

Students

School Attendance Areas

Intra-District Choice/Open Enrollment

The Board of Education endorses the neighborhood school concept and makes many decisions based on student population within the attendance areas of residence. The Board recognizes, however, that students may wish to attend a school or participate in a program located in an area other than that of their assigned school. Therefore, students shall be allowed to attend any school or participate in any program of their choice on a space available, first-come, first-served basis. Those students exercising choice under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) have priority over other students in the exercise of open enrollment under this policy.

In implementing the open enrollment program, the District shall consider:

1. Issues pertaining to the availability of space and teaching staff.
2. The availability of programs, appropriate facilities and support services.
3. Eligibility criteria for participation in a particular program including age requirements, course prerequisites and required levels of performance.
4. Siblings enrolled in the receiving school.
5. Rectifying racial imbalance and equalizing class sizes.

Notwithstanding the provisions of this policy, a student may be assigned outside his attendance area by mutual agreement of the principals in the special interest of the student and/or school.

Open Enrollment and Transfers

Students and their parents/guardian shall be notified on an annual basis of the options available through open enrollment in sufficient time to apply.

Students within a designated attendance area shall have priority in registering in that school. Students may apply for open enrollment in a school outside their attendance area and such applications shall be approved if there is space available in the requested school and the application has been submitted on or before September 15 in accordance with the regulations accompanying this policy.

Students

School Attendance Areas

Intra-District Choice/Open Enrollment

Open Enrollment and Transfers (continued)

Parents and/or students who desire a change of school after September 15 must submit a letter explaining the reasons for the request together with the required form requesting a transfer. The request shall be reviewed and acted upon in accordance with the regulations accompanying this policy.

Students granted permission to attend a school other than the school in their assigned attendance area shall have the same curricular and extracurricular status as all other students attending the school.

Transfer students attending a school outside their attendance area shall be granted admission on a year-to-year basis and must reapply each year. In the event the population of the attendance area increases to fill the building with attendance area residents, transfer students may be asked to enroll in another school.

Students enrolled in a school identified for school improvement pursuant to federal law may transfer to another public school within the District that has not been identified for school improvement as space allows. The transfer will be allowed in accordance with law. The District will provide transportation.

In accordance with the provisions of the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 and state and local policy and procedures, the District will develop and maintain a public school choice plan for those schools receiving federal Title I funds. The general provisions of the school choice plan designed for those Title I schools that have had two or more years in needs improvement and fail to meet yearly progress are provided for in this policy in accordance with federal law and state regulations:

1. An explanation of what the designation “needs improvement” means and how the school compares in terms of achievement to other elementary or secondary schools served by the District shall be given to all parents of students enrolled in the school and to the public. In addition, the explanation must give a reason for the identification and an explanation of what the school is doing to address the problem of low achievement.

Students

School Attendance Areas (continued)

Intra-District Choice/Open Enrollment

Open Enrollment and Transfers (continued)

2. All students in schools that fail to make “adequate yearly progress” after identification must be provided with the option to transfer to another public school within the District with transportation provided by the system. The Superintendent or his/her designee will determine to which school(s) a student may transfer based on transportation patterns and space availability. Students shall be allowed to continue to attend the school to which they transferred until they have completed the highest grade in that school. Transportation will be provided in accordance with Board policy until the student(s) have completed the highest grade in that school. Transportation will be provided in accordance with Board policy at District expense for as long as the sending school is in “needs improvement” status; however, once a school is removed from the list of “needs improvement” schools then the parent(s) will be required to provide transportation or the student will transfer back to their assigned school. If the number of students who can transfer is limited, the students with the lowest standardized achievement scores will be allowed to transfer first.

Transportation

Students attending under the NCLB choice option shall be provided transportation at District expense to the extent required by law.

Transportation for students granted permission to attend school outside their attendance area and not transferring pursuant to federal law must be furnished by their parents unless space is available in district buses without disruption of regular routes and bus stops (not including handicapped/special education buses and routes).

Nondiscrimination

The Board, the Superintendent, other administrators and teachers shall not make any distinction on account of race, color, ethnic group or religion of any student who may be in attendance or who seeks admission to any school maintained by the district in the determination or recommendation of action under this policy.

However, the Board reserves the right to restrict open enrollment and transfer requests if such requests begin to significantly affect the racial balance of a school.

Students

School Attendance Areas

Intra-District Choice/Open Enrollment (continued)

Special Education Students

Requests from the parents or guardians of a special education student for open enrollment or transfer to another school or program shall be considered in accordance with applicable state and federal laws and Board policy.

Appeal Procedure

Should a request for open enrollment or transfer be denied, the parent/guardian will be advised by the Principal that they may appeal the denial by contacting the Superintendent of Schools.

The Principal shall immediately submit the reason for denial of the request, and the parent/guardian's request, to the administrator considering the appeal. The administrator will review the parent/guardian request and the Principal's decision and then make a determination of a school assignment.

Upon request of either the Principal or the parent/guardian, the Superintendent will review the decision of the administrator. Upon request, the Board of Education will review the decision of the Superintendent.

(cf. 5117 - School Attendance Areas)

(cf. 5118 – Nonresident Students)

(cf. 5122 – Assignment of Students to Schools)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 10-55 Pupils to attend regional school
 10-226a Pupils of racial minorities
 10-226b Existence of racial imbalance
 10-226c Plan to correct imbalance
 10-226d Approval of plan by State Board
 PA 96-213 An Act Concerning School Readiness and Intra-district Choice
 20 U.S.C. - No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110, Section 1116.

Policy adopted: May 10, 2005

NEW LONDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
New London, Connecticut

Intra-District Choice/Open Enrollment Form

NEW LONDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS New London, Connecticut

_____, 2006

Dear Parents of Students Attending _____Elementary School:

You are invited to help make _____ Elementary School become one of the most successful schools in Connecticut. Many parents are members of the school's improvement team and other committees established by the school and the PTA. They also participate in parent education activities and attend parent-teacher conferences to learn more about how to help their children at home and at school. We need all parents to be involved.

Our goal is to improve student academic performance at _____ Elementary School. We believe significant progress can be made if we work together and set our goals high. Your principal, teachers, staff, and parent leadership already are working hard to make the necessary improvements for next year, and they are committed to offering your child the best education possible.

Considerable effort is under way already. _____ Elementary School features a full-day kindergarten program (with class sizes of 15 students) and reduced class sizes (17 students) in Grades 1 and 2. In addition to the Reading Recovery Program next year, staff will be provided to teach mathematics, the gifted and talented program, and English for Speakers of Other Languages. Improved parent involvement and enhanced staff development also will be supported with additional resources, along with materials to implement a rigorous curriculum. The unique summer enrichment and accelerated instructional program, Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO), will be available for students entering kindergarten through third grade. Extensive after-school instructional activities for students also are being planned for the upcoming school year.

Title I Enrollment Option

Parents have the option either to keep their children enrolled in their home school or to seek enrollment in a designated school for the 20__-20__ school year under the Title I Enrollment Option program. A new federal law, entitled the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2002*, requires that federally funded Title I schools maintain two consecutive years of sustained student progress. If they do not, parents have the right to exercise an enrollment option. _____ Elementary School is a federally funded Title I school, and it has not maintained two years of sustained student academic progress. This means that parents can request to enroll their child in a designated school. The school designated to receive enrollment applications from your home school is _____ Elementary School.

The approval of applications for the enrollment option will be based on two levels of priority:

First, students who are identified as low performing and low income will be allowed to move to a designated school if they apply for the option. Local school staff will use existing information and data available at each school. The Early Childhood Assessment Program, the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills, and the Instructional System in Mathematics will be used to assess individual student performance levels. In addition, these will be a review of each student's educational and assessment history, including report card data, eligibility for Title I assistance, and any other previously available assessment data.

Second, all other students who apply will be eligible to change schools based on space availability at the designated receiving school. A random lottery selection process will be used if requests exceed space availability. Siblings will be given a preference to be placed in the same school, if parents request and space is available. However, there is no guarantee for sibling enrollment.

The choice to request an enrollment option is a serious decision, and more information is being prepared to help you make an informed choice. A parent information meeting will be held at _____Elementary School on_____, 20__, at 7:00 p.m. to provide information about school improvement plans, special resources, and the Title I Enrollment Option program.

Your School

We believe that _____Elementary School is a good school. Parents, teachers, the principal, and all staff continue to work hard to ensure the success of your school. The determination of sustained academic progress was made only on the basis of two criteria: the results of the Connecticut Mastery Tests (CMT) and student participation rate. I urge parents of students attending _____Elementary School to consider all of the options available to them in making a decision about their child's education.

Sincerely,

Superintendent of Schools

NEW LONDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
New London, Connecticut

Sample Letter to Parents Who Have Indicated an Interest in the
NCLB Choice Option

Dear Parent/Guardian:

You have indicated that you intend to take advantage of the option to have your child (or children) transported at District expense to a school that is not on "school improvement" status under federal law. You may choose to send your child either to _____
[identify schools]

Note: More than one school must be offered according to federal regulations.

I have provided your name to the Principals of these schools and you should contact them directly if you wish to arrange for a tour of the school or talk with them about school programs.

We need to make you aware of several things in relationship to this program.

- Transportation will be provided to and from your home school, rather than your home. In other words, your child will meet the bus at your home school at the start of the day, and be dropped off at your home school at the end of the day. If you elect the transportation option, the expectation is that your child will take advantage of the transportation on a regular basis.
- Once you choose the NCLB choice option, your child must remain at the new school for the remainder of the school year. Your child's education, and that of other students, can be disrupted by moves after the start of the school year.
- If your child is a special education student (or is on a §504 plan), the IEP team will need to determine whether your child's needs can be met at the school to which he/she would transfer.

Finally, if your child is to attend a new school, we need to finalize plans as soon as possible. In order to formally conclude your selection of this option, you must return this signed form to us by the close of the school day on September 15.

Thank you for your continued interest in your child's education.

Principal, [school name]

pc: Superintendent of Schools

School selected: _____

Transportation option: yes _____ no _____

I have read this letter and understand it.

Name of parent _____ Signature of parent _____

Answers to Questions About My School and the Title I Enrollment Option 2002 –2003

The goal of New London Public Schools is to improve the academic progress of all schools. Special efforts are under way to continue to improve student performance in federally funded Title I schools, which include:_____.

Principals, teachers, parents, and all staff are working hard to make improvements for next year. Parents have the option to keep their children enrolled in these schools, as their home school, or to seek enrollment in a designated school for the 2002 - 2003 school year. The following outlines the major questions and answers about the Title I Enrollment Option.

1. What special efforts are under way in my home school?

The Board of Education has invested significant academic and family resources in your home school to help improve teaching and learning. These resources include the following:

- Full-day kindergarten with a student-to-teacher ratio of 15:1
- Reduced class sizes in Grades 1 and 2 with a student-to-teacher ratio of 17:1
- Reading Recovery
- Additional instructional staff to support programs such as Mathematics, Reading/Language Arts, Gifted and Talented and English for Speakers of Other Languages.
- Instructional assistants
- Additional staff development activities
- A summer enrichment and accelerated instructional program.
- Parental educational and family health services.

2. What is the Title I Enrollment Option?

The Title I Enrollment Option of the New London Public Schools is designed to comply with a provision of a new federal law, entitled the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2002*. The law provides parents of students in certain federally funded Title I schools with the option either to keep their children enrolled in their home school or seek enrollment in a designated school. This option applies only if their home school has not demonstrated two years of sustained improvement in student performance.

3. Will my home school always be in this program?

Not necessarily. Efforts are being made to improve the academic performance of your home school. If the school demonstrates two years of sustained student academic progress, then it will be removed from the program. At that time, new enrollment options will no longer be available and transportation services will be discontinued. Your child, by law, must be permitted to remain in the school to which he/she transferred, until he/she has completed the highest grade in the school. However, the District's obligation to provide transportation ends at the end of the school year if the school from which the student transferred is no longer identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring.

4. How were schools identified for this program?

The Connecticut State Department of Education identified certain federally funded Title I schools as eligible for the enrollment option. The identification was made on the basis of two consecutive years of declining scores on the Connecticut Mastery Test Program. The State Department of Education uses CMT results and average daily attendance to determine an overall composite score for each school.

5. What should I consider in an enrollment option?

The decision to seek an enrollment option is a personal choice. Many factors should be considered, including the fact that there are special resources at your home school that are designed to improve student achievement. Most of these special resources will not be available at the other schools.

6. What can I do to help my home school?

Many parents already are helping their home school improve student performance. For example, parents participate on the school's improvement team and other committees established by the school and the PTA. They also participate in parent education activities and attend parent-teacher conferences to learn more about how to help their children at home and at school. Parents can help improve their home schools in many ways.

7. How do I apply for the enrollment option?

Parents are required to complete a *Title I Enrollment Option Request Form*, which is attached. Additional copies are available at your home school. Please complete the form and return it to your home school by _____, 20___. Your home school will forward the form to the Superintendent's office for processing. A decision regarding such requests will be mailed to parents by _____, 20__.

8. Will some requests have a priority?

Yes. In the event that more requests are received than there is available space in the receiving school, the following criteria will be used to prioritize the selection of students: (1) all students who demonstrate evidence of low levels of academic achievement and evidence of economic need (according to Title I eligibility criteria) will be approved; and (2) all other students will be considered on a space available basis. A random lottery selection process will be used if requests exceed space availability.

9. How will the first priority be determined?

The first priority for requests for an enrollment change will be those students identified as low performing and low income (see Question 8). Identification for this priority will be made by local school staff, using existing information and data available at each school. A variety of measures will be used to assess individual student performance levels. In addition, there will be a review of each student's educational and assessment history, including report card data, eligibility for Title I assistance, and any other previously available assessment data.

10. If I make a request, what school would my child attend?

Your child can stay at your home school. If you decide to seek the Title I Enrollment Option, then you could request that your child be enrolled in a designated school. (Approvals of such requests will be made on a priority basis, see Questions 7 and 8.) The _____ school(s) may be requested.

11. What if my child is receiving special education services?

Special education services would be continued at the receiving school.

12. Will transportation be provided to the designated school?

Yes, transportation will be provided to the designated school. The distance between sending and receiving schools may be lengthy since students will no longer be attending their neighborhood school. The number of students participating also will affect the length of the ride.

13. Will transportation always be provided?

Not necessarily. Transportation service to the receiving school is provided only as long as your current home school continues to meet the required annual yearly progress standards.

14. What about sibling participation?

If one sibling is approved for enrollment in the new school, based on the established criteria, other siblings will be placed in the same school, if parents request and space is available. However, sibling enrollment is not guaranteed.