

# School choice fact sheet

## School choice under “No Child Left Behind” — What parents of eligible students need to know

“No Child Left Behind” requires schools that haven’t met state goals for “Adequate Yearly Progress” for two or more years to offer parents the option of transferring their children to other schools, with transportation provided by the school district for students who live far enough away to qualify.

School districts may set their own policies as long as they comply with the federal law. In the Pittsburgh District, policy and procedures for school transfers under the new law are different from magnet school registration, open enrollment, and administrative (PS-6) transfers.

### Who can transfer...

All students who attend schools identified as “School Improvement I,” “School Improvement II,” “Corrective Action I,” or “Corrective Action II” are eligible to transfer. (For more information, see the “Overview.”) If your child is eligible, the school is required to notify you before the beginning of the school year.

Students who choose to transfer may continue to attend their new schools regardless of their home school’s status, *but if their home school is no longer identified as an “improvement” or “corrective action” school at some point in the future, the District will not continue to provide transportation.*

### ...to which schools?

Students can only transfer into schools identified as “Making Adequate Yearly Progress” or “Warning.” In the 2003/04 school year, the District offered parents choices of city schools in the same region as their children’s home schools, and charter schools.



## What must parents do?

Parents of eligible children should receive a letter from the District with a list of District schools and charter schools that their children could transfer into. To transfer their children, parents must follow these procedures:

- ❖ Visit or call the home school for a “CT-1” (“Choice Transfer Request Form”). The District encourages principals to meet with parents who are considering transferring their children, but you’re not required to meet with the principal or go to the school to obtain this form—you can ask for it to be sent home with your child.
- ❖ Make a first and a second choice from the list of schools. *Note:* A parent’s choice is one of the factors the District considers, but it’s not guaranteed.
- ❖ If your choice is a magnet school, complete a magnet registration form, which the home school can provide.
- ❖ Give the form to the principal, or send it back to the school with your child. The principal signs the form and sends it to the Office of Student Services.

## The new transfer policy and magnet registration

A student may not transfer into a foreign language magnet program beyond the second grade level unless the student meets requirements for language proficiency. A student may not transfer into the creative and performing arts magnets, Rogers and CAPA.

Sometimes magnet programs have students on a waiting list. If the school year begins with openings for students at those schools, and there are other students wishing to transfer in who were offered school choice through NCLB, the District will handle requests on a case-by-case basis. The decision about whether to accept a student on the waiting list or a student transferring through NCLB will depend on racial balance, the region the school is in, parent choice, and possibly other factors. For more information about these situations, call the District’s Office of Student Services: 412.622.3952.

## School transfers and special education

Although many special education programs can be provided at any city school, not all programs are available at all schools. For students receiving special education services, the District is not required to offer the same choices it offers to other students. For more information, call the District’s Program for Students with Exceptionalities: 412.323.3950.

## School transfers and free tutoring

Schools identified as “School Improvement II” will be required to offer students from low-income families opportunities to attend tutoring sessions, paid for with District funds. These schools will also be required to offer school choice, but parents may only choose one option or the other.

## For more information

School transfers are handled by the District’s Office of Student Services: 412.622.3952.

For information about programs offered at each school and the magnet school registration process, see the District’s “Public School Choices” booklet. To receive a mailed copy, call the District’s Office of Communications and Marketing: 412.622.3615. It can also be downloaded from the District’s website: [www.pps.k12.pa.us](http://www.pps.k12.pa.us).