

ENROLLMENT PLAN
LAKE WALES CHARTER SCHOOLS

Lake Wales Charter Schools (LWCS) is a public school system composed of schools of choice. As parents and guardians make enrollment choices for their students, the system seeks to fulfill its mission to serve every student in the Lake Wales community by accepting all Lake Wales applications first. This is done in two phases. In the first phase, the system fulfills its statutory and contractual duty to grant priority enrollment to Lake Wales residents. In the second phase, the system complies with Florida's Controlled Open Enrollment law by accepting students from outside Lake Wales for any vacant seats that may exist in the charter system.

I. Phase One: Priority Enrollment for Lake Wales Applicants

A. Conversion Schools; Statutory Rights.

By vote of parents and teachers, Lake Wales High School and the Dale R. Fair Babson Park, Hillcrest, Janie Howard Wilson, and Polk Avenue Elementary schools were converted to charter schools. Enrollment for conversion schools is controlled by Fla. Stat. §1002.10(c) stating that "enrollment preference shall be given to students who would have otherwise attended that public school." The students who "would have otherwise attended" each of those public schools are those residing in the attendance zones existing in 2004 at the time of conversion. Lake Wales residents enjoying priority enrollment are shown on the attached 2004 attendance zone maps published by the Polk District at the time.

B. Start-Up Schools; Contractual Rights.

With approval from the Polk District, LWCS created "start-up" middle schools known as Edward W. Bok Academy (Bok South) and Edward W. Bok Academy North (Bok North). Start-up charter schools are equivalent to the District's magnet schools and do not have attendance zones. Nonetheless, the Bok North charter grants a contractual priority to Lake Wales residents as follows:

The School may provide enrollment preferences as allowed for in section 1002.33(10), Florida Statutes. Further, the School may limit the enrollment process to target specific student populations as set forth in section 1002.33(10)(e), Florida Statutes. For the term of this contract, the targeted student population will be those students residing within a reasonable distance from the School. No students living outside of the defined reasonable distance shall be accepted to the school until 100% of the students living within a reasonable distance are accepted. Reasonable distance will be defined as the former Lake Wales High School zone, as depicted in the District's attendance zone map [attached]. The School may also give enrollment preferences to the student populations identified in the provisions of s. 1002.33(10)(d).

The Bok South charter of several years ago did not grant such a priority. However, LWCS stated that if the District authorized Bok North with its additional seats for Lake Wales students,

LWCS would agree to amend the Bok South charter to match the provision now appearing in the Bok North charter.

C. Preferences Granted by Statute.

After enrolling students who would have otherwise attended a school (see above), LWCS, as allowed by Fla. Stat. §1002.33(10)(c), may give preference to the following student populations:

1. Students who are siblings of a student enrolled in the charter school;
2. Students who are the children of the members of the governing board of the charter school;
3. Students who are the children of an employee of the charter school;
4. Students who have successfully completed a voluntary pre-K education program provided by the charter school or the charter school's governing board during the previous year;
5. Students who are the children of an active duty member of any branch of the United States Armed Forces; and
6. Students who attended or are assigned to failing schools pursuant to s. 1002.38(2).

D. Application Deadlines.

Every new student to a charter school must timely apply in order to be enrolled. Fla. Stat. §1002.10(b). Late and incomplete applicants are at risk of not being admitted. The enrollment windows for Lake Wales residents for the 2025-26 school year are as follows:

January 6, 2025 - February 14, 2025. The application portal will close at 11:59 pm on February 14, 2025. There will be a link for late applications starting February 15, 2025.

II. Phase Two: Controlled Open Enrollment for Applicants Outside Lake Wales.

After first accommodating Lake Wales students and preferences granted by statute (see above), LWCS will comply with the requirements of the state's Controlled Open Enrollment law found at Fla. Stat. 1002.31. The law says that a charter school shall allow a parent from any school district in the state whose child is not subject to a current expulsion or suspension, to enroll his or her child in, and transport his or her child to, any charter school that has not reached capacity, subject to the maximum class size requirements in the Florida Statutes and Florida Constitution. The law also allows a charter school the option of providing transportation to such open enrollment students

A. Transfers into the Lake Wales Charter School System.

For consistency, LWCS will mirror its compliance with the Controlled Open Enrollment law to that of the District when allowing transfers from outside its school attendance zones.

Approved applicants will be notified in writing once the enrollment period ends. The approval letter must be taken to the assigned school within 14 calendar days to accept the seat.

B. Questions and Answers.

1. What is Controlled Open Enrollment (COE)?

COE will provide additional opportunities for students to attend a school other than the zoned school where there is available capacity. Through LWCS's COE Plan, parents are provided greater choice options.

2. How will LWCS define capacity and how will LWCS determine which schools are available for COE?

The governing board will shall determine capacity for each charter school based upon its charter school contract.

3. What is the COE application process?

Applications will be available on the LWCS' website during COE open enrollment. Paper copies are available at each school for those without access to a computer.

4. How will the lottery work?

All applications will be processed according to the random number assigned. There will be two separate lotteries with in-zone and out-of-zone students being numbered separately. The out-of-zone applications will only be considered if there are still remaining open seats after the completion of the in-zone lottery.

5. If my child is selected in a lottery to attend a COE school, what am I to do?

Once notified of a lottery selection, the parent, within 14 calendar days, should enroll the student at the specified school using the enrollment approval letter.

6. Will siblings receive preference under COE?

Applicants with a verified sibling shall be noted and maintained on a sibling list. If one sibling is selected, other verified siblings will be given priority. Every effort will be made to place siblings at the same school. An application must be completed for each child. Siblings are defined as a brother, sister, stepbrother, or stepsister, living in the same household. Verification will be required.

7. Will an application submitted in the beginning of Open Enrollment period be given preference over an application submitted later in the period?

Applications submitted during the COE window are given equal consideration regardless of whether submitted on the first day of the window or the last day of the window.

8. If my child is not selected through open enrollment or COE, will there be a wait list?

Yes. Applicants not selected during the random lottery will be placed onto one of four wait lists, which will be reached in the following order:

1. In-zone
2. Out-of-zone with preference granted by statute (see above)
3. Out-of-zone
4. Out-of-zone with statutory preference tied to out-of-zone student

9. If my child is not selected through COE, is there an appeal process?

No. COE is based strictly on capacity and on a lottery procedure.

10. Can I apply through a “hardship transfer” if my child isn’t placed through COE?

Not being selected by the lottery for COE does not constitute a hardship.

11. If my child has an IEP, 504 Plan is he/she eligible to apply for COE?

Yes. If accepted, an IEP team will convene to determine whether the needs of the student can be adequately addressed and that those services in the IEP can be provided at the chosen school. If not, the student will not be enrolled.

12. My child is currently serving an out-of-school suspension or has been recommended for expulsion. Can I request a transfer/placement through COE?

No. Student requests for transfer/placement will not be approved through COE.

13. Will my child have to apply each year for COE?

No. A student who transferred/placed under COE may remain at the COE School until he/she complete the highest grade at the school. However, once the student completes the highest grade at the COE School, the student must return to the school district if another

lottery selection is not obtained. Non-Polk students must return to their school district if another lottery selection is not approved.

14. Does LWCS provide transportation to the COE School?

According to statute, a charter school may provide transportation to COE students.

15. Is the COE transfer/placement option available for my pre-kindergarten child?

No. Pre-K programs are not mandatory; therefore, COE options are not available.

16. Can my child's COE transfer/placement be rescinded/revoked?

Yes. A COE transfer/placement can be rescinded or revoked if false information is provided, or if attendance, tardiness, late pick-ups or discipline incidents happen at the receiving COE School.

III. LWHS Henry McCance IB Program.

The Lake Wales High School Henry McCance International Baccalaureate Programme is a program within LWHS with its own school number, similar to the school numbers assigned by the Polk District to the Bartow and Haines City IB programs, as well as Harrison School of the Arts. These programs are not limited to individual attendance zones. They are special academic programs of choice in public schools open to students in the District who meet certain specific requirements for entrance.