

STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH POLICY
Enrollment

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the enrollment process and requirements for STEM School Highlands Ranch (STEM). STEM is a free, public charter school authorized by the Douglas County School District (DCSD) and serves grades Kindergarten through 12.

II. POLICY

A. Open and Choice Enrollment

STEM participates in DCSD's annual open enrollment and choice enrollment processes, adhering to all applicable dates and deadlines. Parents/guardians must submit an application to enroll their student(s) in STEM. STEM utilized DCSD's open enrollment application software platform for open enrollment.

B. Prioritizing Applicants

When the number of eligible applicants during the open enrollment period exceeds the spaces available in a particular program, grade or school, as determined by the Executive Director or designee, applications will be prioritized by grade level on the annual prioritized list by the priorities listed below.

- First Priority: Siblings of current STEM students
- Second Priority: Founding Families and children and grandchildren of current STEM staff and board members
 - An Enrollment Priority Request Form is required to provide proof of enrollment priority
- Third Priority: Student applicants who are DCSD Residents
- Fourth Priority: Student applicants who are not DCSD residents.

Enrollment priority does not guarantee enrollment if there is no availability at the applicant's grade level. Due to enrollment priorities, STEM does not release information regarding a particular applicant's position on the list. Founding Families, staff members, and board members must complete the Enrollment Priority Request Form in order to provide proof they meet these enrollment priority criteria prior to the First Round Open Enrollment Application period.

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Applicants not accepted during enrollment by STEM during the First Round Open Enrollment Application period will automatically be placed on the annual prioritized list and will have priority over those applicants by applying during the Second Round Open Enrollment Application period. STEM's annual prioritized list will be purged upon the close of the Second Round Open Enrollment period of each year, in accordance with DCSD policies. Applicants not offered enrollment must reapply the following year, as the list does not carry over from year to year.

C. STEM Interest List

STEM offers prospective families the opportunity to complete the STEM Interest Form to receive notifications about open enrollment dates and enrollment related information. Completing the STEM Interest Form is separate from the DCSD/STEM Open and Choice Enrollment processes, and is not considered an open or choice enrollment application. The STEM Interest Form does not guarantee enrollment nor does it obligate families to enroll in STEM.

D. Admission Phase

As per the DCSD Open Enrollment process, STEM offers a First Round Open Enrollment Application period and a Second Round Open Enrollment Application period. Once issued an offer of enrollment during the First Round Open Enrollment Application period, parents/guardians must accept the offer by the First Round Open Enrollment Application period deadline. Once issued an offer of enrollment during the Second Round Open Enrollment Application period, parents/guardians must accept the offer within 48 hours.

Parents/guardians are responsible for providing a reasonable way for STEM to reach them regarding enrollment and are also responsible for informing the school of any change to their contact information. While STEM will attempt to notify families, the school is not responsible for the inability to contact families should they be unreachable (i.e., traveling, inaccurate information, etc.). Failure to respond to the enrollment offer by the deadline may result in the enrollment offer becoming void and the opening will be offered to the applicant next on the annual prioritized list.

E. Enrollment Phase

To complete the enrollment phase, parents/guardians must complete and return all registration and enrollment forms within five working days of when the enrollment offer was issued. Failure to complete and return all required registration and enrollment forms by the deadline may result in the enrollment offer becoming void and the opening will be offered to the applicant next on the annual prioritized list. Under DCSD guidelines, by accepting an offer of enrollment at STEM, you have established STEM as your student's assigned school through 12th grade.

F. Enrollment for Students Receiving Special Education Services

Requests from the parents/guardians of students receiving special education services for choice enrollment to STEM shall be considered in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Consideration of whether or not a student receiving special education services is

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able to enroll in a school of choice shall be implemented in a two-step process. The first step of the process is the Admissions Phase and the second step is the Enrollment Phase. In order for a student receiving special education services to enroll and attend a school of choice, the student must be admitted after completion of the Admissions Phase of the process and then must be approved for enrollment during the Enrollment Phase of the process.

During a school's Admissions Phase of the process, including any lottery or similar process, school shall not in any way inquire into the disability status of a student. If a student receiving special education services is admitted through the Admissions Phase of the process, the student must still be approved for enrollment into the school of choice. During the Enrollment phase of the process, the student's current Individualized Education Program (IEP) shall be reviewed to determine if the student's IEP can be appropriately implemented at the requested school or program so the student can be provided a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). If there is a determination that the student's IEP cannot be implemented at the requested school, student enrollment may be denied and the student may be assigned to another school where the student's IEP can be implemented as developed by the IEP team. Decisions to assign the student to another school shall be made with due consideration for the impact on the child's total education program and must include parent/guardian participation.

G. Vacancies

Should a vacancy become available prior to the end of the Second Round Open Enrollment Application period, the vacancy will be filled as specified above. Should a vacancy become available between the end of the Second Round Open Enrollment Application period and October 1st, the vacancy may be filled through the Choice Enrollment process. Should a vacancy become available after October 1st, it will be the decision of the Executive Director or designee to fill that vacancy or leave it open until the following school year.

H. Choice Enrollment

Following the close of the Second Round Open Enrollment Application period, STEM may offer choice enrollment to new DCSD and non-DCSD students throughout the school year based on availability. New DCSD students are those who have moved into DCSD after the Second Round Open Enrollment Application period has closed and/or have not yet enrolled in a DCSD school. For eligible students, STEM offers a STEM School Highlands Ranch New Student Choice Application process available on the STEMK12.org website.

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I. Transfers

Students may choose to enroll in STEM after Second Round Open Enrollment Application period closes; however, for students already enrolled in DCSD, the process for administrative transfers in accordance with DCSD Policy JCA/JFB-R shall be followed.

Approved by the STEM School Board on _____.
(dd/mm/yyyy)

STEM School Highlands Ranch

By: _____
(Signature, Board Secretary)

(Printed name, Board Secretary)

Adopted: 2019

Revised: January 2023

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