



Public School Choice Resource Guide

Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Reauthorized as No Child Left Behind

What is the purpose of Public School Choice?

The purpose of Public School Choice is to provide all students in low-performing Title I schools that have been identified for improvement the opportunity to access a high quality education.

Who is eligible to participate in Public School Choice?

All students enrolled in a Title I school identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring are eligible.

- Priority should be given to the lowest achieving children from low-income families.
- Students are eligible for school choice until the school is no longer in improvement.
- Eligible students who transferred may remain in that school until they have completed the highest grade in the school, and transportation is no longer required by Title I.

Which schools and LEAs are required to offer Public School Choice?

Districts receiving Title I funds are required to make the choice available to all students in Title I schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring.

When must an LEA make Public School Choice available to eligible students?

Districts are to notify parents of eligible children of the option as soon as possible, and **no later than 14 calendar days before the start of the school year.**

How must an LEA notify parents that their children are eligible for Public School Choice?

- Notices to parents must:
 - (1) Inform parents that their child's current Title I school has been identified as in need of improvement and that their child is eligible to attend another public school;
 - (2) Identify each public school (including charter schools) that students may transfer to;
 - (3) Inform parents that their child may receive transportation to the school;
 - (4) Explain why choice might be limited; and
 - (5) Include information on the academic achievement of the schools that the parent may select.

In addition to mailing notices directly to parents, the LEA must provide information about choice options through broader means including: newspapers, posters and the Internet.

What information regarding public school choice must an LEA display on its Website?

For the 2009-2010 school year, the LEA must post:

- Data on the number of students who were eligible for and participated in public school choice during the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years
- The list of transfer options for the 2009-2010 school year.

An LEA must continue posting historical data on public school choice participation and eligibility, and its current list of transfer options in subsequent school years accordingly.

What if there are no schools to which students can transfer or the district does not have physical capacity within its schools to accept transfers?

- Parents must still be notified that their child's school is identified for improvement.
- Supplemental Educational Services may be made available to eligible children.
- Students may not be denied the option to transfer due to lack of capacity. When capacity is an issue, school officials must consider possible options such as: redrawing the district's attendance boundaries, establishing a cooperative agreement with other districts in the area that are willing to accept transfers, or creating new charter schools.

Which schools may be offered to students as transfer options?

Other public schools and charter schools within the LEA that are not identified for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring should be offered for choice.

- Parents should be given more than one school from which to choose whenever possible.
- A "virtual school" or "specialty school" is allowed as long as that school is a public elementary or secondary school.
- If no schools are available, the LEA must, to the extent practicable, establish a cooperative agreement with other LEAs in the area that are willing to accept students as transfers.

Note: The final decision on the school each child will attend is made by the district.