average (GPA), 90% attendance, repeated violations of the Student Code of Conduct, and/or if the student is chronically tardy to school.
 - e. Out-of-County (OOC) students who commit level 4 offenses as defined by the Hernando County School District Student Code of Conduct will be returned to their zoned district.

The decision to rescind a School Choice approval requires discussion between the parent and the school administration, and between the school administration and the Supervisor of School Choice. An elementary or middle school student whose reassignment has been rescinded will return to his/her zoned school at the end of the quarter. A high school student whose reassignment has been rescinded will return to his/her zoned school at the end of the current semester. Rescinding school choice approval requires written documentation that the parent has received prior notification of the principal's intent to revoke choice.

[Please note: School boundaries may change due to School Board action.](#)

Rescinding of School Choice Procedures

[Please note: School boundaries may change due to School Board action.](#)

- ⇒ The Principal or designee will contact the Supervisor of School Choice about the possibility of school choice approval being rescinded.
- ⇒ The Principal or designee will meet with the parent to discuss concerns and the possibility of school choice being rescinded. Conference notes will be documented.
- ⇒ Documentation will be sent to the Supervisor of School Choice.
- ⇒ If academic, behavioral, and/or attendance concerns persist, the parent will be notified in writing that school choice is being rescinded, and the student must return to his/her zoned school. A copy of the letter will be sent to the Supervisor of School Choice. The letter will include language that informs the parent that an appeal may be requested through the Supervisor of School Choice.
- ⇒ The Supervisor of School Choice will form a committee of administrators to review the documentation. After a careful review and further investigation, the committee will uphold or deny the appeal.

Controlled School Choice Appeals

- ⇒ Once an application for Controlled School Choice has been denied, the student is expected to attend his/her zoned school and may re-apply during the next open enrollment period for enrollment the following school year.
- ⇒ Parents may request a review before the Hardship Committee based on a documented hardship situation. Board approved hardship criteria include:
 - a. A medical condition as verified in writing by a physician that requires treatment or supervision in proximity to the school being requested.
 - b. A situation where the student requesting reassignment has been the victim of a crime and/or violence by another student.
 - c. There has been a death of a student's parent(s) or sibling(s).
 - d. Relocation due to foster care placement, court-ordered change of custody (due to separation or divorce), or the serious illness of a custodial parent.

The Hardship Committee shall consist of the Executive Director of Student Support Programs, Director of Student Services, Director of Exceptional Student Education, Supervisor of School Choice, and the District Athletic Director. *Parents who are denied their appeal through the Hardship Committee may appeal the decision to the Superintendent of Schools. The School Board retains the right to consider an appeal of the decision to deny a hardship appeal. The procedure for requesting an appeal is located on page 10 of this document.*

Please note: School boundaries may change due to School Board action.

Promoting Parental Involvement and Disseminating Information

- ⇒ The district believes that parental choice is a vital part of a child's education. The district accepts responsibility for providing information, as well as assisting parents in making school choice decisions for their children.
- ⇒ Information regarding school choice open enrollment process is made available to parents and the community via:
 - Local newspaper advertising, when possible
 - School newsletters, when possible
 - Automated telephone messages announcing open enrollment timelines
 - School marquee announcements, when possible
 - Posting on District website and school websites
 - Application guidelines and a "Question and Answer" on the district website
 - Letters and flyers mailed to directors of private preschools and daycare centers
 - School-based meeting for families
 - Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)
 - Parent communication on report card
- ⇒ The parents of students being bused for desegregation purposes may submit a written request to the School Choice Department to object to busing and opt out of participation in the District's voluntary desegregation plan. When a parent makes such a request in writing, that student shall attend his/her zoned school.

Attendance Zone Changes

- ⇒ As new schools are built, the District will form rezoning committees to consider setting the new school's boundaries as well as revising the zones of affected schools.

Additional Information Regarding Choice Option

- ⇒ Career Technical Programs
Career Technical Programs typically entail three to four years of coursework and are offered at varying high schools. Students are required to maintain a "B" average in their program to continue on to the next level and pass the industry certification exam for the program. Career Technical Education Specialists conduct orientation meetings regarding high school programs in the fall for eighth grade students at each middle school. All applications must be submitted during the online enrollment period (January 6th through March 6th). Students who withdraw from courses required in the selected high school career technical program will return to their zoned school at the end of current semester.
- ⇒ Charter Schools
Charter Schools are nonsectarian schools of choice designed to deliver programs to meet the needs of the community. Funding for charter schools comes from the state and is sponsored by the local school District but privately operated. Charter Schools have the freedom to set their own rules on curriculum, teaching style, personnel and discipline rules. Contact the charter schools directly for

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application information.

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- ⇒ John M. McKay and FES UA Scholarship Programs for Students with Disabilities
A parent of a student, who has been identified as disabled and has a current Individualized IEP or Section 504 accommodation plan, may request that the student attend another public school in the district provided that school can provide the services the student needs to accomplish the goals and objectives on the student's IEP. The McKay and FES UA Scholarship Programs may also offer the student the opportunity to attend a public school in an adjacent district or receive a scholarship to attend a participating private school. Parents wishing to find out more information about this program should contact the School Choice office or visit <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice>.
- ⇒ International Baccalaureate Program (IB)
A school with an IB program is a school offering students a rigorous and relevant curriculum that is recognized internationally. These schools are designed to attract a diverse student body wishing to participate in a demanding four-year curriculum (2 years of preparation and 2 years of IB coursework) leading to final examinations and a qualification that is welcomed by leading universities around the world. These schools have an attendance zone. Parents must submit an application to the district and meet the application criteria. Schools with an IB program must conduct orientation meetings regarding their school programs during the month of December and/or January. All applications must be submitted during the online enrollment period (January 6th through March 6th), except when the IB coordinator accepts students after the deadline. Students who withdraw from courses required in the program will return to their zoned school and may not select an alternate program in order to remain at the school, unless a Hardship application is received and approved.
- ⇒ Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE)
A school with a Cambridge AICE program is a school offering rigorous, pre-university courses emphasizing the following skills: higher-order thinking; verbalization; writing; problem-solving; teamwork; and investigation. These schools are designed to attract a diverse student body wishing to discover new abilities and explore Math, Science, Language, and Arts/Humanities. Coursework culminates with AICE examinations, and students may earn an internationally- recognized AICE diploma. Cambridge AICE requires an application with the school and the district. Schools with an AICE program must conduct orientation meetings regarding their school programs during the month of December and/or January. All applications must be submitted during the online enrollment period (January 6th through March 6th), except when the AICE coordinator accepts students after the deadline. Students who withdraw from courses required in the program will return to their zoned school and may not select an alternate program in order to remain at the school, unless a Hardship application is received and approved.
- ⇒ Thematic Programs
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accept a limited number of students outside of their attendance zone based on student vacancies at specific grade levels.

⇒ Magnet Program

A school with a magnet program is a school offering curriculum based on a specific theme or instructional method. For more information, refer to the approved Magnet Procedures on our website at <https://www.hernandoschools.org> under "Students and Families".

EQUITY

It is the policy of the School Board of Hernando County, Florida, not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, or handicap in its educational programs or employment practices. By operating in this manner, the School Board adheres to the provisions of Federal Law and other applicable laws.

Specifically, Hernando District Policy states, "It is the policy of the Hernando County School Board not to illegally discriminate or to allow its employees to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability, pregnancy, military status, ancestry, or Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) in its educational programs or employment practice." The District also provides equal access to its facilities to the Boy Scouts and other identified Title 36 patriotic youth groups, as required within 34 C.F.R. 108.9.

In accordance with Florida Administrative Code, national origin minority or English Language Learners (ELL) students shall not be subjected to any disciplinary action because of their appropriate use of a language other than English.

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THE POLICY OF NONDISCRIMINATION OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HERNANDO COUNTY

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practices. By operating in this manner, the School Board adheres to the provisions of Federal Law and other applicable laws.

EMPLOYMENT: Neither the Hernando County School District nor its employees shall illegally discriminate in its employment policies and practices on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, age or any other legally protected status as defined by applicable law.

STUDENTS: The Hernando County School Board prohibits exclusion of any student from participation in or the denial of the benefits of any educational program or activity as well as any and all forms of illegal discrimination against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability or other legally protected status as provided by applicable law.

PRECEDENCE: This policy shall take precedence over any other statement in the policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Hernando County School Board wherever such may appear unless in conflict with any collective bargaining agreement.

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F.S. 1000.05

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For questions regarding equity within the school system, please contact Matthew Goldrick; by email goldrick_m@hcsb.k12.fl.us, phone 352-797-7005, or mail 919 N. Broad St. Brooksville, FL 34601. To file concerns, please follow the complaint procedures found in School Board Policy.

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Hernando County School District

Process for Board Consideration of Hardship Appeals

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2. Executive Director sends to Supervisor of School Choice.
3. Has the parent/guardian already contacted the Supervisor of School Choice? (If not, Supervisor of School Choice takes the appeal to the District Hardship Committee). If yes, proceed to next step.
4. Does the request demonstrate a documented hardship for the student that is otherwise prohibited by the Controlled Choice and/or Magnet policy? If not, refer back to Supervisor of School Choice. If yes, proceed to next step.
5. Parent provides a written appeal with supporting documentation (e.g., legal, medical) to the Supervisor of Choice, who will forward the appeal and original hardship denial paperwork to the Executive Director of Student Support Programs for distribution to the Superintendent and Board. The board shall have a hearing within thirty (30) business days to consider the appeal, which at the parent/guardian(s) election shall be closed to the public to protect student privacy information. A decision shall be made by the Board and communicated in writing to the Superintendent, Executive Director of Student Support Programs, Supervisor of School Choice, and the parent/guardian. Decisions of the Board shall indicate the term of the approval (e.g., current school year only, through the highest grade level). If an appeal is granted, the student will be subject to the provisions of the Choice and/or Magnet policies. Please refer to the approved Controlled Choice Plan and/or Magnet Program Procedures for conditions of continued attendance.

F.S. 120.57(2)

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SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HERNANDO COUNTY CONTROLLED CHOICE PLAN 2026-2027

The School Board of Hernando County employs what is commonly referred to as a Neighborhood School concept. Students are assigned to school attendance zones based on the student's legal residential address. A Controlled Choice Program is designed to give all parents the opportunity to select a school other than their child's zoned school. Approval to attend a school outside of a student's zone can be rescinded due to poor attendance, grades, or behavior or if the student withdraws from a program (e.g., AICE, IB) on which approval was based.

Examples of School Choice Options:

- Controlled Parental Choice
- Career Technical Programs
- International Baccalaureate Program
- Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education Program
- Thematic Programs
- Magnet Programs (refer to Magnet Program Procedures)
- Hernando eSchool (contact 352-797-7072 for application information)
- McKay and Family Empowerment Unique Abilities (FES UA) Scholarships (contact www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/ for application information)
- Charter Schools (contact Charter School for application information)

Controlled Parental Choice

⇒ Applications are required when:

- a. The request is for initial entry of a student in a school other than his/her zoned school.
- b. Boundary changes place a student in a different neighborhood school, and the parents want their child to remain at the school the student was previously zoned for before the changes were made.

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- c. There is a change of home address which places the student in a different neighborhood school and the parents want their child to remain at the school. The principal must agree, and the approval is limited to the remainder of the school year.
- d. A school is severely overcrowded, there are no other alternatives for relief, and the Superintendent has deemed that the impact of student reassignment must be reviewed and reconsidered.
- e. A parent of a Hernando County student is requesting attendance in another county or a parent living in another county is requesting attendance in a Hernando County School.

Application Process

⇒ Controlled Parental Choice, non-Magnet Career Technical Programs, Cambridge AICE, International Baccalaureate, and Thematic Programs:

- a. Access to applications for Controlled Parental Choice, as well as Career Technical Programs, Cambridge AICE, International Baccalaureate, and Thematic Programs when not available at the zoned school are available online during the open enrollment period which is established yearly by the School Board. Access to applications for Home School families seeking to participate in interscholastic sports at their non-zoned school are available during the open enrollment period established yearly by the School Board. Parents without a computer or Internet access may seek assistance from their nearest school, public library, or District Office.
- b. Parents should complete an online application from January 6th through March 6th as established by the School Board. Application is available on www.hernandoschools.schoolmint.net. Families must create an online account in order to submit an application. All notifications will be made through the SchoolMint program. No applications will be accepted prior to January 6th.
- c. No applications are available outside of the open enrollment period. A documented hardship application can be obtained through the School Choice office. Cambridge AICE and International Baccalaureate applications are not subject to open enrollment period. You must be accepted into the respective program first.
- d. Schools at capacity, which is defined as 90% of state-determined utilization, are not available for Controlled School Choice. These will be determined by the Superintendent's office (refer to the Capacity Report posted on the Controlled Choice webpage at www.hernandoschools.org).
- e. Parents will be notified through parental email address provided on the SchoolMint application on or around March 13th.

⇒ Magnet Programs

- a. Parents are to complete the application process during the Magnet School's

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open enrollment period established yearly by the School Board.

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- b. Refer to the approved Magnet Program Procedures for further details on their application process. The current procedure can be found under "Students and Families" on our website at www.hernandoschools.org.

Preference for Admission

(in no particular order and pending available capacity)

- ⇒ Dependent children of active duty military personnel; members or veterans of the uniformed services who are severely injured *and* medically discharged or retired for a period of one year after medical discharge or retirement; and members of the uniformed services who die on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty, for a period of one year after death (F.S. 1000.36 and 1003.05).
- ⇒ Children who have been relocated due to foster care placement in a different school zone.
- ⇒ Children who move due to court ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent.
- ⇒ Siblings residing at the same address, requesting to be assigned to the same school with the exception of a student who is exiting fifth, eighth, or twelfth grades or enrolled through a specific program such as Magnet, International Baccalaureate or Career Technical Programs.
- ⇒ Children of Hernando County School District Employees.
- ⇒ Residents of Hernando County, pursuant to F.S. 1002.31 (2)(e).

Continuity of School Assignment

- ⇒ Once a School Choice assignment has been approved, a student may remain in attendance up to the highest grade level offered in the chosen school. The principal has the right to rescind approval due to poor attendance, grades, and/or behavior.
- ⇒ Once a student is approved and registered for a controlled parental choice, magnet or theme program, he or she will no longer be eligible for any other school choice options for that school year.

Change of Residence

- ⇒ Parent(s) / guardian(s) who can demonstrate they are purchasing, building or renting a home in a different zone from where they are currently living (original electric or water bill in their name, rental agreement, notarized statement from a landlord, deed or construction contract showing commencement of construction) **do** require an application through School Choice Special Circumstances procedures to attend new zoned school.
- ⇒ Parent(s) / guardian(s) who move and wish their child(ren) to remain at the current school for the balance of the school year must request reassignment for special

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circumstances through the School Choice Department and receive approval from the District Hardship Committee. **If approved, attendance will be for the balance of current school year only.**

Transportation

- ⇒ The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for providing transportation when their student is approved to attend a school outside of their attendance zone. Transportation will be provided to certain Exceptional Education Students when required by their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Rescinding of Approved School Choice

- ⇒ Approval of a School Choice application may be rescinded if:
- a. False information was provided (F.S. 837.06 and F.S. 92.525 – providing false information is a criminal act); F.S. **837.06 False official statements.**— **Whoever knowingly makes a false statement in writing with the intent to mislead a public servant in the performance of his or her official duty shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.**
 - b. It is determined by the Superintendent and/or the Principal that enrollment at a requested school is having a negative impact on the student’s educational progress;
 - c. The student withdraws from a course of study that was the basis for enrollment at the requested school (e.g., Career Technical Programs, Cambridge AICE, International Baccalaureate);
 - d. The student does not maintain any of the following: academic requirements for the course of study, earn passing grades for promotion in grades K – 8 and in grades 9 – 12, a 2.0 grade point average (GPA), 90% attendance, repeated violations of the Student Code of Conduct, and/or if the student is chronically tardy to school.
 - e. Out-of-County (OOC) students who commit level 4 offenses as defined by the Hernando County School District Student Code of Conduct will be returned to their zoned district.

The decision to rescind a School Choice approval requires discussion between the parent and the school administration, and between the school administration and the Supervisor of School Choice. An elementary or middle school student whose reassignment has been rescinded will return to his/her zoned school at the end of the quarter. A high school student whose reassignment has been rescinded will return to his/her zoned school at the end of the current semester. Rescinding school choice approval requires written documentation that the parent has received prior notification of the principal’s intent to revoke choice.

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Rescinding of School Choice Procedures

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- ⇒ The Principal or designee will contact the Supervisor of School Choice about the possibility of school choice approval being rescinded.
- ⇒ The Principal or designee will meet with the parent to discuss concerns and the possibility of school choice being rescinded. Conference notes will be documented.
- ⇒ Documentation will be sent to the Supervisor of School Choice.
- ⇒ If academic, behavioral, and/or attendance concerns persist, the parent will be notified in writing that school choice is being rescinded, and the student must return to his/her zoned school. A copy of the letter will be sent to the Supervisor of School Choice. The letter will include language that informs the parent that an appeal may be requested through the Supervisor of School Choice.
- ⇒ The Supervisor of School Choice will form a committee of administrators to review the documentation. After a careful review and further investigation, the committee will uphold or deny the appeal.

Controlled School Choice Appeals

- ⇒ Once an application for Controlled School Choice has been denied, the student is expected to attend his/her zoned school and may re-apply during the next open enrollment period for enrollment the following school year.
- ⇒ Parents may request a review before the Hardship Committee based on a documented hardship situation. Board approved hardship criteria include:
 - a. A medical condition as verified in writing by a physician that requires treatment or supervision in proximity to the school being requested.
 - b. A situation where the student requesting reassignment has been the victim of a crime and/or violence by another student.
 - c. There has been a death of a student's parent(s) or sibling(s).
 - d. Relocation due to foster care placement, court-ordered change of custody (due to separation or divorce), or the serious illness of a custodial parent.

The Hardship Committee shall consist of the Executive Director of Student Support Programs, Director of Student Services, Director of Exceptional Student Education, Supervisor of School Choice, and the District Athletic Director. *Parents who are denied their appeal through the Hardship Committee may appeal the decision to the Superintendent of Schools. The School Board retains the right to consider an appeal of the decision to deny a hardship appeal. The procedure for requesting an appeal is located on page 10 of this document.*

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Promoting Parental Involvement and Disseminating Information

- ⇒ The district believes that parental choice is a vital part of a child's education. The district accepts responsibility for providing information, as well as assisting parents in making school choice decisions for their children.
- ⇒ Information regarding school choice open enrollment process is made available to parents and the community via:
 - Local newspaper advertising, when possible
 - School newsletters, when possible
 - Automated telephone messages announcing open enrollment timelines
 - School marquee announcements, when possible
 - Posting on District website and school websites
 - Application guidelines and a "Question and Answer" on the district website
 - Letters and flyers mailed to directors of private preschools and daycare centers
 - School-based meeting for families
 - Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)
 - Parent communication on report card
- ⇒ The parents of students being bused for desegregation purposes may submit a written request to the School Choice Department to object to busing and opt out of participation in the District's voluntary desegregation plan. When a parent makes such a request in writing, that student shall attend his/her zoned school.

Attendance Zone Changes

- ⇒ As new schools are built, the District will form rezoning committees to consider setting the new school's boundaries as well as revising the zones of affected schools.

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A. Item Currently Budgeted -

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------------|---|---|---|--------------------------------|---|--------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Account Name | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Account Number | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Fund | | Function | | Object | | Cost Center | | Project | | Sub Project |
| Original Approved Budget | + | Budget Amendments | - | Expenditures / Encumbrances To Date | = | Current Available Budget | - | Present Request | = | Remaining Balance Available | | |
| \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------------|---|---|---|--------------------------------|---|--------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Account Name | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Account Number | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Fund | | Function | | Object | | Cost Center | | Project | | Sub Project |
| Original Approved Budget | + | Budget Amendments | - | Expenditures / Encumbrances To Date | = | Current Available Budget | - | Present Request | = | Remaining Balance Available | | |
| \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | \$ _____ | | |

B. Item Currently Not Budgeted -**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----|-------|--|----------|--|--------|--|-------------|--|---------|--|-------------|
| Funding Source | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Account Name | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Account Number | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Fund | | Function | | Object | | Cost Center | | Project | | Sub Project |
| Amount | \$ | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |

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|----------------|----|-------|--|----------|--|--------|--|-------------|--|---------|--|-------------|
| Funding Source | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Account Name | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Account Number | | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Fund | | Function | | Object | | Cost Center | | Project | | Sub Project |
| Amount | \$ | _____ | | | | | | | | | | |

C. History

Check one:

Prior Year Budget:**New for Current Year:**

Prior Year Approved Budget: \$ _____

Prior Year Actual Spent: \$ _____

**** WHEN ITEM NOT CURRENTLY BUDGETED IS APPROVED BY THE SCHOOL BOARD, THIS WILL SERVE AS THE BUDGET AMENDMENT****