

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · LOUISIANA

School Enrollment in Louisiana 2026: Five Communities, Two Systems

New Orleans has no neighborhood school and enrollment is centralized; in the other four communities the address assigns the school. The real obstacle is usually not a number, it is proof of residency.

SHORT ANSWER

There is no single story in this state, and sentences copied from other guides in this series are not automatically true here. The district's own sentence: New Orleans has a unique school system where the majority of our schools are public charter schools, and enrollment and applications for all of them run through **a single unified system. We correct two stale facts:** the system is now called **NCAP**, and the official enrollment site is **enrollnolaps.com**; the older address that circulates online now lands on **a parked domain page**. **The other four communities run classic zoned systems** and the address assigns the school. **Immigration documents need not be required for enrollment**; the district that states this most clearly is New Orleans, and the basis is federal: *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982). **The real obstacle is usually proof of residency**, and that list is set by **your district**, not the state.

Five districts, two logics

COMMUNITY	ENROLLMENT LOGIC
New Orleans	Centralized choice application; no neighborhood school. The system is named NCAP
Baton Rouge	Mixed: a zoned school by address, plus a separate competitive application for selective programs
Mandeville	Classic zoned system; the school locator works from the street address
Metairie	Classic zoned system; enrollment is fully online
Lake Charles	Classic zoned system; zone lookup and enrollment are two separate tools

New Orleans: centralized application and calendar

The district's own explanation says schools are separately operated but enrollment is unified: the district manages enrollment and applications for all NOLA-PS schools through a unified enrollment system. The family handbook is even firmer: students at directly operated schools and at all three types of charter schools go through this process.

DATE	EVENT
November 2, 2026	2027-2028 main round applications open
January 22, 2027	Application deadline
By March 31, 2027	Placement results
Every May	Open enrollment after the main round

ARRIVING MIDYEAR DOES NOT LEAVE YOUR CHILD WITHOUT A SCHOOL

- The district's own sentence says families new to the system who must enroll **after September 4, 2026** go to a Family Resource Center.
- Students who have never attended in this system and need a seat are enrolled into open seats on a **first-come, first-served** basis.
- Placements are made **in person** and according to seat availability.
- **What that means for you is plain:** your child starts school, but it will be an open school, not the school you wanted. If you can, build your moving calendar around the main round.
- **Changing schools midyear is not free:** from October 1 students may not change schools by preference alone; a separate request form is used.

Immigration status: the clearest sentence in the series

From the New Orleans family handbook, in the district's own words: Students shall neither be required nor asked to present documentation pertaining to immigration status, nor shall they be denied admission to school based on immigration status or failure to present documentation of immigration status ... Reference to the immigration status of a child or guardian shall not appear on any forms, materials, paperwork, or records produced, distributed, or collected by the school.

That sentence does not only say we do not ask; it says no reference to immigration status may appear on any form, material, paperwork or record. **The same sentence could not be found in the other four districts.** We do not say none exists; we say **research could not find one.** One district's nondiscrimination text lists age, race, religion, national origin, disability and sex but not immigration status; another parish district publishes an immigration practice guide on its legal page, and **the titles were verified but the contents could not be read.**

FOREIGN BIRTH CERTIFICATES: THREE DISTRICTS, THREE POSITIONS

- **Jefferson Parish, the Metairie side:** accepts it explicitly. Its own sentence: A foreign birth certificate is an acceptable document for verifying the student's information.
- **St. Tammany, the Mandeville side:** says only State Certified Birth Certificate and **does not mention foreign documents at all**. Whether they are accepted **could not be verified**; call the parish child welfare and attendance office.
- **New Orleans:** counts a birth certificate, a **passport** or a certificate of live birth as proof of age; where a birth record cannot be obtained from the country of birth, a passport or citizenship documents may stand in. With no documents at all, the student is **enrolled provisionally**.
- **We publish all three and pick no side.**

Proof of residency: usually the real obstacle

- **New Orleans:** an electric, water, cable or internet bill from the last 90 days; a housing assistance document; a mortgage agreement **or a lease whose end date is in the future**; a homestead exemption document; or an official letter from a government agency. **For a family staying in someone else's home** there is a separate route: a written statement, residency documents in the host's name and **photo identification for both the parent and the host** (a license, a **passport** or a state identification card).
- **Metairie:** asks for **two** documents from a broad list, and one of the accepted options is **an official document issued or approved by the immigration agency. That is an option, not a requirement**. With none of them, the principal gives the family **fifteen school days**.
- **Mandeville:** the line is hard. For a renter the primary document must be a signed lease **from a realty office, apartment management or a mobile home park**; the district's own wording is not from an individual. **A lease from an individual landlord does not count as a primary document**, which is a real trap for a newcomer. If you stay with someone else, a **notarized** shared residency form is required, and **photocopies are not accepted**.
- **Baton Rouge:** the selective program application asks for **two residency documents**, and after applying they must be delivered to the first-choice school **within four days**.

Age and grade rules: statewide

- Compulsory attendance runs **from age 5** through the end of the school year in which the student turns 18. Without a diploma a student may stay through the year in which they turn 21, or 22 with an individualized education program.
- **The cutoff is September 30:** a child must be 5 on that date for kindergarten and 4 for the four-year-old program.
- **A real obstacle for a 6-year-old arriving from Turkey:** a 2021 act made **kindergarten a prerequisite for first grade**. The act requires either **a full school year of attendance in a full-day kindergarten** or **passing an academic readiness screening** before enrollment. Get the kindergarten attendance record before you move and have it translated by a sworn translator.
- **Students entering fifth or ninth grade from outside:** in one parish, students arriving from out of state, from a private school or from approved home study must take the **English language arts and**

mathematics portions of the state placement test.

- **A student arriving with high school credit** from a non-approved program must demonstrate proficiency for the credit to be recognized, and that right is **one time only**.

THE VACCINATION EXEMPTION HERE IS UNUSUALLY BROAD

- The statute says the requirement does not apply where the person or their guardian submits **either a physician's statement or a written dissent**: ... a written statement from a physician stating that the procedure is contraindicated for medical reasons, or a written dissent from the student or his parent or guardian.
- So **a medical reason is not required; a parent's written dissent is enough**.
- The statute also requires that **the text and citation of that provision appear in every notice sent to families**.
- **We do not publish dose counts**: the official table's column alignment did not read the same way twice. For dose counts see the state health department's own document.

Two neighboring communities, two opposite structures

This contrast belongs in the guide: in New Orleans every charter school is gathered into one centralized application, while the neighboring Jefferson Parish district writes on its own page that Each charter school has its own unique admissions process. So **there, every charter school runs its own admissions**. Same state, neighboring communities, opposite structures.

There is a contradiction in Baton Rouge and we pick no side: two pages on the selective program site give **the same application window under two different school-year labels**. So we publish no school-year label here; we say **the window that opened on October 14, 2026** and send you to the district.

On language: enrollment pages and parent documents in this state appear mostly in **English, Spanish and Vietnamese**, with some in French, Chinese and Arabic. **No record of Turkish-language service was found in any of the five districts**, and no written sentence on requesting an individual interpreter was found either. Ask your school **in writing** for an interpreter and ask for the answer in writing.

- 1 **Do not delay enrollment**. In New Orleans open the main round calendar; in the other four open your district's enrollment page.
- 2 **Check the school district before you move**: the city name on your mail does not tell you which district you fall into.
- 3 **Ask your district for the residency document list** and, on the Mandeville side, ask up front who your lease comes from.
- 4 **Prepare the kindergarten attendance record for a child arriving from Turkey**; it is the prerequisite for first grade.
- 5 **Bring the foreign birth certificate and a sworn translation**; three districts take three different positions.
- 6 **If you are considering a vaccination exemption, know the written dissent route**; a medical reason is not required in this state.
- 7 **Every form you sign at enrollment is a declaration**. If a form asks about immigration status, **read it before you sign and consult your attorney if needed**.

8 For local enrollment pages and calendars see [New Orleans](#), [Baton Rouge](#), [Metairie](#), [Mandeville](#) and [Lake Charles](#).



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN LOUISIANA

Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients across Louisiana, in Turkish and English. Free evaluation:

clinchlaw.com/free-evaluation · +1 866-491-7669

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.

Attorney advertising. This guide is general information only. It is not legal advice and is not a substitute for the advice of an attorney. Information compiled from official sources as of October 14, 2026; fees and procedures change, so check the official site before you act. Reading this guide does not create an attorney-client relationship. The choice of a lawyer is an important decision and should not be based solely upon advertisements. Latest version: clinchlaw.com/city-guides/louisiana-immigration-attorney