

## **Information on the Priority Window for School Choice Applications**

This past year, from November 1 to December 15, parents applied for magnet schools or open enrollment and were included in the first selection lottery. Parents may submit applications throughout the year, but submitting them in time for the first lottery provides students with a greater probability of being accepted to an oversubscribed school. Thus, this range of dates is known as the “priority window” for school choice applications.

At the May 13 Board meeting on Policy JFB, the question came up: Why do we close the priority window on December 15?

There are two aspects to the decision on the dates to use for the priority window:

1. TUSD wants to provide certainty, as early as possible, for parents/students that they will be accepted to high-demand schools. When parents enroll their children before the holiday break, staff has the opportunity to process thousands of applications and to run the lottery in time for placement letters to go out in January or early February. With a later closing date the District runs the risk of losing students whose applications have been accepted elsewhere.
2. TUSD also wants to prepare as early as possible for the next school year. The District must have time to use the school-choice placement information to project enrollments, develop budgets, develop master schedules and hire staff. The District is now completing these earlier in the year to improve our ability to hire the best teachers.

Though this provides the rationale for the recommended dates, the specific application closing date has now been removed from Policy JFB. That date is specific to implementation of the policy—to funding, hiring and the development of master schedules—and it may change from year to year. Thus, it will be addressed in a subsequent revision to the regulation JFB-R and related exhibits.