

R 5111 ELIGIBILITY OF RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT PUPILS

A. Definitions

1. "Affidavit pupil" means a pupil attending, or seeking to attend, school pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-1(b) and N.J.A.C 6A:22-3.1.
2. "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Education or his/her designee.
3. **"Appeal" means contested case proceedings before the Commissioner pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:3, Controversies and Disputes.**
4. **"Applicant" means a parent, guardian, or a resident supporting an affidavit student who seeks to enroll a student in a school district; or an unaccompanied homeless youth or adult student who sees to enroll in a school district.**
5. **"Guardian" means a person to who a court of competent jurisdiction has awarded guardianship or custody of a child, provided that a residential custody order shall entitle a child to attend school in the residential custodian's school district unless it can be proven that the child does not actually live with the custodian. It also means the Department of Children and Families for purposes of N.J.S.A. 18A: 38-1e.**

B. Eligibility to Attend School – Pupils Domiciled in the District

1. A pupil over five and under twenty years of age pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-1, or such younger or older pupil as is otherwise entitled by law to a free public education, is eligible to attend school in this school district if the pupil is domiciled within the district:
 - a. **A pupil is domiciled in the district when he or she is the child of a parent or guardian whose domicile is located with the school district.**



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- (1) Where a pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are domiciled within different districts, and where there is no court order or written agreement between the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) designating the district for school attendance, the pupil's domicile is the district of the parent with whom the pupil lives for the majority of the school year, regardless of which parent has legal custody.
- (2) Where a pupil's physical custody is shared on an equal-time, alternating week/month or other similar basis such that the pupil is not living with one parent for a majority of the school year, and where there is no court order or written agreement between the parents designating the district for school attendance, the pupil's domicile is the present domicile of the parent with whom the pupil resided on the last school day prior to October 16 preceding the date of the application.
 - (a) If a pupil resided with both parents, or with neither parent, on the last school day prior to the preceding October 16, the pupil's domicile is the domicile of the parent with whom the parents indicate the pupil will be residing on the last school day prior to the ensuing October 16. Where the parents do not designate, or cannot agree upon, the pupil's likely residence as of that date, or if on that date the pupil is not residing with the parent previously indicated, the pupil will attend school in the district where the parent with whom the pupil is actually living as of the last school day prior to October 16 is domiciled.



- (b) The district shall not be required to provide transportation for a pupil residing outside the district for part of the school year, other than that based upon the home of the parent domiciled within the district to the extent required by law, as a result of being the district of domicile for school attendance purposes pursuant to the provisions of this section.
- b. A pupil is domiciled in the district when he or she has reached the age of eighteen or is emancipated from the care and custody of a parent or legal guardian and has established a permanent home within the district. A home is permanent when the pupil intends to return to it when absent and has no present intent of moving from it, notwithstanding the existence of homes or residences elsewhere.
- c. A pupil is domiciled in the district when the pupil has come from outside the State and is living with a person domiciled in the district who will be applying for legal guardianship of the pupil upon expiration of the six-month "waiting period" of State residency required pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:34-30(e) and N.J.S.A. 2A:34-31. However, any such pupil may later be subject to removal proceedings if application for legal guardianship is not made within a reasonable period of time following expiration of the mandatory waiting period.
- d. A pupil is domiciled in the district when his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) resides within the district on an all-year-round basis for one year or more, notwithstanding the existence of a domicile elsewhere.
- e. A pupil is domiciled in the district if the Division of Youth and Family Services in the Department of Human Services is acting as the pupil's legal guardian and has placed the pupil in the district.



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2. When a pupil's dwelling is located within two or more local school districts, or bears a mailing address that does not reflect the dwelling's physical location within a municipality, the district of domicile for school attendance purposes will be that of the municipality to which the resident pays the majority of his or her property tax, or to which the majority of property tax for the dwelling in question is paid by the owner of a multi-unit dwelling.
 - a. Where property tax is paid in equal amounts to two or more municipalities, and where there is no established assignment for pupils residing in the affected dwellings, the district of domicile for school attendance purposes will be determined through assessment of individual proofs as provided pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:22-3.4 et seq. This provision shall not preclude the attendance of currently enrolled pupils who were permitted to attend school in the district prior to the provision's initial promulgation on December 17, 2001.
- C. Eligibility to Attend School – Other Pupils Eligible to Attend School
1. A pupil is entitled by law to a free public education in the district if that pupil is kept in the home of a person other than the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s), where the person is domiciled in the school district and is supporting the pupil without remuneration as if the pupil were his or her own child;
 - a. A pupil is not eligible to attend school in this district pursuant to this provision unless:
 - (1) The pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) has filed, together with documentation to support its validity, a sworn statement that he or she is not capable of supporting or providing care for the pupil due to family or economic hardship and that the pupil is not residing with the other person solely for the purpose of receiving a free public education; and



- (2) The person keeping the pupil has filed, when required by the district:
- (a) A sworn statement that he or she is domiciled within the district, is supporting the child without remuneration and intends to do so for a longer time than the school term, and will assume all personal obligations for the pupil relative to school requirements; and
 - (b) A copy of his or her lease if a tenant, or a sworn landlord's statement if residing as a tenant without a written lease **or a deed, mortgage or tax bill is owned.**
- b. A pupil shall not be deemed ineligible under this section because required sworn statements(s) cannot be obtained, where evidence is presented that the underlying requirements of the law are being met notwithstanding the inability of the resident or pupil to obtain the sworn statement(s).
- c. A pupil shall not be deemed ineligible under this section where evidence is presented that the pupil has no home or possibility of school attendance other than with a non-parent district resident who is acting as the sole caretaker and supporter of the pupil.
- d. A pupil shall not be deemed ineligible under this section solely because a parent(s) or legal guardian(s) gives **occasional** gifts or makes limited contributions, financial or otherwise, toward the welfare of the pupil, provided the resident keeping the pupil receives no payment or other remuneration from the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) for regular maintenance of the pupil.



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2. A pupil is entitled by law to a free public education in the district if the pupil is kept in the home of a person domiciled in the district, other than the parent(s) or legal guardian(s), where the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) is a member of the New Jersey National Guard or the reserve component of the United States armed forces and has been ordered into active military service in the United States armed forces in time of war or national emergency. Eligibility under this provision shall cease at the end of the current school year upon the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) return from active military duty.
3. A pupil is entitled by law to a free public education in the district if the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) temporarily resides within the district, notwithstanding the existence of a domicile elsewhere:
 - a. The parent or legal guardian, when required by the district, shall demonstrate that such temporary residence is not solely for purposes of a pupil's attending school within the district of temporary residence;
 - b. Where one of a pupil's parents temporarily resides in the district while the other is domiciled or temporarily resides elsewhere, eligibility to attend school will be determined in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:22-3.1(a)1i. However, no pupil shall be eligible to attend school based upon a parent's temporary residence in a district unless the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) demonstrates, when required by the district, that such temporary residence is not solely for purposes of a pupil's attending school within the district.
4. A pupil is entitled by law to a free public education in the district:
 - a. If the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) moves to another district as the result of being homeless, subject to the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:17-2, Education of Homeless Children;
 - b. If the pupil is placed in the home of a district resident by court order pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-2;



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- c. If the pupil previously residing in the district parent(s) or legal guardian(s) is a member of the New Jersey National Guard or the United States reserves and has been ordered to active service in time of war or national emergency pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-3(b); and
- d. If the pupil resides on Federal property within the State pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-7.7 et seq.

D. Housing and Immigration Status

- 1. The physical condition of an applicant's housing, or an applicant's compliance with local housing ordinances or terms of lease will not affect eligibility to attend school.
- 2. Immigration/visa status shall not affect eligibility to attend school for a pupil who is domiciled in the district or otherwise eligible to attend school in the district pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6:22-3.2 and the pupil shall be enrolled without regard to, or inquiry concerning, immigration status. However, the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:38-1 shall not apply to pupils who have obtained or are seeking to obtain a Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Status (INS form I-20) from the district in order to apply to the INS for issuance of a visa for the purpose of limited study on a tuition basis in a United States public secondary school ("F-1 Visa").

E. Nothing in Policy and Regulation 5111 or N.J.A.C. 6A:22-1.1 et seq. will be construed to limit the discretion of the Board to admit nonresident pupils, or the ability of a nonresident pupil to attend school with or without payment of tuition, with the consent of the district Board pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-3(a).

F. Proof of Eligibility

- 1. The district shall accept a combination of any of the following or similar forms of documentation from persons attempting to demonstrate a pupil's eligibility for enrollment in the district:



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- a. Property tax bills, deeds, contracts of sale, leases, mortgages, signed letters from landlords and other evidence of property ownership, tenancy or residency;
 - b. Voter registrations, licenses, permits, financial account information, utility bills, delivery receipts, and other evidence of personal attachment to a particular location;
 - c. Court orders, State agency agreements and other evidence of court or agency placements or directives;
 - d. Receipts, bills, cancelled checks, insurance claims or payments, and other evidence of expenditures demonstrating personal attachment to a particular location, or, where applicable, to support of the pupil;
 - e. Medical reports, counselor or social worker assessments, employment documents, unemployment claims, benefit statements, and other evidence of circumstances demonstrating, where applicable, family or economic hardship, or temporary residency;
 - f. Affidavits, certifications and sworn attestations pertaining to statutory criteria for school attendance, from the parent, legal guardian, person keeping an "affidavit pupil," adult pupil, person(s) with whom a family is living, or others as appropriate;
 - g. Documents pertaining to military status and assignment; and
 - h. Any other business record or document issued by a governmental entity.
2. The district may accept forms of documentation not listed above, and shall not exclude from consideration any documentation or information presented by a person seeking to enroll a pupil.



3. The district shall consider the totality of information and documentation offered by an applicant, and shall not deny enrollment based on failure to provide a particular form of documentation, or a particular subset of documents, without regard to other evidence presented.
4. The district shall not require or request, as a condition of enrollment in school, any information or document protected from disclosure by law, or pertaining to criteria which are not legitimate bases for determining eligibility to attend school. These include:
 - a. Income tax returns;
 - b. Documentation or information relating to citizenship or immigration/visa status, except as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:22-3.3(b);
 - c. Documentation or information relating to compliance with local housing ordinances or conditions of tenancy; and
 - d. Social security numbers.
5. Documents or information of the type referenced in paragraph 4 above, or pertinent parts thereof, may be voluntarily disclosed by the person seeking enrollment. However, the district may not, directly or indirectly, require or request such disclosure as a condition of enrollment.

G. Initial Assessment and Enrollment

1. The district shall use registration forms provided by the Commissioner, or locally developed forms that:
 - a. Are consistent with the forms provided by the Commissioner;
 - b. Do not seek information prohibited by any provision of statute, Code or rule;



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- c. Summarize the criteria for attendance set forth in N.J.S.A. 18A:38-1 for applicant reference, and specify the nature and form of any sworn statements to be filed;
 - d. Clearly state the purpose, in relation to such criteria, for which requested information is being sought; and
 - e. Provide notice to applicants that any initial determination of eligibility is subject to a more thorough review and re-evaluation, and that there is a potential for assessment of tuition in the event that an initially admitted applicant is later found ineligible.
2. The district shall ensure that sufficient numbers of registration forms, and sufficient numbers of trained registration staff, are available to ensure prompt determinations of eligibility and enrollment.
- a. If the district uses separate forms for "affidavit pupil" applications, rather than a single form for all types of application for enrollment, such forms shall comply in all respects with the provisions of G.1. above. Where such forms are used, the district shall provide them to any person attempting to register a pupil of whom he or she is not the parent(s) or legal guardian(s), whether or not they are specifically requested. The district shall not demand or suggest that legal guardianship or custody shall be obtained before enrollment will be considered for a pupil living with a person other than the parent(s) or legal guardian(s), nor shall they demand or suggest that "affidavit pupil" proofs be produced by an applicant seeking to enroll a pupil of whom the applicant has legal guardianship or custody.
 - b. The district level school administrator designated by the Superintendent shall be available, and clearly identified to applicants, to assist persons who are experiencing difficulties with the enrollment process.



3. Initial determinations of eligibility shall be made upon presentation of an application for enrollment, and enrollment shall take place immediately in all cases except those of clear, uncontested denials.
 - a. Where an applicant has provided incomplete, unclear or questionable information, enrollment shall take place immediately, but the applicant shall be placed on notice that removal will result if defects in the application are not corrected, or an appeal is not filed, in accordance with subsequent notice to be provided pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:22-4.2.
 - b. Where an applicant appears ineligible based on information provided in the initial application, a preliminary written notice of ineligibility shall be provided, including an explanation of the right to appeal to the Commissioner of Education. Enrollment shall take place immediately if the applicant clearly indicates disagreement with the district's determination and an intent to appeal to the Commissioner.
 - (1) A pupil enrolled pursuant to this provision will be notified that he or she will be removed, without a hearing before the Board, if no appeal is filed within the twenty-one day period established by N.J.S.A. 18A:38-1.
4. Where enrollment is denied and no intent to appeal is indicated, applicants shall be advised that they shall comply with compulsory education laws and shall, where the pupil is between the ages of six and sixteen, be asked to complete a written statement indicating the pupil will be attending school in another district, attending a nonpublic school, or receiving instruction elsewhere than at a school pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25. In the absence of this written statement from the parent or legal guardian, the district level school administrator designated by the Superintendent shall notify the school district of actual domicile or residence, or the Division of **Child Protection and Permanency** based on "neglect" pursuant to N.J.S.A. 9:6-1, with the pupil's name, the name(s) of the parent/guardian/resident, address to the extent known, denial of admission to the district based on residency or domicile, and



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absence of evidence of intent to attend school or receive instruction elsewhere, for purposes of ensuring compliance with such laws.

5. Where enrollment is denied and an intent to appeal is indicated, or where enrollment is provisional subject to further review or information, enrollment or attendance at school will not be conditioned on advance payment of tuition in whole or part.
6. The Superintendent or designee, shall ensure that information suggesting an applicant may be homeless is identified during the registration process, so that, where appropriate, procedures may ensue in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:17-2 - Education of Homeless Children.
7. Enrollment or attendance in the district shall not be denied based upon absence of the certified copy of birth certificate or other proof of a pupil's identity required within thirty days of initial enrollment pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A: 36-25.1.
8. Enrollment in the district shall not be denied based upon absence of pupil medical information, although actual attendance at school may be deferred as necessitated by compliance with rules regarding immunization of pupils, N.J.A.C. 8:57-4.
9. Enrollment in the district, attendance at school, or educational services where attendance in the regular education program appears inappropriate, shall not be denied based upon absence of a pupil's prior educational record. However, the applicant shall be advised that the initial educational placement of the pupil may be subject to revision upon receipt of records or further assessment of the pupil by the district.

H. Notice of Ineligibility

1. If the district finds the applicant ineligible to attend the schools of the district pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:22-1.1 et seq., or the application initially submitted is found to be deficient upon subsequent review or investigation, notice shall immediately be provided to the applicant consistent with sample form(s) to be provided by the Commissioner. Notices shall be in writing, in



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English and in the native language of the applicant, issued by the Superintendent and directed to the address at which the applicant claims to reside.

2. Notices of ineligibility shall include:
 - a. In cases of denial, a clear description of the specific basis on which the determination of ineligibility was made, sufficient to allow the applicant to understand the basis for the decision and determine whether to appeal. Such description shall identify the specific section of N.J.S.A. 18A:38-1 under which the application was decided;
 - b. In cases of provisional eligibility, a clear description of the missing documents or information that shall be provided in order to attain final eligibility status under the applicable provision of N.J.S.A. 18A:38-1;
 - c. A clear statement of the applicant's right to appeal to the Commissioner of Education within twenty-one days of the date of the notice, along with an informational document provided by the Commissioner describing how to file an appeal;
 - d. A clear statement that the pupil is entitled to attend school for the twenty-one day period during which an appeal can be made to the Commissioner, but that, if missing information is not provided or an appeal is not filed, the pupil shall not be permitted to attend school beyond the 21st day following the date of the notice;
 - e. A clear statement that the pupil is entitled to continue attending school during the pendency of an appeal to the Commissioner;
 - f. A clear statement that, if an appeal is filed with the Commissioner and the applicant does not sustain the burden of demonstrating entitlement to attend the schools of the district, or the applicant abandons the appeal through withdrawal, failure to prosecute or any means other than settlement, the applicant may be assessed, by order of the



Commissioner enforceable in Superior Court, tuition for any period of ineligible attendance, including the initial twenty-one day period and the period during which the appeal was pending before the Commissioner;

- g. A clear statement of the approximate rate of tuition, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:22-6.3, that an applicant may be assessed for the year at issue if the applicant does not prevail on appeal, or elects not to appeal;
 - (1) If removal is based on the pupil having moved from the district, the notice of ineligibility shall also provide information as to whether district policy permits continued attendance, with or without tuition, for pupils who move from the district during the course of the school year.
- h. The name of a contact person in the district who can provide assistance in explaining the contents of the notice; and
- i. Notice that, where no appeal is filed, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) must still comply with compulsory education laws, and that, in the absence of a written statement from the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) that the pupil will be attending school in another district, attending a nonpublic school, or receiving instruction elsewhere than at a school, the district level administrator designated by the Superintendent shall notify the school district of actual domicile/residence, or the Division of Youth and Family Services based on “neglect” pursuant to N.J.S.A. 9:6-1, of the pupil’s name, the name(s) of the parent/guardian/resident, address to the extent known, denial of admission to the district based on residency or domicile, and absence of evidence of intent to attend school or receive instruction elsewhere, for purposes of facilitating enforcement of the State compulsory education requirement (N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25).



I. Removal of Currently Enrolled Pupils

1. Nothing in N.J.A.C. 6A:22-1.1 et seq. and this Regulation shall preclude the Board from seeking to identify, through further investigation or periodic requests for current validation of previously determined eligibility status, pupils enrolled in the district who may be ineligible for continued attendance due to error in initial assessment, changed circumstances or newly discovered information.
2. When a pupil, enrolled and attending school in the district, is later determined to be ineligible for continued attendance, the Superintendent may apply to the Board for removal of the pupil.
 - a. The Superintendent shall issue a preliminary notice of ineligibility meeting the requirements of N.J.A.C. 6A:22-4.2. However, such notice shall also provide for a hearing before the Board prior to a final decision on removal.
3. No pupil shall be removed from school unless the parent, legal guardian, adult pupil or resident keeping an "affidavit pupil," as the case may be, has been informed of his or her entitlement to a hearing before the Board of Education.
4. Once the hearing is held, or if the parent, legal guardian, adult pupil or resident keeping an "affidavit pupil," as the case may be, does not respond to the Superintendent's notice within the designated time frame or appear for hearing, the Board shall make a prompt determination of the pupil's eligibility or ineligibility and shall immediately provide notice thereof in accordance with the requirements of N.J.A.C. 6A:22-4.2.
5. Hearings required pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:22-4.3 et seq. may be conducted by a committee, at the discretion of the full Board, which will make a recommendation to the full Board for action. No pupil may be removed except by vote of the Board taken at a meeting duly convened and conducted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., the Open Public Meetings Act.



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J. Appeal to the Commissioner

1. A district determination that a pupil is ineligible to attend the schools of the district may be appealed to the Commissioner by the parent, legal guardian, adult pupil or resident keeping an "affidavit pupil," as the case may be. Such appeals shall proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-1 and N.J.A.C. 6A:3-8.1 et seq. Appeals of "affidavit pupil" eligibility determinations shall be filed by the resident keeping the pupil.

K. Assessment and Calculation of Tuition

1. If no appeal to the Commissioner is filed following notice of a determination of ineligibility, the Board may assess tuition for any period of a pupil's ineligible attendance, including the twenty-one day period provided by N.J.S.A. 18A:38-1 for appeal to the Commissioner.
 - a. The district may obtain an order of the Commissioner of Education for tuition, enforceable pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:58-10 through recording on the judgment docket of the Superior Court, Law Division, by filing a petition of appeal pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:3.
2. If an appeal to the Commissioner is filed, where the appellant does not sustain the burden of demonstrating entitlement to attend the schools of the district, or abandons the appeal through withdrawal, failure to prosecute or any means other than settlement agreeing to waive or reduce tuition, the Commissioner may order assessment of tuition for any period of a pupil's ineligible attendance in a district, including the twenty-one day period for filing of an appeal and the period during which the hearing and decision on appeal were pending.
 - a. An order of the Commissioner is enforceable through recording on the judgment docket of the Superior Court, Law Division, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:58-10.
3. Tuition assessed pursuant to the provisions of this section shall be calculated on a per pupil basis for the period of a pupil's ineligible enrollment, by applicable grade/program category and consistent with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-3.1. The individual pupil's record of daily attendance shall not impact on such calculation.



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4. Nothing in N.J.A.C. 6A:22-1.1 et seq. precludes an equitable determination, by the Board or the Commissioner, that, when the particular circumstances of a matter so warrant, tuition shall not be assessed for all or part of any period of a pupil's ineligible attendance in the district.

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Revised:

