

Policy JFABA - SCHOOL CHOICE POLICY

The West Bath School Administrative Unit (WBSAU) permits parent and guardians of students in grades 6-12 to select an appropriate school for their child to attend. If no choice is made by the parent or guardian, the student will automatically be enrolled in RSU 1. West Bath residents enrolled in a K-5 school outside of the West Bath School, will not be considered participating school choice students and must complete the application process outlined below immediately prior to the start of their sixth grade year.

Although every effort will be made to place students according to parents' wishes, attendance at a school other than RSU 1 is not guaranteed. The following limitations apply to school choice:

1. As per the withdrawal agreement with RSU 1 ("Withdrawal Agreement by and between Town of West Bath Withdrawal Committee and Regional School Unit No. 1"), school choice will be limited to 25% of eligible students, defined as students in grades 6 - 12 educated at public expense, unless special accommodation is made by the WBSAU Board.
2. The available school choice places shall be apportioned in order of priority as follows: existing school choice students, siblings of existing choice students, all others.
3. To maintain eligibility for this program, students must maintain residency status throughout the year. The WBSAU Board, or designee, reserves the right to verify participating students' residency at any time.
4. Admission to the selected school, other than RSU 1, is the responsibility of the parent or guardian of the student.
5. All transportation to and from a school other than Bath Middle School or Morse High School will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian. The WBSAU will not cover the cost of travel expenses to any other school unless transportation is determined to be necessary by a child's Individual Education Plan.
6. Tuition costs will be a shared responsibility of the parent or guardian. West Bath will contribute a tuition amount up to the cost of sending the student to RSU 1. Any additional costs will be borne by the parent or guardian of the student.
7. The list of schools eligible for West Bath tuition contributions is maintained by the State. To be eligible for tuition contributions from West Bath, the school must be categorized as 'non-sectarian'. The current list of schools and their categorization may be found at: [<https://www1.maine.gov/education/medms/IDfiles/prividcodes.pdf>]. The parent or guardian of the student, and not the WBSAU, is solely responsible for ensuring that the school chosen by the student has been approved by the Maine Department of Education to receive public funds for the school year(s) in question. See 20-A M.R.S.A. § 2951.
8. Once a student is participating in school choice, his or her slot will be reserved until no longer desired by the student's guardian, or until the student's graduation.
9. Students moving into WBSAU during the school year, who wish to continue at their previous school will not be considered existing school choice students. Such students must apply for school choice during the next application window. Students moving to West Bath after the school choice registration window has concluded (after Feb 14) will be deemed ineligible for school choice for the upcoming school year. These students may apply for school choice during the next application window.

10. Students declaring residency in West Bath as part of a J1 Visa program will not be considered school choice students due to the temporary nature of their residency. These students should consult the WBSAU policy regarding J1 Visa students.
11. Approvals for school choice placements are specific to the students receiving placements and non-transferable to other students, regardless of familial relationship.

In order to provide for adequate planning, the following process will be followed:

1. A registration window shall be available from January 6 through February 14th of each year. Parents wishing to utilize school choice in the following school year must register during this period. For students already participating in school choice, a letter of intent to continue shall be sufficient.
2. In the event the number of school choice applicants exceed the number of available school choice openings, participation will be determined by lottery. This lottery shall be held on a date between February 14th, and March 1st.
3. Students not selected will be placed on a waiting list in the order they were drawn in the lottery.
4. WBSAU will notify RSU 1 of the expected number of students by March 1.
5. School choice lottery results will be postmarked to parents no later than March 1.
6. Parents who wish for a 6-8 grade student to attend Woolwich instead of Bath Middle School must also complete the RSU 1 school choice application in accordance with their policy by May 1. This type of school choice is limited by RSU 1 policy, but does not fall under limitation #1 above.
7. The parent/guardian completes any enrollment applications required by their chosen school.
8. Should enrollment in the chosen school be denied, acceptance into RSU 1 is guaranteed in accordance with the West Bath withdrawal agreement with RSU 1.
9. New school choice enrollments must be confirmed with WBSAU by August 1. If the student has elected to not enroll in a school choice school, that slot will become available to students on the waiting list.
10. Students who missed the application window but who wish to be considered for a school choice slot may apply after February 14th. Students will be placed on the waiting list and will be notified if and when a school choice slots becomes available.

The WBSAU school board will receive a complete report of school choice placements at the regular November meeting of the School Board of Directors.

Legal Reference:

20-A M.R.S.A § 2951

Cross Reference:

JFABB - Admission of Foreign Exchange Students

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