



## **Public School Choice Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) For Parents**

**Q1. When must Public School Choice options be provided to parents?**

**A1.** Section 1116 of the No Child Left Behind Act requires Title I schools identified for school improvement to offer Public School Choice to parents at the beginning of the school year immediately following the identification. (i.e. 2005 PSSA results were utilized to identify schools for school improvement in August of 2005. School improvement schools must offer school choice at the beginning of the 2005-06 school year.) Non-Title I schools in school improvement, however, will **NOT** be required to offer public school choice in the 2005-06 school year. No Child Left Behind does **NOT** require non-Title I schools to notify parents of the school status, but we encourage districts to communicate the AYP status of all schools in the district after the state releases its Academic Achievement Report in 2005.

**Q2. Does my child's school have to offer school choice?**

**A2.** If your child attends a Title I school building in Pennsylvania that has been identified for School Improvement I, School Improvement II, Corrective Action I, or Corrective Action II, you must be offered the choice to send your child to any other public school building within the school district. Non-Title I schools in school improvement, however, will **NOT** be required to offer public school choice in the 2005-06 school year.

**Q3. Can I send my child to ANY school through the Public School Choice Option?**

**A3.** No. Title I Schools that are identified for school improvement are required to offer parents of children attending the school the option to transfer to any other public school *within the school district* that is NOT identified for school improvement or corrective action. School districts are not required to offer public school choice options outside of the district, but may choose to enter into cooperative agreements with neighboring school districts to provide choice options for parents.

**Q4. If my child takes advantage of the Public School Choice option, who is responsible for the transportation?**

**A4.** A school that is required to offer Public School Choice must provide and pay for the transportation costs associated with the transfer. The school district will remain responsible for transportation until the school has made AYP for 2 consecutive years.

**Q5. If there are no buildings within my school district into which my child can transfer, what must my school district do?**

**A5.** School districts are required to offer parents the choice to send their children to any other public school within the school district that is not identified for school improvement or corrective action. In some cases, a school district only has one building serving each grade span or all of the buildings within the district are in school improvement, so there are no choice options. When these circumstances arise, school districts are encouraged, to the extent practicable, to enter into cooperative agreements with neighboring school districts to provide choice options for parents.

Under these circumstances, school districts may also offer parents Supplemental Education Services (tutoring) in place of Public School Choice.

**Q6. Must a school district build new schools, renovate schools or utilize mobile classrooms in order to comply with transfer requests?**

**A6.** The NCLB Act specifically states that school districts cannot use “lack of capacity” to eliminate choice options for parents. School districts must provide parents with options—solutions for “lack of capacity” are not spelled out in the legislation or guidance and must be decided upon locally.

**Q7. Does my child have to participate in Title I to be eligible for Public School Choice?**

**A7.** No. All children that attend a Title I school identified for school improvement must be offered Public School Choice. If not all choice requests can be honored, the school district must prioritize based on low income and the academic achievement levels of the children.

**Q8. Can I choose to send my child to a non-public school?**

**A8.** No. Public School Choice applies only to public schools. School districts cannot offer nonpublic schools as a choice.

**Q9. Can the school district limit my choice options?**

**A9.** School districts must offer parents more than one option for transfer if more than one option exists within the district, but they may limit the choices for various reasons. For example, if six schools within a district can accept transferred students from two identified buildings, a district may allow the parents from one school to choose from three of the six buildings that are geographically closer and provide the remaining three buildings as an option for the other identified building.

**Q10. If my child transfers to another public school building within the district, will he be**

**eligible to receive the same services in the new building?**

**A10.** Some supplementary services may not be provided in all buildings within the school district for various reasons. If your child is receiving supplementary services in his current building, investigate whether or not these same services are available in the other schools before requesting a transfer.

**Q11. If my child transfers to a new school, how long can he attend the new school?**

**A11.** A child who transfers under the Public School Choice option may attend the new school until he completes the final grade offered by the building. However, if the school of origin exits school improvement (after making AYP for 2 consecutive years), the school district is no longer required to pay transportation costs associated with the transfer.