

School Choice FAQs

Does the district accept students in any grade each year or is it limited?

Every year the school committee decides whether it will accept new enrollments.

The superintendent, based on information from building principals on capacity, staffing and enrollment, recommends how many and at what level slots should be open. The School Committee votes based on this information.

Are kindergarten students accepted?

Right now Newburyport does not accept students in PK and K programs.

Are the younger siblings of students already enrolled in choice given preference?

Yes, following DESE guidelines:

“Under G.L. c. 76 § 12B(j), any sibling of a student currently attending school in the receiving district receives a preference for admission. Siblings are students who have a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption.”

“The sibling preference applies only when one sibling is already attending in the school choice district. If siblings of the same family apply simultaneously and only one sibling is admitted, no preference is available for the sibling who has not yet been admitted.”

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/2019-0423glc76s12b.html>

Does a student need to be a Massachusetts resident?

Yes. Admission through school choice is only open to residents of Massachusetts.

Can a school district establish a preference for the children of school district or other municipal employees when admitting students through school choice?

“No. A preference for admission on any basis other than for siblings is inconsistent with the random selection requirement in the statute. Outside of school choice, however, a school district may admit children of school district and municipal employees under G.L. c. 76, § 12.”

Can a school committee accept students from another school district on a tuition basis apart from school choice?

“Yes. The school choice law does not affect G.L. c. 76 § 12, which states that “[a]ny child, with the consent of the school committee of the town where he resides, may attend, at the expense of said town, the public schools of another town, upon such terms as may be fixed by the two committees.”

“In addition, other statutes, including G.L. c. 71B, § 4 (special education), and G.L. c. 74, § 7 (non-resident vocational technical education),¹³ explicitly provide additional means for certain students to attend the schools in communities in which they do not live. School choice under G.L. c. 76, § 12B, is a separate program and does not affect these statutes.”

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/2019-0423glc76s12b.html>

Why are the FTE pupils on the sending/receiving numbers not whole numbers?

Students may have entered or left the district after the start or before the end of the school year.

Why isn't the income a simple formula of \$5000 x number of receiving students?

The simple explanation is that there are adjustments made for students who are low income or are on an IEP. The state makes these calculations based on reports that the district submits.

“On or before the last day of each month, the state treasurer assesses approximately one twelfth of each school district's annual school choice tuition charges and pays one twelfth of the annual tuition receipts as part of the monthly local aid distribution. Since the annual estimates may change during the year to reflect current enrollments and special education increments, the monthly calculations will reflect these changes.

The regular day school choice tuition rate is \$5,000 per student for school districts and \$9,259 per student for Commonwealth virtual schools, including a \$75 per student administrative fee. An incremental cost is also added to the tuition for each special education student reflecting the additional cost of the services that they are receiving. In these preliminary calculations, special education increments are estimates based on the student's prior year special education costs or on statewide averages for the various service categories.”

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/schoolchoice/choice2023.html>

What percentage of receiving students are on IEPs or are designated low income?

Total	Special Education	Low Income
81	15	14

Where are students who are leaving Newburyport going?

In 2022-23 20 students are leaving NBPT:

- Triton (11)
- Hamilton-Wenham (1)
- Virtual Schools (6)
- Amesbury (1)
- Ipswich (1)

In the past two years, NPS had the following slots open:

	2022-2023	2021-2022
1	10	0
2	10	0
3	0	0
4	0	7
5	0	0
6	10	7
7	10	7
8	5	0
9	15	15
10	5	0
11	4	0
12	0	5