



# Students with Disabilities & Parental Choice in Connecticut

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Connecticut State Department of Education

Bureau of Special Education & Pupil Services 2003

# OPEN CHOICE PROGRAM

## WHAT IS THE OPEN CHOICE PROGRAM?

The open choice program allows urban students to attend public schools in nearby suburban towns and suburban and rural students to attend public schools in a nearby urban center. A student who participates in the open choice program "belongs" to the receiving district.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE OPEN CHOICE PROGRAM?

The purpose of the open choice program is to improve academic achievement; reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation; and provide a choice of educational programs for public school students.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND?

The open choice program is open to all students who attend public schools on an equal basis, including students with disabilities. Enrollments are offered by school districts on a space available basis. A lottery is used to place students when there are more applicants than spaces available. The open choice program operates from a limited number of urban areas. Districts are required to give open choice personnel access to public schools for recruiting purposes.

## HOW WILL STUDENTS GET TO SCHOOL?

Transportation arrangements are made by the Regional Education Service Center (RESC) serving the area. Costs are paid by the state. For students with disabilities, the same rules apply unless transportation is considered a related service and is required by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONVENING THE PLANNING AND PLACEMENT TEAM (PPT) MEETING AND DEVELOPING THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)?

The receiving district is responsible for holding a PPT and should invite representatives from the district in which the student resides to participate in the meeting. The receiving district develops the IEP.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?

The receiving district is responsible for the provision of services for students with disabilities as mandated by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PAYMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES?

Pursuant to Section 10-266aa of the Connecticut General Statutes, the school district in which the student resides is responsible for paying the receiving district an amount equal to the difference between the reasonable cost of special education and related services and the sum of the amount received by the receiving district for the state open choice program.

## WHO REPORTS THE STUDENT ON THE DECEMBER 1 PCI COUNT?

The receiving district is responsible for reporting the student for purposes of any federal reimbursement. However, should a sending district incur costs which would make them eligible for reimbursement available pursuant to Section 10-76g of the Connecticut General Statutes, they should contact the State Department of Education so that a determination can be made regarding which town should claim the child under these circumstances. The current enrolled school where the student attends and the home school code will be the same in PCI.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973?

The receiving district is responsible for ensuring compliance with Section 504, which includes the identification, evaluation and educational placement of a student with a disability.