

ATTACHMENT C

School Choice in Florida

The intent of Public Law 107-110 is to *Leave No Child Behind*. Through public school choice options Florida continues to lead the way in providing parents of students with the greatest academic needs options for the best educational programs available. Florida's continuum of school choice includes fulfilling:

- choice provisions provided by Title V funding
- choice provisions described in Chapter 1002, Florida Statutes
- federal desegregation requirements
- choice provisions for Public Law 107-110.

Districts in Florida that show evidence of providing school choice to the priority students (those who are socio-economically disadvantaged and lowest performing), through one or more of the choice provisions will have fulfilled the requirements of choice as directed in Public Law 107-110.

Chapter 1002, Florida Statutes, defines choice programs that Florida school districts implement to fulfill this provision. Sections include:

1002.31 Public school parental choice.—Each school district develops a system of priorities for its plan that includes consideration of the following:

- A process that allows parents to declare school preferences.
- A process that encourages placement of siblings within the same school.
- A lottery procedure used by the school district to determine student assignment.
- An appeals process for hardship cases.
- The procedures to maintain socioeconomic, demographic, and racial balance.
- The availability of transportation.
- A process that promotes strong parental involvement, including the designation of a parent liaison.
- A strategy that establishes a clearinghouse of information designed to assist parents in making informed choices.

1002.33 Charter schools.—Charter schools in Florida are guided by the following principles:

- Meet high standards of student achievement while providing parents flexibility to choose among diverse educational opportunities within the state's public school system.
- Promote enhanced academic success and financial efficiency by aligning responsibility with accountability.
- Provide parents with sufficient information on whether their child is reading at grade level and whether the child gains at least a year's worth of learning for every year spent in the charter school.

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Charter schools in Florida fulfill the following purposes:

- Improve student learning and academic achievement.
- Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on low-performing students and reading.
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including ownership of the learning program at the school site.
- Encourage the use of innovative learning methods.
- Require the measurement of learning outcomes.

1002.34 Charter technical career centers.—The purpose of Florida’s charter technical career centers is to:

- Develop a competitive workforce to support local business and industry and economic development.
- Create a training and education model that is reflective of marketplace realities.
- Offer a continuum of career educational opportunities using a school-to-work, tech-prep, technical, academy, and magnet school model.
- Provide career pathways for lifelong learning and career mobility.
- Enhance career and technical training.

1002.37 The Florida Virtual School.—The mission of the Florida Virtual School is to provide students with technology-based educational opportunities to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed. The school serves any student in the state who meets the profile for success in this educational delivery context and shall give priority to:

- Students who need expanded access to courses in order to meet their educational goals, such as home education students and students in inner-city and rural high schools who do not have access to higher-level courses.
- Students seeking accelerated access in order to obtain a high school diploma at least one semester early.

1002.38 Opportunity Scholarship Program for students attending Florida’s lowest performing schools.—The purpose of Opportunity Scholarships is to provide enhanced opportunities for students in this state to gain the knowledge and skills necessary for postsecondary education, a technical education, or the world of work. The Florida State Constitution requires the state to provide a uniform, safe, secure, efficient, and high-quality system which allows the opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. The Florida Legislature further finds that a student should not be compelled, against the wishes of the student’s parent, to remain in a school found by the state to be failing for 2 years in a 4-year period. The Legislature therefore makes available opportunity scholarships in order to give parents the opportunity for their children to attend a public school that is performing satisfactorily or to attend an eligible private school when the parent chooses to apply the equivalent of the public education funds generated by his or her child to the cost of tuition in the eligible private school.

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1002.39 The John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities

Program.—The John M. McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program provides the option to attend a public school other than the one assigned, or to provide a scholarship to a private school of choice, for students with disabilities for whom an individual education plan has been written in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education. Students with disabilities include K-12 students who are mentally handicapped, speech and language impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, visually impaired, dual sensory impaired, physically impaired, emotionally handicapped, specific learning disabled, hospitalized or homebound, or autistic.

220.187 Credits for contributions to nonprofit scholarship-funding organizations. — to encourage private, voluntary contributions, to expand educational opportunities for children of families that have limited financial resources, and to enable children in this state to achieve a greater level of excellence in their education, the 2000 Florida Legislature created this program. These corporate tax scholarships provide for state tax credits for contributions to nonprofit scholarship funding organizations.

Additionally, through Title V Federal funds, Sec. 501, *Innovative Programs and Parental Choice Provisions*, 26 of 67 school districts in Florida are implementing **Voluntary Choice Programs** with priorities of choice going to:

- provide a wide variety of educational choices for all students,
- provide opportunities for students currently attending low-performing schools to attend higher-performing schools,
- provide enhanced educational programs in under-enrolled schools to increase enrollment, and
- increase student achievement in all schools.