



GRIFFIN-SPALDING COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

House Bill 251 Questions and Answers

What are the school district's responsibilities under House Bill (HB) 251?

A district must annually notify parents by July 1st of each year regarding which schools have available space and which of these schools parents may choose to request a transfer for their children. A district may notify parents by letter, electronic means (e-mail or website), or by other reasonable means such as the local newspaper. The local process shall include an explicit deadline for parents who want to apply. A district may have a single enrollment period each year.

How is available classroom space defined?

Available classroom space is defined as permanent classroom space. This does not include the use of trailers/portables. In addition, factors such as projected enrollment, maximum class size and available teacher allocations are considered. Class size capacity is considered by grade level and by subject.

Are all school aged children in Spalding County eligible to participate in school choice under HB 251?

No. The school choice program is available to students currently enrolled in Griffin-Spalding County Schools. Students that are enrolled in private schools, home school programs, etc. are not eligible to participate in school choice. In addition, students that are transferring to Griffin-Spalding County Schools for the upcoming school year are not eligible to participate in school choice.

Are districts required to create additional space at specific schools due to the demand for transfers under HB 251?

No. Districts are not required to create additional classroom space. In addition, the district is not required to create a space for a sibling of a student approved for a HB 251 transfer.

How will the district select students if the demand at a particular school exceeds the number of available seats?

In the event a particular school has available space and the district determines that the number of transfer requests exceeds the available classroom space, the district will conduct a random lottery that provides each interested student with an equal chance to have their transfer request met.

How long is the HB 251 transfer valid?

The law allows a student who transfers to continue to attend that school until the student completes the highest grade of the receiving school. A transferring student who completes all grades available at the receiving school does not automatically receive enrollment preference to the feeder school.

Will the district transport students under HB 251 to and from school?

No. If the parent elects to exercise this choice option, the parent is responsible for all transportation to and from school. The students may not ride any Griffin-Spalding County School System buses.

Can the district deny a transfer request under HB 251?

Yes. The law applies to schools with available classroom space. Under those terms, a transfer may be denied based on a lack of permanent classroom space, class size by grade/subject, and programs based on State rule. In addition, transfers may be denied for students' with disabilities (SWD) who have a current Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) that specifies services only offered at a specific school in the district.

All decisions regarding HB 251 are final, and they may not be appealed.

Are there exemptions to the provisions in HB 251?

Yes. The exemptions are as follows:

The law does not apply to charter schools.

The law does not apply to newly opened schools for a period of four years from the school's opening date.

How are student athletes treated if they transfer under HB 251?

Rising Ninth graders entering into 9th grade for the first time may request a school choice transfer to an eligible school. A student requesting a transfer may not participate in any extracurricular activities at the receiving high school until the request has been approved.

Tryouts and Spring Football Practice: A student may participate in only one tryout or spring practice per year. Example: A student is approved to transfer and participates in a tryout or spring football practice at that school. After participating the student realizes that they may not make the team, the student may not attend the tryout or spring football practice at the school that services the student's area of residence.

High school students, other than rising ninth graders, will be ineligible for varsity competition for one calendar year from the date of the entry into the new school but can participate in sub-varsity level athletics as long as they meet the academic and age requirements as established by the Georgia High School Association (GHSA). If a student transfers back to their districted school, he/she will be ineligible once again for varsity competition for one calendar year from the date of the entry into the new school.

GHSA website (www.ghsa.net)