

# Title I PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE & SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

## Questions and Answers

According to *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*, every child that attends a Title I school in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring is eligible to transfer to another public school in the district that is not in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring status. (This does not include non-Title I schools). The district must pay all or a portion of the transportation necessary for eligible students to attend their new school.

Every child that receives free or reduced-price lunch and attends a Title I school that has not achieved AYP for three or more years must be offered state-approved SES as a choice option. The parents of all eligible students must be notified of their child's school choice options and provided an opportunity to participate. Parents may only select SES providers from the state-approved provider list.

### **Frequently Asked Questions About School Choice**

#### **What is the purpose of the public school choice requirement in *No Child Left Behind*?**

Public school choice is a critical component of NCLB because it offers a student enrolled in a Title I school that is in need of improvement an opportunity to attend another school, even as his or her original school is undergoing improvement. Expanded parental choice gives schools a greater incentive to undertake reforms and make the changes that are needed to improve student learning and reach academic achievement goals.

#### **What educational choice options are available to students and parents under the Act?**

NCLB includes several provisions that increase student and parental choice. Two of them address academic achievement at the school level and one addresses the issue of student safety. School Districts must give students attending schools that have not made adequate yearly progress (QYP) in improving school achievement the options of (1) attending another public school or (2) receiving supplemental educational services (free tutoring), depending on the eligibility and the status of the school. The choice to attend another public school is available to all students enrolled in schools that re in their first year of school improvement status and for subsequent years that the school remains identified for improvement. Supplemental educational services are available to eligible students who are enrolled in a school in its second year of improvement and for

subsequent years. When both options are available, parents have the choice of which option they would prefer for their child. **They can choose one or the other but not both.**

**What should parents look for when they are given the option of school choice?**

Parents should focus on the academic achievement results produced by the schools they are considering. When they are notified about the opportunity to choose a different school for their child, parents should inquire about information regarding student academic achievement at the schools from which they may choose. Parents should consult a variety of sources for information about the schools that are available to accept transfer students. These sources of information might include other parents, the local media, school visits and information available on school performance report cards. Parents should match the strengths of a particular school with the needs of their child, so that the child will be able to receive appropriate instruction geared toward improving his or her academic achievement.

**What are the responsibilities of the school that receives transfer students with disabilities?**

A school to which a student transfers may elect to implement the individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan developed by the prior school, or to convene an IEP team meeting, and develop a new IEP in consultation with the parents that meets the student's needs.

Prior to parents making a final decision on transferring their child to a new school, they should discuss their child's specific needs with the prospective school's staff and visit the prospective school so that the parents are aware of the differences in school size, curriculum, faculty, and other factors that may; affect the ways in which the school will prove a free appropriate education to their child.

**Must students with disabilities be offered their choice of the same schools as non-disabled students?**

School districts must offer students with disabilities and those eligible under Section 504 the opportunity to be educated in a school that has not been identified as in need of school improvement. However, a school district is not required to offer students with disabilities the same choices of schools as it offers to nondisabled students. In determining the choices available to such students, the district should match the abilities and needs of a student with disabilities with those schools that have the ability to provide the student FAPE

## **Public School Choice With Transportation – Questions Parents May Wish to Ask the Schools They are Considering:**

- a. How do you address the needs of struggling students?
- b. What will you do to help my child achieve at higher levels?
- c. What is the academic achievement level of your students in reading/language arts/ English and math, as well as in other subjects?
- d. How has this achievement changed over time?
- e. How do you teach reading? Do you follow scientifically based strategies?
- f. What percentage of your teachers are highly qualified?
- g. Does your school offer challenging coursework or other academic challenges at the middle or high school level?
- h. Will my child be provided transportation to or from extra-curricular activities?

## **Frequently Asked Questions About SES**

### **What is SES?**

Supplemental Educational Services (SES) are free tutoring services that must be offered to low-income children who attend a Title I school that fails to make progress for three years (in its second year of “school improvement status”). Low-income students are those who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. These services offer students extra help in academic subjects such as reading, language arts, and mathematics. SES services are provided outside the regular school day—before or after school, or in the summer.

### **Who can get SES?**

Low income students, (those who receive free or reduced lunch), who attend Title I schools that have not made adequate yearly progress for at least three years are eligible for **free** tutoring services.

As part of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, states are required to set definitions of adequate yearly progress (AYP), the minimum performance that districts and schools must reach every year on state achievement tests. Title I schools that don’t make AYP for at least three years must offer SES to students. Schools must continue to offer SES to their students until the school shows adequate yearly progress for two years in a row. If the demand for SES exceeds available funds, districts may give priority to the lowest achieving eligible students.

### **How does SES work?**

Once a state has identified a school as “in need of improvement” for two or more years, the school district determines which students in that school are eligible for services. Then, the district notifies families of eligible students about their right to free tutoring. The district must also provide information about the local SES providers to help

families select one and should allow families enough time to compare options and make informed choices. The state allots a certain amount of money per child that can be spent on SES. **\$1,123.00** can be spent per child in our district for SES services. Once that money has been spent, services will stop. This means tutoring time will be between 17 & 25 hours per child depending on what the provider charges.

Once a family chooses a provider, the district enters into a contract with the provider. The district pays the provider for tutoring services. If more eligible families demand SES than existing funds can support, districts must give priority to the lowest-achieving students.

Each state develops a list of potential SES providers. States choose providers that can offer tutoring programs in line with state standards and that offer high-quality, research-based tutoring. Many providers will offer “hands on” tutoring by trained instructors. Others may offer Internet-based instruction that students can access through a computer at home or at a community center.

Once a family chooses a provider, the provider, the school, and the district meet with the parents to agree on performance goals for the child and a schedule for services.

### **Who monitors SES providers for quality?**

States, in cooperation with districts, monitor the quality of SES providers. States develop and apply objective criteria to evaluate providers and monitor the quality of services. If a provider has not helped students improve achievement for two or more years, states are required to remove that provider from the state list. Districts are required to provide states with information to help monitor the performance of state-approved providers. Families can monitor their child’s performance against performance goals set with the provider, the school, and the district.

### **Why is SES important?**

The SES program gives low-income families the opportunity to choose **free** tutoring services for their children. The program offers children who may be struggling in school a chance to get the extra academic help and individual instruction they need.

Studies suggest that academically based programs offered outside the school day can help students improve their achievement and work habits. Tutoring can help children improve achievement by building on the learning that takes place during the school day. Students at risk for academic failure have the most to gain from tutoring programs. Some of these students may not learn well in traditional classrooms and, through tutoring, can learn in different, perhaps more effective ways. Finally, by helping individual students improve, SES can support teachers’ and principals’ efforts to improve their schools.

### **Will I get help in choosing a provider?**

Yes, we will assist you. Please call your school and speak with the SES Facilitator or call the SES office at the district office – 850-547-5928, Ext. 228. Also, please come to the Provider Fair on Aug. 23, 2007 at Bonifay Elementary School Activity Center at 6:00 P.M. You will be able to meet different providers, ask them questions, and decide which provider is right for your child.

### **What kind of instructors will be tutoring my child? Will they be regular teachers?**

Every provider makes its own decisions about what sort of instructors to hire, so ask the provider about its instructors. Most of our tutors are teachers. Those that are not must meet paraprofessional status.

### **Once I choose a provider, how can I make sure that SES is really helping my child?**

There are two things you can do. First, help set up the services for your child. There will be a meeting in which you, the provider, and the school can decide what your child needs, what his or her goals should be, and how the provider can help meet these goals. Please make sure to attend this meeting. Second, the provider must give you updates on how your child is doing. Read those updates, and talk to the provider and your child's tutor if your child isn't meeting the goals you set.

### **Questions to ask SES Providers**

- a. What programs at which grade levels are available for my child?
- b. How often will the tutoring be provided?
- c. When will the services be provided? When do they start and how long do they last?
- d. Where will the services be provided? Transportation?
- e. How will the provider's services address the needs of students with disabilities?
- f. What is the experience or qualifications of the staff?
- g. What evidence is available regarding the effectiveness of the program?
- h. How do parents sign up for the services?
- i. Who is the local contact person for the provider?
- j. How are students grouped during tutoring?
- k. How will the provider keep me informed of my child's progress.
- l. What happens if I choose a provider, but it does not help my child?

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### **Adequate Yearly Progress:**

Adequate yearly progress (AYP) is the measure of the extent to which students in a school, taken as a whole and certain groups within the school, demonstrate proficiency in at least reading/language arts and mathematics. It also measures the progress of schools under other academic indicators, such as the graduation or school attendance rate.

**Eligible student:**

For the purposes of the Title I school choice provision, eligible students are all students enrolled in Title I schools that are in their first or second year of school improvement or are in corrective action or restructuring status. Note that this differs from the eligibility criteria for supplemental educational services, which are available only to students from low-income families who are enrolled in schools in their second year of improvement or in corrective action or restructuring.

**Supplemental Educational Services (SES)**

SES is additional academic services designed to increase the academic achievement of low-income students in low-performing schools. These services may include tutoring, remediation, or other educational interventions that are consistent with the content and instruction used by the local educational agency and are aligned with the State's academic content standards. SES must be provided outside of the regular school day. SES must be high quality, research-based, and specifically designed to increase student academic achievement.

District Contact Person for SES:

Mrs. Young – 850-547-5928, ext. 253