

STEP BY STEP · MEMPHIS

School Enrollment in Memphis: Which District Are You In? 2026

Enrollment does not depend on immigration status and the state says so in writing. But there is no single school district in this county: alongside the county-wide district there are six municipal districts opened in 2014.

SHORT ANSWER

The reassuring part first: enrollment does not depend on immigration status, and the state education department says so **in writing** in its legal questions and answers document, naming *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982) by name and citation. The same document says **federal privacy law prohibits requiring a Social Security number to enroll a child in school** and that districts **should never turn a student away over a missing document; no specific document may be required** as proof of address either. **Now the part specific to this city:** there is **no single school district** in the county. Alongside the county-wide district there are **six municipal districts that began taking students in August 2014**. **So which district a home with a Memphis postal address lands in depends on the address.** **And one distinction up front:** school **enrollment** is open, but a school **scholarship** falls under a separate law.

The district map: one county, seven school administrations

The structure in this county is this: **the county-wide district** plus the districts of the county's six municipalities. The six municipal districts began taking students **in August 2014**, and they are: **Arlington, Bartlett, Collierville, Germantown, Lakeland, Millington**. The county-wide district today serves **the city and the unincorporated parts of the county**.

And even the name does not answer the question: according to the secondary sources the research read, some schools whose names carry a municipality's name stayed **in the county district** rather than that municipality's. **This item was read from secondary sources**, because the district's own site could not be opened in this research. **So do not decide by the name of a school or by the neighborhood it sits in.**

QUESTION	WHERE THE ANSWER COMES FROM
Is my address inside the city limits	The jurisdiction boundary layer on the city's open data portal; for a definitive answer, 311 . The layer dates from 2020 and the boundary may have changed since
Which school district does my address fall into	A separate question , answered by the relevant school administration; run the address lookup before you enroll
Which school is assigned to this address	The third question, after the district; the district's own address lookup

Ask those three questions in order when you look at housing and get the answer **before you sign a lease**. Moving from one school district to another is one of the hardest mistakes to fix after the fact. **And this question joins the reverse address trap in this city:** the city's own boundary data lists **deannexation ordinances**, meaning that while the envelope still carries this city's name the home may have been taken **out** of the city limits.

Enrollment does not depend on status, and the state writes it

The state education department's own legal questions and answers document asks plainly **whether schools may refuse to enroll undocumented immigrant children**, and the answer is one word: **no**. The same answer applies to the actual or presumed citizenship and immigration status of **a parent or guardian**. The document also writes that enrollment practices which **chill** school participation on the basis of citizenship or immigration status may violate federal civil rights law.

Documents that may be asked for, from the state's own list

- **Proof of identity and age**, for example a certified birth certificate.
- **Official records and a transcript** from the previous school.
- **Immunization records** or proof that immunization is not required for the child.
- **Proof of home address**. The fine point here: the state says districts **may not require a specific document**; proof may be shown with **a variety of documents** such as a bill, a tax document or a lease.

CARRY TWO SENTENCES VERBATIM, THEY MAY HELP AT A COUNTER

- **First:** districts **should never turn a student away over a missing document**.
- **Second: federal privacy law prohibits requiring a Social Security number to enroll a child in school.**
- Another state agency's enrollment procedure document is even plainer: enrollment **may not be refused because a Social Security card or number, a health form, a birth certificate or other information cannot be produced**; the only thing that may be required is the **immunization record**.
- The same document says a school asking for additional documents **must immediately state that no document will be used in relation to immigration status**.
- **No birth certificate does not close the road: the school decides** which document counts as proof of age. Students in foster care and students experiencing homelessness are enrolled **immediately and without documents**.

THE DISTRICT'S OWN LIST COULD NOT BE READ THIS ROUND, AND WE ARE NOT INVENTING IT

- The county-wide school district's own enrollment page **could not be opened by any route** in this research.
- So we do not write **the district's own enrollment document list**. The list above is **the state's** list; the district's own page may ask for more.
- We also do not write **the district's answer on identification numbers**. The federal rule prohibits the number, but we could not see how that item appears on the district's own form.
- We do not write **the languages the district actually translates into** or **the procedure for a family staying with relatives**.
- **We are not carrying another city's district list here**, because these lists genuinely vary from district to district.
- **What to do:** call the district before you enroll, **name the documents you hold** and ask whether they are accepted, and in the same call ask **whether you may request an interpreter**. **Research found no published Turkish material** statewide, but a translation right exists that can be requested.

Enrollment and a scholarship are different things

- **School enrollment: no law** conditioning enrollment on immigration status was enacted. The research scanned the state's acts in force and found none; the education department's written answer today is still **no**. Attempts were made in two consecutive years and neither became law.
- **A school scholarship: a separate act** governs the education freedom scholarship and provides that **the application of a student who cannot establish lawful presence is denied**. The same act treats the scholarship as **public assistance**, which attaches the new state law's verification and reporting chain **to the scholarship application**.
- **In one sentence:** enrolling your child in a public school is open, but applying to a **scholarship program** is not the same thing. **Consult your attorney before applying for a scholarship**.

Age and attendance

For kindergarten a child must have turned **five by August 15**; compulsory education runs **from six to seventeen**. There is a separate exception for a student transferring from another state who will turn five by the end of the year.

- 1 **Run the address lookup first:** which side of the city limit is your home on, and which school district does it fall into. Those are two separate questions.
- 2 **Get the answer before you sign a lease.** Changing districts after a move is hard.
- 3 **Carry printouts of the state's two written sentences.**
- 4 **Prepare the immunization records;** that is the only document that may be required.
- 5 **For proof of address, bring what you have:** no specific document may be required, and in this city the single utility bill works well at this door.

- 6 **Call the district** and ask for its own list, its answer on identification numbers and its translation languages; we could not read them this round.
- 7 **Ask about an interpreter in the same call.**
- 8 **A scholarship application is a separate decision;** consult your attorney before you make it.



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