



No Child Left Behind Public School Choice



What is the Public School Choice option?

NCLB's public school choice option is meant to increase the number of choices for families whose children attend Title I schools that are "in need of improvement." In Title I "schools in need of improvement," parents have special rights and responsibilities. These rights and responsibilities include public school choice—the opportunity to choose the public school they believe is the best place for their child.

Why is public school choice important?

Choice gives parents the power to help shape their child's education and to help schools improve. NCLB views choice as one way that parents can help hold schools accountable for giving their children a good education.

When are children eligible for school choice under NCLB Title I?

A student at a Title I school is eligible for school choice under NCLB when:

- The school has not met the goals set by NH for school improvement (called "adequate yearly progress," or AYP) for two years in a row or longer. In other words, school choice must be offered to parents, beginning in their first year of school improvement and beyond.

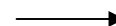
Which students are eligible?

All students enrolled in the Title I schools described above are eligible for choice.

- **What happens if my school district does not have enough choices to offer all students the chance to transfer?** Priority must be given to the lowest achieving, low-income students.
- **How many options will I have?** If more than one school is available, the local school district must offer more than one choice to eligible students.

How will I know if my child's school has to provide choice?

The school district must explain the choice option to all parents of students enrolled in Title I schools that have to provide choice. It must give this notice well before the beginning of the school year in which choice will be offered.



NH State PIRC
(Parent Information and Resource Center)
www.nhpirc.org
Toll-Free Helpline (866)-9NH-PIRC

What information should be in the notice?

The notice should give complete information in an easy-to-understand format. It should be in a language the parents can understand. It must:

- Tell parents that their child is eligible to attend another public school because their current school is not improving enough;
- Identify all public schools, including public charter schools, that the parent can select; and
- Briefly describe the performance and overall quality of those schools.
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What if no schools are available?

It may happen that all schools at a grade level are in need of improvement or that there is only one school in the district. In those cases:

- The school must *still* notify parents that their child's school is in need of improvement and that the child is eligible for choice, but that no choices are currently available.
- NCLB says that the local school district should establish a cooperative agreement with other local school districts in the area that do have eligible schools— "to the extent practicable."
- If it is not possible for a school district to offer choice, school districts are allowed to offer **Supplemental Educational Services (SES)** instead in the first year that a school is in need of improvement. You can ask your Title I Director, or school principal, if this is an option for your child.

How long can my child attend the new school?

Students who choose to transfer must be allowed to remain in the new school until the student has completed the highest grade in the school. However, it is important to consider your child's transportation needs (see below).

What about transportation?

- The school district must pay for, or provide, transportation to the new school.
- The district is only responsible for transportation until the **end** of the school year in which your child's school of origin is no longer in need of improvement. Once a school is identified as in need of improvement, it must make AYP for two years in a row to be taken off the list. Since transportation can continue until the end of the year when the school is no longer in improvement status, it could be as long as 3 years or more, but would have to be at least two years.

What if my child wants to transfer to a school with special entrance requirements?

Your child must still meet the entrance requirements of the school.

For free workshops and other resources on No Child Left Behind, contact:



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