Ohio | Department of Education

Public School Choice (PSC) – District Steps

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Key Words: Public School Choice
Summary: Public School Choice (PSC) district procedures

I. Steps for Districts to Take

1. Develop a policy for selection (policy considerations described below)
2. Identify schools in School Improvement status or those likely to be in School Improvement status within two years
3. Develop transportation and communication plans
4. Identify capacity to accept students by school building and by grade level within each building
5. Identify possible need for cooperative agreement with other districts
6. Identify logistical needs (described below)
7. Notify parents of opportunity and initial deadline
8. Provide evidence that the district has complied with required Federal regulations throughout the school improvement process. The LEA has provided information to parents "(1) Directly, through such means as regular mail or e-mail," and "(2) Through broader means of dissemination such as the Internet, the media, and public agencies serving the student population and their families" [34 CFR 200.36 (c)]
9. Send parent notification to Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Public School Choice (PSC) and Supplemental Educational Services (SES) support mailbox PSC_SES@ode.state.oh.us
10. Make selection of school
11. Notify parents of selection/non-selection
12. Implement public school choice

II. Policy Considerations – Regarding Selection and Capacity

1. All students in a school identified for school improvement are eligible, including children with disabilities
2. Students may not be sent to another school identified for school improvement regardless of Title I status
3. Schools may not use lack of capacity to deny eligible transfers.
4. When capacity is an issue, the range of possible options to ensure compliance might include:
   - reconfiguring, as new classrooms, space in receiving schools that is currently not being used for instruction;

- expanding space in receiving schools, such as by reallocating portable classrooms within the district;
- redrawing the district's attendance zones, if insufficient capacity is available within the existing zones within which students would ordinarily select schools;
- creating satellite divisions of receiving schools, that is, classrooms that are under the supervision of the receiving school principal and whose teachers are part of the school faculty but that exist in neighboring buildings;
- creating new, distinct schools, with separate faculty, within the physical sites of schools identified for improvement;
- encouraging the creation of new charter schools within the district;
- developing distance learning programs, or entering into cooperative agreements with virtual schools;
- reshaping long-range capital construction and renovation plans in order to ensure schools that are likely to receive new students have additional space;
- modifying either the school calendar or the school day, such as through "shift" or "track" scheduling, in order to expand capacity; and/or
- easing capacity by initiating inter-district choice programs with neighboring LEAs

5. Student Selection
   - Determine capacity by school/by grade level.
   - Priority for transfer goes to lowest achieving students from low-income families:
     - In determining achievement, identify assessments or measures used in grades in which a state or local test does not exist.
     - Articulate what choices parents do or do not have related to the school to which their child will be sent.
6. Capacity Considerations:
   - Building and room capacity to meet fire safety standards
   - District class-size policies
   - Type of furniture and equipment typically used in specific rooms (such as computer and science rooms)
   - Type of instruction provided (activity-based classrooms generally require more room per child)
   - Types of additional student supports that would be required (library, guidance counselors, interpreters, personal care attendants, special education teachers, etc.)
7. Process Considerations:
   - Date by which parents must notify district of intent to participate
   - Method of notifying district of intent to participate (e-mail, telephone, letter, post-card)
   - Date the selection will be made

- Priority for economic disadvantaged conditions – more weight might be given to free lunch, less weight to reduced lunch, and no weight to regular lunch students
- Priority for low academic achievement – more weight given to students below basic, less to basic, less to proficient
- Balance between economic and academic status

III. Public School Choice Logistics

1. Additional support (personnel, equipment) needed for Individual Education Plan (IEP) students, including American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance
2. Supports for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students/parents, such as:
   - Interpreters
   - Additional health/safety signs in native language
3. Additional textbook, resource materials, classroom supplies
4. Specific training for teachers (examples):
   - IEP strategies and accommodations
   - LEP strategies
5. Student record transfer
6. Class schedules/assignments
7. Increases/decreases to poverty counts and effects on Title I status/funding
8. Increases/decreases in a number of lunches/snacks
9. Transportation schedules/assignments – costs associated with transfer
   [Note: districts may not supplant current transportation costs]
10. Effects on union contracts

IV. Public School Choice Parent Notification Information

1. Reason for Notification – school identified for School Improvement because of:
   - Less than 95 percent of students tested
   - Low achievement of students in the content area of reading or math by grade
   - Low achievement of a specific population in reading or math by grade
   - Persistently dangerous schools (unsafe school choice option)
2. Opportunity to attend school not identified for School Improvement or unsafe school
3. Copy of student selection criteria and process
4. Make communication with parents timely, thorough and understandable
5. Timeline and method for notifying district of request for exercising school choice option
6. Timeline and method for notifying parents of selection/non-selection