

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · GARY

School Enrollment in Gary: One District, One Memorandum, 2026

Here the question is not which district you are in but how the district is governed. Having a single district saves you one piece of research and raises a second question.

SHORT ANSWER

On numbers the statewide answer is clear and **in writing**: the state education department's memorandum does **not** treat the absence of a Social Security card, proof of address or a birth certificate, an inability to speak English, or undocumented status as grounds to refuse enrollment. On which school, the answer here is simple: **Gary has a single school district, the Gary Community School Corporation**. In the state's largest county there are eleven separate districts and a family has to work out which one it is in; **that problem does not exist here**. But this city has a history of its own and you need to know it. The one real limit is immunization, and there **enrollment and attendance come apart**.

Enrollment cannot be refused: the memorandum's own words

The memorandum of **July 26, 2024**, signed by the state attendance officer and addressed to principals and attendance officers, lists the following, and we pass it on as written. If enrollment is refused, name the memorandum and ask for the reason **in writing**.

GROUND	WHAT THE MEMORANDUM SAYS
No rental receipts, mortgage document, driver's license, Social Security card or lease	State law requires no document with an address as a prerequisite to enrollment . A school may ask for a document to help determine where the family lives, but if the parent cannot produce one the child cannot be turned away for that reason alone
Being undocumented	Not a ground to refuse; the memorandum cites a Supreme Court decision
Not being a citizen	Not a ground to refuse. A child who intends to remain in the state for at least thirty days must be in school, and enrollment must be immediate once that intent is established
Not speaking English	Not a ground to refuse; the memorandum cites a second Supreme Court decision
No birth certificate	A school asks for a certified birth certificate or other reliable proof of date of birth . If it is not produced within thirty days the school notifies the state police clearinghouse for missing children. That is routine procedure, not an accusation

Arriving late in a semester, no stable residence, moving mid-year, living with a kinship caregiver

All are among the grounds the memorandum says cannot be used to refuse

THE ONE REAL LIMIT IS IMMUNIZATION, AND ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE ARE NOT THE SAME

- The memorandum is clear: **children must be enrolled whether or not they have the required immunizations.**
- But if the school does not grant the statutorily allowed **twenty-day waiver**, the child **may not attend** beyond the first day of school.
- So **enrollment must happen in every case; attendance is what can be limited.** We do not soften that distinction, and it is the most useful sentence in this guide: enroll and close the immunization gap in parallel.
- **If your immunization record is in Turkish or held in Turkish registries**, take it to the school nurse without waiting for enrollment and ask which vaccines match. **We could not read the state immunization schedule from an official source**, so we print no list.

Gary's own history: the question is not which district but how it is governed

The district was **under state control from 2017**. At that point it carried a large operating debt, and local control had been handed to a state-appointed emergency manager. The state board that oversees financially distressed units **voted unanimously on June 17, 2024** to lift the district's distressed status, and the decision took effect on **July 1, 2024**. The exit conditions were two years of maintained solvency, a balanced budget, a set cash reserve and a sustainable financial plan.

But there is an important limit and the reporting states it plainly: lifting the status **did not mean a return to an elected school board**. Residents are reported to be unable to elect their own school board for the foreseeable future; some board members were appointed by the state education department. **We could not verify the district's board structure today.** What that means in practice for a parent: the route familiar in other cities of **going to an elected board member** may not work the same way here. Write first to the school office and then to the district office, and **leave every request in writing**.

The biggest gap in this file

Let us be honest: **we could not verify the district's 2026 and 2027 enrollment calendar, the documents it asks for, or the languages counted in its English learner program.** We do not say there are none; we say we could not read them. So this guide gives you no document list. What you should do: call the district, ask **in writing** for the list of documents required for enrollment, and **do not postpone enrollment because something is missing**. The memorandum is on your side and you can take the sentences above with you.

WE PRINT A TENSION AS IT STANDS

- At least one school district in this state states in its enrollment letter that the state education department requires **proof of Indiana residency for all students**, and imposes an age limit on the documents.
- **That is the opposite of what the state memorandum says.** We take no side, but we state the hierarchy: **the state memorandum is the higher source.**
- Our advice: take what is on the district's list as far as you can, **but do not postpone enrollment over a missing document.** A district office may still ask; complete the rest later.
- **Ask for an interpreter at the moment of enrollment, and ask in writing.** We could not verify which languages this city serves and we read no record of Turkish support being available.

Language: do not skip the home language survey

Indiana administers a **home language survey once**, at first enrollment in Indiana, and it stays in the student's file. Any student with a language other than English indicated on the survey is given a **placement assessment** to determine English learner status, and the identification and placement process must be completed **within thirty calendar days of enrollment**. If the student transfers to another school inside the state, the original survey follows them. **Be sure to write Turkish on the survey:** it is the one record that leads to language support, and not recording that Turkish is spoken at home costs the child support they are entitled to.

- 1 Call the district and ask in writing for the list of enrollment documents.** There is one district in this city, so that is one telephone call.
- 2 Prepare the bag:** the child's passport, a birth certificate and translation if you have them, the immunization record, any address document you hold (a lease works) and the previous school's report if you have one. **Things will be missing and that is normal.**
- 3 Enroll first, close the gaps later.** Enrollment must happen in every case; the limit on attendance is immunization.
- 4 Show your immunization record to the school nurse on day one** and ask which vaccines match.
- 5 Write Turkish on the home language survey.** Language support flows from it and status is determined within thirty calendar days.
- 6 Leave requests and complaints in writing.** The district left state control but did not return to an elected board; school office first, then the district office.
- 7 Get a library card in the same week**, and go to **the city's own system**; the county library system does not serve this city.



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Office: 321 N Central Expy, Ste 206, McKinney, TX 75070

Attorney responsible for this guide: Asim Clinch, Esq., Clinch Law Firm P.C. Attorney Asim Clinch is a member of the Missouri Bar (No. 76084) and practices U.S. federal immigration law.

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