

School Choice for Student Success

Public School Choice Available Under *No Child Left Behind*

Every parent wants the best possible education for his or her child. Under the *No Child Left Behind Act*, parents of children attending low-performing schools may be able to move their children to higher-performing public schools, including public charter schools. The public school choice option gives parents the chance to ensure that their children are attending a school where they are getting the instruction they need to succeed academically, while at the same time, allowing school officials to make improvements in the children's regular schools.

This brochure explains what public school choice is, and where parents can go for more information.

Who Is Eligible for Public School Choice?

Any child attending a Title I school (generally a school that serves a high percentage of low-income students) that the state has listed as "in need of improvement," in "corrective action" or in "restructuring" is eligible to move to another public school in the same school district. A child does not have to come from a low-income family to take part in public school choice. In some cases, children may also be able to move to a school outside of their home district.

How Do I Know if My Child Is Eligible?

Your school district should tell you, before the start of each school year if you are eligible to move your child to another school. If you think your child may be eligible but you have not been notified, check with your school principal, the Title I director in your school district, a local education organization or your state education department. See the end of this brochure for contact information.

What Information Will I Receive from My District About Transfer Options?

Your district should tell you if you have the choice to move your child to another school and should provide you with complete and easy-to-read information that: lists the schools in which you can enroll your child; describes the academic program, activities and services provided at those schools; and lists their test scores. In addition, your district should offer you more than one choice of schools, if more than one choice is possible.

How Will My Child Get to the New School?

If you decide to send your child to another school, your school district generally must provide or pay for your child's transportation to the school. However, the total amount your school district is required to spend for transportation is limited. Your district first should provide transportation to low-income, low-achieving students if there is not enough money to serve all students.

How Long Can My Child Stay at the Transfer School?

Your school district must let your child stay at the transfer school until he or she finishes the highest grade-level offered at that school.

Where Can I Get More Information?

To learn more about public school choice in your area, contact:

- Your local school district, your school principal, other school staff or your district Title I director. The district phone number is usually listed in the blue pages of your local telephone directory; or
- Your local Parent Information and Resource Center, which can be found at <http://www.pirc-info.net/pircs.asp>; or
- The Illinois State Board of Education at 1-217-782-2948; or
- The U.S. Department of Education, toll-free at 1-888-814-6252.

Finally, be sure to attend parent-teacher conferences, parent organization meetings and other events at your child's school. You can get a lot of information, ideas and help from teachers and other parents.

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act*, a landmark in education reform. This law gives you—the parent—options if your child's school needs to improve. One important option is public school choice.