

**2008-2009 Online Request Process
Frequently Asked Questions**

1. Should I go online to submit my request for schools?

You need to go online to request a school *if*:

- Student is enrolling into *kindergarten*.
- Student is enrolling into the District *for the first time*.
- *Student is changing schools* for the 2008-09 school year.

2. What if my child is currently enrolled in a Natrona County School District preschool?

If your child is currently enrolled in a District preschool, you must go online and complete the school request process.

3. What happens if my child is currently in a school and I request a different school as my first request for the 2008-09 school year?

If you request a different school other than the one your child is currently enrolled in, your child loses his/her seniority at the current school and is processed through the random selection process.

4. How do I choose a school?

Elementary and secondary school brochures are sent to each current student's home in early January. Brochures are also available around the community, in schools and at the District's Central Office. Information about each school is also available at the District's website, www.natronaschools.org.

Each elementary and secondary school also will host an open house during the month of January. A list of dates is included in the school information packet sent home in January, on the website, at each school, and the information will be published in the Casper Journal. Parents are invited to contact any school and visit with the administrators and staff.

5. Is my child placed in a school during the online process on a first-come, first served basis?

No. Any student that completes the online request process between January 9 and January 31 has an equal opportunity for his/her first choice.

6. I don't have Internet access at home. What do I do?

Please visit **any school** or the **District's Central Office**, 970 N. Glenn Rd., between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Computer terminals are also available at any of the **Natrona County Public Library** branches.

If you're not comfortable using a computer, staff at the schools and the District offices are happy to assist.

7. I'm not sure that my child is ready for kindergarten. Can I decide to go online and sign up later?

We recognize that not all children are ready for kindergarten at the same time, and it can be a difficult decision for families to make. However, it is ***recommended that parents complete the online process during January*** and, if necessary, withdraw the child later. If a parent enrolls a kindergarten student ***after*** the online request process is complete, the ***preferences for sibling no longer apply***.

The District has provided "A Parent's Guide to Kindergarten Readiness" pamphlets, which are available at the Child Development Center, the Department of Family Services, Head Start, all elementary schools, and at the District office. We recommend you use the booklet to assess your child's readiness, and *if you're still not sure he or she is ready, go online in January and make your school requests anyway*. Work on some of the kindergarten skills over the next several months with your child. If you don't feel he or she is ready for kindergarten in the fall, you can choose to withdraw him/her at that time.

8. My older child is already in school. Can I send my kindergartner to the same school?

Preference for children enrolling in Kindergarten is given to sibling(s) of students currently attending the school. *Preferences are assured through the duration of the online request process*. Once the online request process is complete, preferences will be honored on a *space-available basis only*.

9. Define "sibling."

Sibling is defined as children of the same natural parents; step parents; foster parents; co-habiting parents; grandparents; temporary guardians, including those housing homeless children; or children housed by respite care providers ***living within the same household***.

10. There is one school I'm particularly interested in for my child. Does my child have a better chance to get into the school if I choose the same school three times?

No. Requesting a school more than once does not increase your child's chances of getting into that school. While school attendance in the Natrona County School District is not limited by attendance boundaries, it is limited by physical space and staffing capacities. Since we cannot guarantee each child his/her first request, omitting alternative schools will limit a child's chances of getting into other school options. *Requesting three different schools is highly recommended*.

The District offers many excellent schools with programs that offer quality education for children. Please investigate the schools and develop second and third choices. If you would like some help in choosing alternative schools based upon your child's learning needs, please call Dr. Anne LaPlante at 577-0239.

11. How are students placed in schools?

For **Kindergarten**:

Families complete the online school request process, choosing **three different schools**. Then, after close of the online process, students are placed according to the following order:

1. Students currently enrolled in kindergarten who are being retained.

2. Kindergarten-age siblings of students *currently attending* the school.
3. Other children requesting the school are placed in the school. If there are *more requests than space is available*, the following steps are applied:
 - a. All remaining students who completed the online request process by January 31 are assigned a random number.
 - b. Numbers are sorted in ascending order.
 - c. Seats are filled beginning with the lowest number first and then to the next number until all remaining seats are filled.
 - d. Those students not placed in the school are automatically placed on a waiting list maintained at the District office. The order of the waiting list is determined by the student's random number.
 - e. This process is also applied to 2nd and 3rd choices.

For example: A two-unit school will have capacity for 34 kindergarten students. 40 kindergarten students request the school. Two of the students have siblings currently enrolled in the school at the school and one is being retained. These three students are placed first, leaving 31 open seats. The 37 remaining students will be assigned a random number and students with the 31 lowest numbers are placed in the school. Remaining students are placed on a waiting list in order of randomly assigned number. The six students not placed in their first-request school, will automatically be processed in their second-request school—after preferences and students choosing that school as a first choice have been placed. If no space is available at the second-request school, the process continues for the third-request school. If a child does not receive any of the first three requests for schools, the District will contact the parents to discuss options.

For **1st – 12th Grade**

1. Students currently enrolled in the school wishing to remain at the school for the upcoming school are placed.
2. Students currently on the waiting list (created by the online process) for entry into the school are placed.
3. Students who are changing schools and complete the online request process. If there are more *requests than available seats*, student will be assigned a random number and placed according to the process described above.

12. What happens if I don't get my child into my first preference school?

It's important to remember that the online request process ends January 31 and that there is a great deal of time between then and mid-August, when school begins. Families change their minds or leave town, often creating openings in schools.

For example, during the 2007-08 school year, **600 kindergarten students completed the online process**. In February, 2007:

- 560 were placed at their 1st choice school
- 24 were placed at their 2nd choice school
- 6 were placed at their 3rd choice school
- 10 students were contacted by the District. By the beginning of the school year (August), of these 10 students, three had been placed in their 1st choice school, two had

been placed in their 2nd choice school, one in the 3rd choice school, one in the 4th choice school, and three were no longer enrolled in the District.

Between January 31 and the first day of school, as space becomes available for the next school year, District personnel will call families (based upon their number on the waiting list) and offer them the opportunity to place their child in that school. Parents choose one of these:

- Accept the opening.
- Decline the opening and move child's name to the bottom of waiting list.
- Take child's name off the waiting list.

For students who are presently enrolled in grades K – 11, as space becomes available for the current school year, parents may choose to:

- Accept the opening and immediately move child to that school.
- Accept the opening and opt to move child on or before the first day of the next quarter.
- Decline the opening and move child's name to the bottom of waiting list.
- Take child's name off the waiting list.

13. What if my child is already on a waiting list?

Children *currently enrolled in NCSD* on waiting lists retain their priority on waiting lists from one year to the next.

14. Does my child have preference if the school I request is considered my “neighborhood school”?

The Natrona County School District is an open-enrollment school district. Parents and students request which school(s) the students will attend, including the school closest to their home if they wish. However, no preference is given to those students living closer to a school. Whenever possible, the District provides transportation for students attending a school outside of their neighborhood.

15. When do I need to bring documentation for my child?

Once school assignments are confirmed, schools will host orientation and registration activities. You will be asked to submit and process required paperwork at that time.

16. When will school assignments be confirmed?

Every effort is made to confirm school assignments prior to March 1, 2008.