



# **Student and Parent Handbook**

## **2018-2019**



**Mickey Landry, Executive Director**

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## WELCOME TO CHOICE FOUNDATION

Choice Foundation Inc., a nonprofit corporation, was founded by James M. Huger in 2004 to promote parental choice in Louisiana public schools. He and the cohort of founding trustees believe that parents should have the flexibility to choose the right school for their children. No child should be required to stay in a neighborhood school that does not meet the needs of the child.

Following Hurricane Katrina, as the state of Louisiana stepped in to take over New Orleans struggling schools, Choice Foundation applied for a Recovery School District charter, and was awarded the charter for Lafayette Academy. The school currently has 950 students in grades PreK-8. In June of 2010 Choice Foundation was awarded the charter to turn around Esperanza Charter School. Esperanza has 520 students in grades K-8.

### **Lafayette Academy Charter School**

**2727 S. Carrollton Avenue**

**New Orleans, LA 70118**

**504.861.9767**

**Mrs. Darlene Hills-Charlot, Head of School**

**Ms. Ynez Bevins, 504 Coordinator**

**Mr. James Fulton, Title IX Coordinator**

### **Esperanza Charter School**

**4407 S. Carrollton Avenue**

**New Orleans, LA 70119**

**504.373.6272**

**Ms. Nicole Saulny, Head of School**

The school design model is mathematically expressed as

Total Instructional Alignment  
+Date-Informed Decision-Making  
+Extensive Student and Family Support  
A Choice Foundation School

In brief, Choice Foundation schools are thoroughly focused on aligning every resource, every teacher, and every activity with rigorous educational standards. We use data of all sorts throughout our operations to make sure that every decision is made in the best interests of our students. Additionally, we provide as much school- and community-based support as we can to serve the needs of our students and their families.

## CHOICE FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

James Swanson, President

Hans Jonassen, Treasurer

Donald Beery

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Dewana Young-Hill

Alysson Mills, Vice President

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Anthony Carter

Jesse Stewart

Robert Worley

Margo Phelps

Blair DuQuesnay

The Board meets on the last Wednesday of every month (except July and December) beginning at 4:15 p.m. at one of the school sites. Agendas and more information can be accessed at the Choice Foundation website, <http://choicefoundation.org>.

This *Handbook* is intended to provide information about our expectations, policies, and procedures to help students, school officials, and parents work together to ensure opportunities for our students to succeed. We ask that parents and guardians take the opportunity to review this *Handbook* with their children and that they keep it as a reference for questions that may arise during the school year. Parents are encouraged to pursue any questions about the policies and procedures included by contacting their school's administrators. We are here to work with parents in meeting the needs of our students.

## 2018-2019 CALENDAR

First Day of School	Monday, August 6, 2018
Fall Testing	August 13 to September 14
No SCHOOL - Teacher Prof. Dev.	Friday, August 24
NO SCHOOL – Labor Day	Monday, September 3
Progress Reports go home	Monday, September 10
No SCHOOL - Teacher Prof. Dev.	Friday, September 21
FALL BREAK	Monday, October 8
End of 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter (46 days)	Friday, October 12
Parent/Teacher Conferences	Week of October 15-18
Report Cards go home	Thursday, October 18
NO SCHOOL – Teacher Prof. Dev.	Friday, October 19
Interim Testing, gr. 3-8 (LEAP 360)	November 5 to December 14
Progress Reports go home	Monday, November 12
NO SCHOOL (Thanksgiving)	November 19 to November 23
School Resumes	Monday, November 26
Winter Testing (K-2)	December 3 to December 14
End of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter (43 days)	Thursday, December 20
NO SCHOOL – Teacher Prof. Dev.	Friday, December 21
NO SCHOOL – Winter Break	December 24 to January 4
School Resumes	Monday, January 7, 2019
Parent/Teacher Conferences	Week of January 7-11
Report Cards go home	Friday, January 11
NO SCHOOL – Teacher Prof. Dev.	Friday, January 18
NO SCHOOL – MLK Day	Monday, January 21
ELPT/LEAP Connect Testing	February 4 to March 14
Progress Reports go home	Friday, February 8
Interim Testing, gr. 3-8 (LEAP 360)	February 11 to March 1
12:00 pm DISMISSAL	Wednesday, February 27
12:00 pm DISMISSAL	Thursday, February 28
12:00 pm DISMISSAL	Friday, March 1
NO SCHOOL – Mardi Gras	March 4 to March 8
School Resumes	Monday, March 11
End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter (43 days)	Thursday, March 14
NO SCHOOL – Teacher Prof. Dev.	Friday, March 15
Parent/Teacher Conferences	March 19-28
<b>NO MORE THURSDAY 1:00 pm Dismissals after March</b>	
LEAP 2025 Testing Window (gr. 3-8)	April 1 to May 3
NO SCHOOL – Spring Break	April 18, 19, 22
School Resumes	Tuesday, April 23
K-2 End of Year Testing	May 6 to May 15
LAST DAY OF SCHOOL-12:00pm Dismissal	Friday, May 17
End of 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter/Report Cards go home	Friday, May 17

## SCHOOL HOURS AND EARLY DISMISSALS

### School Hours for Students:

**8:00 am to 3:30 pm**

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday**

**8:00 am to 1:00 pm**

**Thursday (April and May - dismissal at 3:30 on Thursday)**

School begins promptly at 8:00 am every day and ends at 3:30 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. Each Thursday, students will be dismissed at 1:00 pm to allow for teachers and school staff to participate in professional learning.

## ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS

All of Choice Foundation schools are nonprofit Type 3 charter schools under the Orleans Parish School Board and participate in the OneApp open enrollment process. We accept students without regard to gender, race, or ethnic origin.

The mission of Lafayette Academy and Esperanza Charter School is to prepare their students for success in a college preparatory high school in an atmosphere that challenges and supports each student to achieve his or her potential.

Our vision is to provide each student with an exemplary education within a system where schools are valued and supported and a strong partnership exists between educators, students, families, and the community to ensure that

- Students have safe, caring environments for learning;
- Students are positively challenged, enriched, and inspired;
- Students learn to be self-motivated and lifelong learners; and
- Students learn to be responsible and contributing members of a global society.

All of our schools operate from the same three core values of *Respect*, *Responsibility*, and *Reach*. These core values guide behavior of students and adults everyday on each campus. Mornings begin with recitation of the school values:

### *Respect*

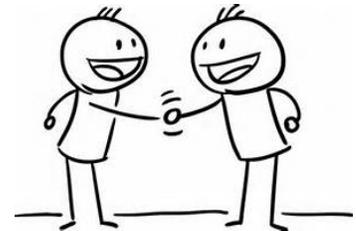
1. We respect ourselves.
2. We respect others.
3. We respect our teachers, and our school.

### *Responsibility*

1. We take responsibility for our education.
2. We take responsibility for our actions.
3. We take responsibility for our school.

### *Reach*

1. We reach for excellence.
2. We reach beyond ourselves.
3. We reach to make the world a better place.



We believe in fostering strong partnerships between home and school. All stakeholders have a responsibility to ensure each child's success.

### Responsibilities of the School

The employees of Choice Foundation schools are charged with providing high-quality educational opportunities for our students. We work daily to address the varied educational needs of students and to provide a safe, productive, school environment for learning.

Maintaining open, constructive communication between school and home in a climate of mutual respect is vital to meeting the needs of the students in our schools. School officials will work closely with students and their families to promote student success.

### Responsibilities of the Student

Students learn best when they set high goals for themselves, work hard to achieve those goals, and conduct themselves responsibly in their schoolwork and actions. Students need to adopt these practices to help ensure their success:

- Attend all classes daily.
- Be on time.
- Be prepared for class with appropriate working materials and completed homework.
- Be respectful to all individuals and property.
- Be clean and neat.
- Be responsible for their own work.
- Be responsible for their actions and decisions.
- Abide by the rules of the school.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner.

### Responsibilities of the Parent/Guardian

Most agree, "The children's first and best teachers are their parents." Choice Foundation schools recognize that student achievement is impacted greatly by the level of parent participation in a student's education. The value of a strong partnership between school and home is immeasurable, and parents or guardians are asked to adopt these basic practices to help school personnel work with their students:

- Recognize that YOU are key to your child's success in school!
- Maintain regular communications with schoolteachers and school officials concerning their children's progress and conduct.
- Ensure their children are in school, on time, every day. Promptly report and explain to school officials any absence or tardiness. *We cannot teach a child who is not in school!*
- Notify school officials of any problem or condition that affects their children or others at school.
- Attend all parent conferences and meetings for parents. Very important information to help your child is provided at those meetings. If you are unable to attend, let your child's teacher know so that you can still receive that information.
- Discuss report cards and school assignments with children.
- Assist children in assuming responsibilities at school.
- Maintain for school officials up-to-date home, work, and emergency telephone numbers and all other emergency and health information throughout the school year.

- If your child is on medication, make sure, you that let our school nurse know, that you maintain an adequate supply for your child, and that your child takes the medication as prescribed by a doctor.
- Send children to school ready to learn.

### School/Home Communication

Ongoing, open communication among students, parents, and school officials is highly encouraged. Parents and guardians are urged to become actively involved in their children's education. Being available to their children to help ensure good school attendance, good work habits and conduct, and preparations for classes is an important way that parents can collaborate with schools.

From time to time, students and parents may have questions or concerns about some aspect of school. Likewise, teachers and administrators may have the need to discuss particular matters in conference with parents and students. Parents are urged to contact their children's teachers with any questions or concerns about their children and to respond to school requests for parent conferences.

If working directly with the teacher does not address concerns satisfactorily, parents are encourage to contact the Division Head, Assistant Head of School, or Head of School. School officials are very willing to work with parents to help ensure that the best interests of their children are served.

## **CULTURE AND DISCIPLINE**

An orderly school climate, characterized by respectful relationships, is the necessary foundation for a successful school. A school must be both safe and supportive for effective teaching and learning to take place. Lafayette Academy and Esperanza have designed their school's Student Code of Conduct around three guiding principles:

1. Fostering a positive school climate helps to engage all students in learning by preventing problem behaviors and intervening effectively to support struggling and at-risk students.
2. Schools that have discipline policies or codes of conduct with clear, appropriate, and consistently applied expectations and consequences will help students improve behavior, increase engagement, and boost achievement.
3. Schools that build staff capacity and continuously evaluate the school's discipline policies and practices are more likely to ensure and promote achievement for all students.

This philosophy of Positive Behavior, Intervention, and Support (PBIS) creates a positive school climate that supports *all* students while holding them to high expectations. Students who misbehave are held accountable for their actions through appropriate and proportional consequences while *also* helping them acquire new behaviors and strategies needed to prevent future instances of misbehavior.

Without a consistent discipline policy, none of what we envision for our schools can happen. Each of the schools has school-wide behavior policies designed to be age-appropriate and aimed to address misconduct with immediate and fair consequences in a proactive manner.

## Anti-Bullying Policy

Choice Foundation Schools are committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for all students. Therefore, any form of bullying, intimidation, and harassment is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated in any form.

It shall be a violation of policy for any student to bully, intimidate, or harass any other student. All informal and formal allegations of bullying or intimidation will be investigated and documented. Any student found guilty of bullying shall be disciplined accordingly.

Bullying is defined as a form of aggression and it occurs when a person(s) willfully subjects another person (victim) to an intentional, unwanted and unprovoked, hurtful verbal and/or physical action at any school site or school-sponsored activity or event. Examples of bullying may include:

- Physical bullying – punching, shoving, poking, kicking, strangling, hair pulling, or excessive tickling
- Verbal bullying – name calling, teasing, gossiping
- Emotional bullying – rejecting, wronging, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, diminishing personal characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity or perceived sexual orientation, manipulating friendships, isolating, or ostracizing
- Sexual bullying – exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, suggestive gestures, abuse involving actual physical contact, or sexual assault
- Cyberbullying – web-based bullying or bullying using any form of electronic media (Facebook®, text messaging, instant messaging, email)
- Hazing – initiation rites against a student or a member of a team
- Stalking – intentionally following or harassing another person in a manner that would cause a person to feel alarmed or to suffer emotional distress

School personnel are responsible for reporting and/or investigating all incidents of bullying and must take appropriate action. Incidents will be promptly investigated and documented, giving due regard to the need for confidentiality and the safety of the alleged victim and/or any individual who reports the incident of bullying. All parties and their parents will be notified of the allegation. Consequences will be given for inappropriate behavior and retaliation against victims or witnesses will not be tolerated. The involved parties may be referred for mediation or social work intervention as deemed appropriate.

Proven allegations of bullying can have serious consequences for the person found guilty. Continued bullying, intimidation, or harassment of any kind will be turned over to local authorities for investigation and possible legal charges.

## Code of Conduct and Discipline Policies

The Student Code of Conduct and discipline policy and procedures for each school are located in each school's *School Handbook* and can be found on the school's website. The regulations and policies must be taken seriously and supported by parents and guardians.

## Special Considerations for Students with Disabilities

### 1. Suspensions and Change in Placement

Students with disabilities have legal protections when the discipline constitutes a change in placement. If a student violates the Student Code of Conduct, before consequences or punishment are imposed, the Head of School or designee must consider whether the student has an IDEA or Section 504 disability, or is a student who is "thought to have a disability."

While all students may be disciplined, the placement of students with disabilities cannot be “changed” when the offense is directly related to his/her disability or when the IEP or Section 504 plan is not implemented, *except in the case of emergency circumstances (drugs, weapons, significant bodily injury)*.

A change in placement is a legal term that applies to the situations described below:

- Any suspension for more than 10 consecutive days;
- A series of suspensions with days that total more than 10 total school days in a school year

In-school suspension and suspension from the bus may constitute a suspension to the extent they affect implementation of a student’s IEP. The school’s Special Education Coordinator, with assistance and documentation from the Assistant Head of School, monitors the number of days each student has been suspended.

Students with disabilities who have not reached this 10-day threshold may be suspended under the procedures that apply to all students.

A student’s school suspension that occurred in any Louisiana school during the same school year of transfer into another Louisiana school “counts” and is added to any additional suspensions in the new school.

An **in-school suspension** will not be considered as a suspension counting toward a change in placement as long as a student is given the opportunity to continue to: appropriately participate in the general curriculum; receive IEP specified services; and participate with nondisabled children to the extent (s)he would have in the current placement.

Students **sent home from school** in the morning because of misconduct are considered to have a full-day suspension. Students sent home in the afternoon are considered to have a half-day suspension. These conditions apply unless the student’s Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) specifically calls for the student to receive a shortened school day when certain behaviors are exhibited.

When **transportation** is an IEP service, a student’s removal from the bus is considered a suspension unless transportation is provided in some other way. In this case, transportation has been determined to be necessary for the student to access educational services. When transportation is not an IEP service, the student’s removal from the bus is NOT considered a suspension. In this case the student/parent have the same obligations for the student to get to and from school as any nondisabled peers suspended from the bus. School officials will consider whether the bus behavior is similar to classroom behavior that IS addressed in an IEP and whether the bus behavior should be addressed in the IEP or through a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

## 2. Manifestation Determination and Services

Within 10 days of any decision resulting in a change of placement the student’s IEP Team must meet and determine whether the student’s behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability. Relevant information will be reviewed and discussed to determine if the conduct caused was caused by or directly and substantially related to the student’s disability.

If the IEP team determines that the student’s behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability, the school must return the student to the placement from which s/he was removed unless the IEP team agrees to a change of placement as part of the modification of the Behavior Intervention Plan. Note: this provision does not apply to students involved with weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury.

If the IEP team members agree that the student’s conduct was not a manifestation of his/her disability, then the student may be subject to the same consequences as all students. A student with a disability who is removed from his/her current placement must receive the following services beginning on the 11th day of *cumulative* suspensions during the school year. The IEP team will identify and document educational

services the student will receive to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting (e.g., an interim alternative educational setting (IAES), etc.) and provides, as appropriate, services and modifications, which are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a change in placement, consistent with the discipline guidelines, is appropriate for a student with a disability who violates a code of student conduct.

### 3. Weapons, Drugs, or Serious Bodily Injury: Emergency Procedures

In circumstances related to a student's use of weapons, drugs, or imposition of serious bodily injury, school officials may remove a student for 45 school days to an interim alternative educational setting. Because drugs, weapons, and serious bodily injury are so dangerous to a safe school climate, a school may remove a student under these circumstances for 45 school days regardless of whether the team believes that the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability.

The 45 school days do not include those days the school is not in session, e.g., Spring Break. The IEP team may specify a removal for fewer days than the maximum 45 days.

During the 45 school day period, the school must convene a meeting to determine whether the student's behavior is a manifestation of his/her disability. The IEP team will conduct or review a Functional Behavior Analysis (FBA) and create a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) addressing ways that the school can help the student. The student may be referred for a reevaluation. If all team members determine that the conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the 45 school day emergency placement may proceed to a disciplinary proceeding afforded to all students.

Parents who disagree with the appropriateness of the alternative placement or remedial disciplinary setting or services may request an expedited due process hearing with a hearing officer. The hearing officer has the authority to

Return the student to the placement from which the student was removed if the s/he determines that the removal did not comply with proper procedures or that the student's behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability; or order a change of placement to an alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days if maintaining the current placement of the student is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

The school may repeat its request for an expedited hearing if it believes that returning the student to the original placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

The student remains in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the 45-day or code violation time period (if less than 45 school days), whichever occurs first, unless the parent and school personnel agree otherwise.

Nothing prohibits school personnel from reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability to appropriate authorities or prevents State law enforcement and judicial authorities from exercising their responsibilities with regard to the application of Federal and State law to crimes committed by a student with a disability.

### 4. Application of Section 504 and ADA

Generally, students with disabilities eligible for services only under Section 504/ADA (i.e., need related and supplementary aids and services only) are entitled to the procedural safeguards specified in this section. An exception to this general rule applies to students with behavior that is not a manifestation of

his/her disabilities. In this case, these students are entitled to those services normally available to nondisabled students who are suspended or removed pursuant to the school's *Code of Student Conduct*.

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Absence Policy**

Upon returning to school following an absence, the student must bring a note signed by parent/guardian or doctor explaining the reason for the absence. (A phone call from the parent is also acceptable and must be documented in JCAMPUS.)

In all cases of suspensions, the parent/guardian shall receive written notice of the suspension, the reasons, and the terms.

Types of Absences:

Type of Absence	Description	Work Make-up Policy
<b>Excused Absence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Absences of two or fewer consecutive school days due to personal illness or serious illness in the family (parent communication required.)</li> <li>▪ Extended hospital or recuperation from an accident stay in which a student is absent for three or more consecutive school days as verified by a physician, dentist, or nurse practitioner licensed in the state.</li> <li>▪ Extended contagious disease within a family in which a student is absent for three or more consecutive school days as verified by a physician or dentist licensed in the state</li> <li>▪ Observance of special and recognized holidays of the students' own faith.</li> <li>▪ Visitation with a parent who is a member of the US Armed Forces or the National Guard who has been called to duty or is on leave from overseas deployment (shall not exceed five school days per school year.)</li> <li>▪ Extended personal physical or emotional illness in which a student is absent for three or more consecutive school days as verified by a licensed physician or nurse practitioner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work may be provided by the teacher for the student to complete and receive full credit.</li> <li>▪ The student has one day to complete the work for each day absent. For example, if the student misses three days of school, the work must be turned in within three days of the student's return.</li> </ul>
<b>Unexcused Absence</b>	Any absence not meeting the requirements set forth in the excused absence definition, including but not limited to, out of school suspensions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work may be provided by the teacher for the student to complete and receive full credit.</li> <li>▪ The student has one day to complete the work for each day absent. For example, if the</li> </ul>

		student misses three days of school, the work must be turned in within three days of the student's return.
<b>Half-Day Absence</b>	Student is marked half-day absent if s/he misses more than 25% but less than 50% of the instructional day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work missed may be assigned by the teacher.</li> <li>▪ The student has one day to complete the work and may receive full credit if it is completed satisfactorily.</li> </ul>
<b>Out of School (OSS) Suspension of 10 Days or Less</b>	Students who are removed from the classroom for disruptive, dangerous, or unruly behavior and receive a consequence of suspension out of school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work missed will be assigned by the teacher.</li> <li>▪ The student may receive either partial or full credit for work if it is turned in within two weeks upon the student's return and completed satisfactorily.</li> </ul>
<b>Out of School (OSS) Suspension of More than 10 Days</b>	A student who is suspended out of school for more than ten days for violation of school policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work missed will be assigned by the teacher.</li> <li>▪ The student may receive either partial or full credit for work if it is turned in within two weeks upon the student's return and completed satisfactorily.</li> </ul>
<b>In-School Suspension (ISS)</b> <i>not considered an absence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A student is removed from the classroom for disruptive or unruly behavior and placed in a behavior intervention room on campus.</li> <li>▪ Students that are recommended for in-school suspension shall avoid interruption to the instructional program and accrual of absences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A student who is assigned in-school suspension shall continue to receive assignments and work on schoolwork during their in-house suspension period.</li> <li>▪ The student is not considered absent.</li> </ul>

Tardies and Unexcused Absences:

It is important that students attend school every day and arrive on time for the beginning of the day. When your child misses the first part of the morning, not only are they missing breakfast, but they are missing a very important part of the academics. Please start the day on a positive note by being on time.

School attendance is mandatory for school-age children. While we will do our best to support parents, it is our legal obligation to report families of habitual absent or tardy students to the proper authorities. Choice Foundation follows the following procedures to address tardiness and unexcused absences:

Occurrence	Action Taken by School	Action Taken by Parent
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> unexcused absence or tardy</b>	Teacher contacts parent regarding student's attendance or tardiness.	Note sent home to parent; parent sign and return notification.
<b>5<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence or tardy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teacher contacts parent for parent conference.</li> <li>▪ The purpose of this conference is for the parent to respond to inquiry regarding the</li> </ul>	During the conference, the parent/guardian signs a receipt of the notification from the school of unexcused absences/tardies.

	nature of the absence(s) or tardies.	
<b>6<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence or tardy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teacher refers student to school social worker and provides background information to assist social worker; social worker proceeds with consequences as defined by ACT No.745 of the Louisiana Legislature.</li> <li>▪ School nurse follows up on medical reasons cited for absences (if applicable.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meet with social worker to address absences/tardies and formulate a plan to remediate the situation.</li> <li>▪ Work with the school to help the child be on time and reduce absences.</li> </ul>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence or tardy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social worker continues to work with family and moves through established procedures.</li> <li>▪ Social worker, student’s teacher(s), nurse, and administration, and parent keep in communication and continue to implement interventions.</li> </ul>	

### **Admission**

Lafayette Academy and Esperanza will fully comply with Louisiana law and Orleans Parish School Board policy regarding admission policies and procedures, as well as all other state and federal provisions. In particular, as a public charter school, the schools will not discriminate on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a handicapped person, or any other form of bias that is not permitted by public school districts. The schools will be nonsectarian in all respects and will comply with state and federal laws applicable to public schools concerning church-state issues. In accordance with charter school law, Choice Foundation schools will not charge tuition. Choice Foundation schools participate in the OneApp process with the Orleans Parish School Board. For more information visit <https://enrollnola.org>.

### **Arrival, Dismissal and Early Check Out**

School begins promptly at 8:00 am every day. Students should follow all school expectations from the moment they enter the school grounds. Students should enter the school with their shirts tucked in and uniforms worn properly.

School personnel are on duty beginning at 7:30. The school takes no responsibility for supervision of students before 7:30 am. Please do not drop your child off at school before 7:30 am.

Dismissal is structured and orderly. Teachers will be on duty to monitor dismissal. All students must leave school at dismissal time unless they are participating in a school-sponsored after school activities monitored by an authorized adult.

The end of the day is critical to students’ learning. Teachers and students are summarizing their learning objectives for the day and, most importantly, building their independent skills through organizing their work, writing down their homework, and clarifying any misunderstandings they might have on assigned homework. In order to eliminate the number of distractions during this critical time of day, early check out will not be permitted after 2:45 pm.

If it is necessary for a student to be dismissed from school before the end of the school day, parent/guardian must notify the school office and report to the school office to sign the student out. The

student will not be released to unauthorized personnel. Proper identification must be shown to the school official before the student will be released.

*Divorced/separated parents should file a court order or other legal document with the school office that verifies guardianship and/or visitation. We cannot withhold a student from a parent without this documentation.*

Emergency Dismissal/Closings:

During emergency weather and other situations, school closings and early dismissals will be announced through the school’s automatic call system, School Reach. It is important that parents ensure that the school maintains the parent/guardian’s current phone number for this situation.

**Curriculum**

Our curriculum is aligned to the Louisiana State Standards. Academic progress is monitored through interim assessments that are administered throughout the year. Teachers and administrators use assessment data to determine individual placements and interventions for students to support academic achievement.

The following instructional materials and resources are used in Choice Foundation:

Subject	Core Curriculum	Supplemental Resources	Assessments
English Language Arts	ELA Guidebooks Foundational Skills Kits (K-2) Zoo Phonics (PK-1) OWL (PK)	Smarty Ants (PK-2) i-Ready (K-8)	IRLA (K-8) LEAP 360 (3-8) NWEA-MAP (K-2) LEAP 2025 (3-8)
Mathematics	Eureka OWL (PK)	i-Ready (K-8) Zearn (K-5)	LEAP 360 (3-8) Affirm (3-8) LEAP 2025 (3-8)
Social Studies	Louisiana Social Studies Units	DBQs	EAGLE LEAP 2025 (3-8)
Science	Great Minds (gr. 4) Louisiana Science Units & Tasks	Mystery Science (K-2)	LEAP 2025 (3-8)

Throughout the year, students participate in fieldtrips and experiential activities that are connected to real-life situations for developing problem-solving, thinking, and social skills. Data on each student are maintained in JCAMPUS. Parents can access JCAMPUS and view their students’ academic, attendance, and behavioral data at any time. For more information on how to access JCAMPUS, contact your school administrator.

**Fieldtrips**

Field trips are a valuable part of the school curriculum and arrangements for such trips are made by teachers well in advance. Parents will be notified of the date, time, destination, and cost and will receive a permission slip to sign and return to the school by a specified date. If the field trip permission slip is not signed and returned to the teacher, the student will not be allowed to attend the field trip. Parents will be given a specified date on which any charges for admission fees, transportation, lunch, etc. must be paid.

In the event the student has paid to attend the field trip and for some reason cannot attend, money can be refunded only if the school has not yet paid for the cost of the activity.

Parents who serve as chaperones on field trips are responsible to the teacher. No person seventeen years or younger shall be allowed to participate in a school-sponsored field trip unless s/he is a student of the school involved in the activity.

If, while attending a field trip, a student displays unacceptable behavior, s/he may not be allowed to attend the next field trip scheduled by his/her class and may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Fire Drills**

Fire drills are held at regular intervals. When the fire alarm sounds, students will leave the classroom in a quiet and orderly manner.

1. When evacuating the classroom and school building, students are to:
2. Form a single line (led by the teacher.)
3. Leave books behind.
4. Proceed as a class to the designated area.
5. Remain with the teacher throughout the drill.
6. When the "all clear" signal is given, students will return to their classroom with their teacher to await further instructions.

### Misuse of Fire Equipment:

The intentional setting off a fire alarm in a school is a serious act, which interrupts the instructional program and could result in student injury. Students guilty of setting off a fire alarm may be subject to suspension and/or recommended for expulsion.

The discharging of a fire extinguisher by a student, except in the case of a fire, is also an act that has serious consequences and could result in appropriate disciplinary action.

## **Food Services**

All schools serve free breakfast and lunch to all students. Please alert your school administration of any food allergies or special dietary considerations for your child.

## **Grading Policy**

This section contains an overview of the grading policy. Additional details can be found in the *Choice Foundation Pupil Progression Plan* located on each school's website.

### Grading Scale for grades 1-8:

A = 93 to 100%  
B = 85 to 92.9%  
C = 75 to 84.9%  
D = 67 to 74.9%  
F = 0 to 66.9%

### Grading Scale for PK and kindergarten:

Mastery = 83 to 100%  
Developing = 66 to 82.9%  
Beginning = 0 to 65.9%

Teachers will have a minimum of two grades per week for students for each subject. The following items will comprise grades for Choice Foundation schools that will determine the final grade for each quarter:

Exams, Tests, Quizzes, and Projects – 50%  
 Classwork and participation – 30%  
 Homework – 20%

Dates for the grading periods, including progress reports and parent conferences, are indicated below.

Important Dates:

End of Quarter	Progress Reports Go Home	Parent conferences (report cards given out)	Report cards go home with students who did not attend conference
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter October 12, 2018 46 days	Monday September 10, 2018	Tuesday and Wednesday October 16-17, 2018 4:00-6:00 pm	Thursday October 18, 2018
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter December 20, 2018 43 days	Monday November 12, 2018	Wednesday and Thursday January 9-10, 2019 4:00-6:00 pm	Friday January 11, 2019
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter March 14, 2019 42 days	Friday February 8, 2019	Conferences scheduled by school March 19-29, 2019	Wednesday March 20, 2019
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter May 17, 2019 42 days	No Progress Reports	Conferences scheduled by school as needed; retention conferences continue with parents	Report cards go home with students last day of school – May 17

## Health and Wellness

Physical, mental, and emotional health among students is taken very seriously. Students who are sick cannot learn well. Proper care and convalescence are important to the long-term health of students, the health of others at school, and student performance.

### School Nurse

Each of our schools employs a fulltime on-site nurse to assist students who are ill or injured. The school nurse along with school administrators will be responsible for monitoring all students' health records, keeping health records current, and participation on student service teams that require medical knowledge.

Students who are ill will be sent home after contact with the parent or other person identified on the student's emergency card. A student who is absent more than three days may be required to produce a note from a doctor before s/he is allowed to return to school. Students with communicable diseases must produce a doctor's note prior to being allowed back into school. To protect your child in the event of an emergency, we must have correct telephone numbers and contact information on file at the school. Please update phone numbers and addresses as they change.

Parents bear the responsibility of informing the school of chronic health conditions and of communicable diseases contracted by the student. Health conditions of particular concern are head lice, chicken pox, measles, and conjunctivitis.

## Medication

When students must take medication at school, school personnel are very careful to ensure that students are properly treated with medication and that medication is not given to or used by students for whom the medication was not prescribed.

The nurse will be available during the day to administer medication in accordance with guidelines and monitor student health. The medication shall be maintained in a locked, secure compartment in the nurse's office.

Students shall not be allowed, under any circumstances, to carry and/or dispense his/her own medication during the day. This policy applies to all forms of medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, including but not limited to over-the-counter medication, aspirin, Tylenol, or similar generic drugs, cough medicines, and drops. If a child is taking medication during the day, the parent must send the medication to the office along with a written note from a physician and the parent, detailing the dispensation of the medication.

Parents of students who are regularly on a medication schedule must have a completed medication form and on file in the office and a copy with the nurse. This form asks for an explanation of the medication and directions and times for dispensing it.

The student will report to the nurse's office at the appointed times whereupon the medication will be dispensed by the nurse.

It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the student has the proper amount and/or refills of the medication at the school. If medication dosage or schedule is changed or eliminated, it is essential that parents notify the school nurse of the changes.

## **Promotion and Retention**

Decisions to promote or retain students will be based on successful completion of the curriculum as evidenced by mastery of Louisiana State Standards and fulfillment of state attendance requirements. Students shall receive academic intervention services before retention is considered.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Promotion Requirements</b>
Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Attain mastery of at least 67% of required Louisiana State Standards in reading and math as evidenced by work samples, anecdotal records, photographs, assessment results, other)</li><li>▪ Have not more than fourteen days of unexcused absences</li></ul>
Grades 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Attain at least a D average in each content area – English language arts, math, science, and social studies – reflecting 67% mastery of Louisiana State Standards</li><li>▪ Have no more than ten days of unexcused absences</li><li>▪ Achieve “Basic” or above in at least two content areas tested on LEAP. (3<sup>rd</sup> grade only)</li></ul>
Grade 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Must attain at least a D average in each content area – English language arts, math, science, and social studies – reflecting 67% mastery of Louisiana State Standards; and</li><li>▪ Have no more than ten days of unexcused absences.</li><li>▪ LEAP 2025 - Must score “Basic” in at least two core subjects (ELA, math, science, social studies) at the end of grade 4.</li></ul>

	<p>Students who do not score “Basic” in at least two subjects on LEAP will be placed on an individual academic improvement plan. The plan must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Address each core subject in which the student scored below “Basic”</li> <li>▪ Include at least two interventions per core subject, including participation in summer school</li> <li>▪ Be signed by the parent/legal guardian, following discussion of the plan</li> <li>▪ Continue until the student achieves “Basic” in the core subjects that led to the development of the plan.</li> </ul>
Grade 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Must attain at least a D average in each content area – English language arts, math, science, and social studies – reflecting 67% mastery of Louisiana State Standards; and</li> <li>▪ Have no more than ten days of unexcused absences.</li> </ul> <p>Students should score at least “Basic” in either ELA or math and “Approaching Basic” in other subjects to be promoted to grade 9.</p>

Promotion will not rest solely on the successful attainment of any one indicator, but will include all criteria. If the criteria indicate that s/he is not prepared for promotion to the next grade, the student will be referred to the school-based committee for final placement decision. Final decisions will be made on an individual basis after thorough review and consideration of all data, including:

- Attendance and reasons for absences
- Grades in all subjects and GPA
- Anecdotal records and teacher input
- Student’s academic growth throughout the school year as measured by benchmark assessments
- Student’s age
- Previous years’ records, including history of academic and social interventions
- Previous years’ academic records, including state test scores
- Previous retention(s)
- Student’s social and emotional development
- Behavior records
- Student participation and progress in the summer remediation program

The SBLC and/or RTI committee are/is required to evaluate all promotion and retention instances. These committees are collaborative problem solvers of experienced and knowledgeable school personnel for ensuring that each student has access to the appropriate services and support needed for success. Students who are struggling in school – academically, behaviorally, socially, or emotionally are referred to the RTI team. The team collects and analyzes information, recommends appropriate intervention(s), arranges support for the intervention, and assists and supports the school in implementing and monitoring the progress of the student.

Teachers refer struggling students to the RTI team as soon as a concern is identified. The RTI process is established to ensure that all resources and supports are considered and offered to the student for his/her success. The committee revisits and reviews each student’s progress on a regular basis, making adjustments as needed. Communication with parents is established at the beginning and maintained throughout the process. At the end of the year, documentation and data are reviewed again for the students who are being considered for retention, and a decision is made by the SBLC committee regarding retention or promotion of the student.

Additional information on Choice Foundation policies for placement and promotion can be found in the *Choice Foundation Pupil Progression Plan* posted on each school’s website.

## **Protection of School Employees**

Any individual, including the parent/guardian of any student attending a Choice Foundation school, who physically assaults or threatens harm to any teacher or school employee, will not be allowed to enter the campus or school grounds without prior approval of the Head of School.

## **Social Workers**

Due to the significant amount of time students spend in school, it is important to identify, refer, and support students with potential social, emotional, and mental health conditions. Full time social workers are on-site at each school and are available to provide support or connect students and families to health care agencies that can provide needed care. We collaborate with health care professionals, mental health specialists, community agencies, and families to ensure students receive the best care and ongoing support.

### Mandatory Reporting

If there is a cause to believe that a child's physical, mental health or welfare is endangered because of abuse or neglect, or that neglect was a contributing factor in a child's death, all Choice Foundation staff are required by Louisiana laws to make a report to the appropriate agency.

## **Special Education Services**

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), the term "special education" means specifically designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent should contact their child's teacher, the school's Special Education Coordinator, or school administrator to discuss options for accommodations that may help facilitate the child's educational progress. At any time, a parent is able to request an evaluation for special education services.

Qualifying students may receive special education services, including speech or language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, adapted physical education, counseling, assistive technology, extended school year services, special education instruction, or special transportation.

Students who are identified as academically gifted or talented will receive enhanced learning opportunities during the year.

## **Student Dress Code**

Providing an effective learning environment for all students includes expectations that students are dressed and groomed in a manner that permits them to actively participate in school and does not distract the education process.

Students shall observe modesty, appropriateness, and neatness in clothing and personal appearance. A student is not considered appropriately dressed if his or her appearance or clothing causes a disruption or disturbance in class or at school-sponsored activities. Hair may not be rolled or covered by a scarf, hat, or cap. Hair bows and accessories should be modest in size and colors should coordinate with the school uniform colors.

All students at Choice Foundation Schools are required to wear school uniforms. Specific uniform requirements for each school are described in the *School Handbook* of each school and can be obtained from the school office or on the school website.

## Student Privacy

Act 837 of Louisiana school legislation provides for limitations and prohibitions on the collection and sharing of student information. Additionally, Act 677 requires that schools publish information on their websites about the sharing of students' personally identifiable information.

Choice Foundation Schools understand and respect the importance of student privacy. We are committed to keeping all personally identifiable information about your child(ren) private and only sharing that information when legally required to do so, or when necessary for the education, health, or safety of your child(ren). Below are some examples of what information may be shared.

- Information and educational records may be shared with employees of Choice Schools that have a role in providing a high quality education to your child, including but not limited to teachers and administrators, to be used for designing, implementing, and evaluating educational programming and academic achievement.
- Information and educational records may be shared with high schools to be used for processing applications for admission and financial aid.
- Information and educational records may be stored on third-party computer systems for data storage and back-up purposes.
- Information and educational records may be shared with the Louisiana Department of Education and third party providers when required by law to provide and bill for special education and mental health services and evaluations.
- Information may be shared with third party providers to provide educational programming, co-curricular programming, and assessments that strengthen the educational programming we offer to your child.
- Information and health information may be shared with medical professionals and third party providers to provide medical care or billing for medical care services (if applicable).
- Information may be shared with third party providers for the provision of transportation and food services.
- Samples of student work and accomplishments may be displayed in the school or published to recognize your child's achievements.
- Your child's name may be published in programs related to school events.

We will NOT share personally identifiable information with any person or entity who desires to use the information for purposes that do not benefit the education health, or safety of your child. If you do not consent to the disclosure of your child's information for legitimate educational purposes, you must indicate so in writing to the school office within ten days of your child's first day of attending school.

Please be aware that opting out has implications that will impact you and your child. Some examples of this include:

- We will not be able to provide transportation to your child, because we cannot share your child's name and address with our transportation partners.
- We may not be able to give your child access to computer-based learning opportunities.
- We will not be able to provide a report card with your child's name on it because we cannot share your child's information with our Student Information Systems vendors.

- We cannot provide a transcript to any high school that your child applies to. You will not be able to access your child's grades online because we won't be allowed to share their information with our technology vendors.

Notice to Parents of Eighth Grade Students Regarding Financial Aid Application:

As the parent of a student in eighth grade, you will be asked to review and provide written consent to share data with the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Aid (LOSFA). Failure to provide written consent may result in delays or may prevent successful application for admission to a postsecondary educational institution and for state and federal student financial aid.

Once you have given consent, that consent shall remain in place unless and until you submit a formal written request to withdraw consent to your child's school.

**Technology and Internet Usage**

Students are not to bring any electronic devices to school, including gaming devices and music players. If a parent requires their child to carry a cell phone for emergencies, it is not allowed to be turned on without prior approval from a teacher or administrator.

Technology and internet access in school is to be used solely for educational purposes. Inappropriate use of computers, any other technological device, and internet will result in disciplinary action. Examples of unacceptable use include:

- Defacing or purposely damaging electronic devices in any way
- Using Facebook or other social sites
- Vandalizing the data of another user
- Gaining unauthorized access to resources or entities
- Invading the privacy of individuals
- Posting anonymous messages
- Access, downloading, or printing files or messages that are profane, obscene, or that use language that offends or degrades others
- Posting personal information about others or the school
- Shopping online

Internet access provides unique resources and opportunities for collaborative work. The use of the Internet must be in support of education or academic research. Students shall use the Internet under the direction and supervision of teachers. Choice Foundation schools utilize filtering technology to limit access by students to inappropriate content on the Internet as well as any content or materials that may be harmful. In addition to the filtering system, teachers and staff will monitor student Internet and computer usage in the classroom. Violations may result in discipline up to and including the expulsion of the violating student.

**Transportation**

Choice Foundation Schools follow the student transportation policies set forth by the Louisiana Department of Education in Bulletin 1191. Outlined below are additional bus procedures established for our schools.

Choice Foundation has contracted a specified number of buses for the school year. This means that we are limited to the total number of seats available per bus and overall. Parents are encouraged to complete a Transportation Request Form (available from the school office) as soon as possible to ensure seat

availability. Once all seats are filled on a specific bus or bus route, students will be placed on a “wait list” in the order in which the Transportation Request Form was received.

There are a limited number of RTA bus tokens available to students who are placed on the wait list. Please contact the school for specifics.

Choice Foundation Schools serve students throughout the entire Parish of Orleans. The schools and the transportation vendor will work with parents to position routes where the majority of students requesting transportation can be served. In some instances, the school will not be able to provide bus stops at specific requested locations. **NOTE: The Schools CANNOT provide pickup and drop off service to any parish other than Orleans.**

For all students grade 2 and younger, a parent/guardian must be present at the bus stop to meet the student. If the parent/guardian cannot be there, the parent/guardian must identify for the school the designee who will pick the child up in their place. If there is no one at the stop to meet the student, transportation will attempt to call the parent while the driver continues the route and will return to the stop after the route is complete. If there is still no one at the stop when the bus returns, or if transportation is unable to contact a parent/guardian, transportation will contact the school and attempt to return the student to the school. If no one is available at the school, transportation will turn the student over to the New Orleans Police Department.

#### Changes in Bus Routes/Stops

Should a need develop for any changes in designated bus stops or routes, parent/guardians shall contact the school. The school shall work with the transportation company for review and possible establishment of new stops. Please note the following regarding changes to bus routes/stops:

- It may take up to 5 business days for a new stop to be added. (If the stop can be added at all.)
- It will take at least 2 business days for a dropped stop and student to be re-added to a bus route.
- Any student who is not at his/her designated stop for 3 consecutive days will be dropped from the route.
- It will take at least business 3 days for a student to be re-added to a bus route.
- Any modifications to existing routes or stops will affect *all* students/parents on that route or stop.

#### Student Rules on the Bus

1. School Transportation is an extension of the school classroom and all school rules are in effect on the bus. No weapons, drugs, fighting, fireworks, lighters, inhalants, or sexual contact.
2. When the bus arrives, students should stand well back from the curb or stopping point and wait until the bus comes to a full stop. If you can touch the bus at any point when you are standing outside, you are in danger of being hurt.
3. Keep head and arms inside the bus at all times.
4. Do not eat or drink on the bus.
5. Do not mark, litter, or damage the vehicle.
6. Avoid unnecessary loud talking, yelling, or distractions that can affect the safe operation of the driver.
7. Keep objects on your lap and keep in control of your belongings.
8. Remain seated when the bus is in motion.
9. No obscene language, bullying, harassing, or teasing.

The school will follow the same discipline procedures on the bus as in school. In the event of any misconduct or violation of bus rules, transportation shall submit in writing the initial documentation of the incident and shall provide it to the school immediately. The school will review the incident form, will take appropriate action and will inform transportation in writing of any disciplinary actions as well as the start date and return date for all suspensions. All suspensions include extra-curricular trips of any type.

Any problems that may occur on the bus should always be reported to the bus driver. If a student reports an incident to his or her parent or guardian that needs to be addressed, then the parent or guardian of that student should contact the school no later than the following day to report the incident.

Repeated misbehaviors will result in permanent loss of transportation services. Students suspended from the bus may be eligible to receive bus tokens to get to and from school, one token each way, if they have no other means of transport.

We ask that parents never confront bus drivers for any reason. All concerns should be addressed with the school administration. This will ensure all matters are handled appropriately.

### **Visitors to the School**

All visitors must report to the front office to obtain a visitor's pass. A pass will be issued at the sole discretion of the Head of School or her designee, depending on the nature of the visit to enter the school. All visitors must show proper identification and sign-in upon arrival. The Visitor's Pass must be worn at all times and left with the front office upon signing out to leave the campus.

## **Grievance Process:**

Choice Foundation encourages school partnerships among families and recognizes that parents are vital and necessary partners within the school community. We believe that it is the responsibility of our school to create a welcoming environment, conducive to learning and supportive for comprehensive family involvement programs. Working in collaboration with parents, teachers, students, administrators, and other educational resources, Choice Foundation recognizes rights of parents and their involvement in their child's education. In keeping with this commitment, we will address any parental concerns/complaints brought to the attention of the appropriate party expeditiously.

This grievance procedure is applicable for all complaints including those pertaining to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), Title IV of the Civil Rights Act and the Age Discrimination Act.

1. If a concern arises from a school situation, the student or parent should first discuss the issue with the staff member most directly involved immediately. The staff member will document the concern, attempt to reach a solution, and report the concern to the assigned Grade-Level Division Head within two (2) school days from the time the concern is introduced.
2. If the concerned student or parent believes that the discussion with the staff member has not led to a satisfactory conclusion, s/he may direct their concern to the assigned Grade-Level Division Head. The Division Head will document and investigate the concern within two (2) school days from the time the concern was reported. The Division Head will follow up with the student or parent in the form of a meeting, phone conference, written or e-mail response within three (3) school days from the time the concern was initially reported.
3. If after following an investigation, discussion and response for resolution conducted by the Grade-Level Division Head, the student or parent believes that the matter has not been resolved the student or parent may direct the concern to the Head of School or the Assistant Head of School. The Head of School or his/her designee or Assistant Head of School will investigate the matter within two (2) school days from the time the concern was reported. The Head of School or Assistant Head of School will track the documentation of the staff member and Grade-Level Division Head and any attempts of resolution. The Head of School or the Assistant Head of School will affirm with the student or parent that the matter is under investigation, explain the steps to follow, and formally document the concern/complaint. The Head of School or his/her designee or Assistant Head of school will hold a conference with the student or parent with a means to resolve the complaint within two (2) school days following the investigation.
4. After following a School Level Administrative Investigation, if the concern/complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the student or the parent, the concern/complaint should be directed to Choice Foundation's Executive Director. The Executive Director or his designee will record the concern/complaint and will address it as promptly as possible and no longer than two (2) school days from the time the concern/complaint was reported.

5. If after following a conversation and/or meeting with the Executive Director or his designee and appropriate parties, if the situation has still not been resolved to the satisfaction of the student or parent, the matter should be taken to Choice Foundation's Board of Directors.

6. Following a meeting and/or conversation with the Board of Directors and appropriate parties, if the concern/complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the student or parent, the matter may be taken to Orleans Parish School Board School by either contacting the school's board Chairman, President, or Parent Family and Community Engagement Specialist.