



The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed by Congress in December, 2015, is the newest version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), replacing No Child Left Behind. Congress also provided a transition period that will lead to ESSA's full implementation for the 2017-18 school year. In the interim most of NCLB will remain in effect.

## Public School Choice

Here is a summary of how ADE expects LEAs with schools identified as Priority or Focus in 2016-17 to implement public school choice.

### Background

Embedded in Section 1116 of NCLB are the requirements for LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring to set aside Title I funds for public school choice. LEAs were required to notify parents of students at those schools of the option to transfer to another school within the LEA that was not identified for improvement with transportation funded to the selected school.

ADE received approval for a waiver of the school improvement requirements in Section 1116 of NCLB under its ESEA Flexibility Request. In the description of the state system of school support ADE outlined how LEAs with schools identified as Priority or Focus, as defined in the Flexibility Request, were required to offer public school choice.

### Status in 2016-17

Arizona's Flexibility Request expired August 1, 2016, as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that replaced NCLB. Under the transition to the 2017-18 full implementation states, such as Arizona, with approved Flexibility Requests have been permitted to retain the identification of schools for improvement using the criteria for Priority and Focus schools. Therefore, all Priority and Focus schools will continue to implement school improvement plans and activities and remain eligible for supports from ADE. No additional schools will be identified at this time.

### Implementation in 2016-17

Any student who is being transported by the LEA, using Title I funds, from a Priority or Focus school to another school within the LEA due to the previous exercise of public school choice has the option to continue to attend the school until the highest grade is completed. The LEA may continue to set aside Title I funds to pay for transportation costs from the original school.

### Parent Notification

In prior years the ADE provided a notification letter template to inform parents of the public school choice option. Since there are no new schools in either the Priority or Focus category, parents have already been informed of the option to transfer; it is not necessary to send another universal notice this year. However, if any new students have enrolled in the Priority or Focus school this year, the LEA must provide the public school choice information and permit any transfers requested, based on the status of Priority or Focus, and set aside Title I funds for transportation, accordingly.

### Reporting Requirements

LEAs with Priority and/or Focus schools are required to report the following for school year 2015-16 by completing the table in the FY16 Title I Completion Report:

Number of students transferred

Number of students applying for transfers

Number of students eligible for transfers

LEAs must retain transfer records requests and transportation expenses with Title I expenditures.