

Transition Plan for Supplemental Educational Services & Public School Choice

Background:

Under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) schools that did not meet adequate yearly progress for three or more years were required to offer Supplemental Educational Services and public school choice to a school not in improvement status to students. NCLB was reauthorized December 2015 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) with full implementation of the Act in the 2017-18 school year. Under ESSA, Supplemental Educational Services and public school choice are not required. To provide an orderly transition from the NCLB requirements to what is allowed under ESSA, the Vermont Agency of Education received a waiver from the United States Department of Education that relieves local educational agencies (LEAs) from the mandated requirements of SES and public school choice. The Agency did have to assure that LEAs would provide alternative supports for students formerly eligible for SES services.

Transition Plan:

The transition plan is for the 2016-17 school year only as ESSA will be fully implemented in the 2017-18 school year.

In regards to Supplemental Educational Services - For each school in Vermont that is in School Improvement –Year 2 status or above, the school must provide alternative supports for students that would have been eligible for SES. Each school is required to work with their LEA, taking into consideration their Continuous Improvement Plan, to decide the best methods to provide the supports that will enable these students to academically succeed. Options include:

- LEAs may decide to set aside funds in their Consolidated Federal Programs (CFP) application and run a SES program under the requirements in NCLB as it did in the prior year.
- LEAs and schools may set aside funds and run a tutoring program to assist students struggling to meet the State’s standards.
- LEAs may contract with a third party provider, following procurement procedures, to provide high quality tutoring to students struggling to meet the State’s standards. The Agency strongly suggests that providers are chosen that have had past success in improving student achievement. Once chosen, the contract should require that a plan for each student is completed and the services are evaluated periodically to ensure progress.

- The LEA or schools may implement high quality afterschool, intersession, and/or summer learning programs designed to assist students struggling to meet the State's standards.
- The LEA or schools may implement high quality in-school intervention programs targeted at the students who would have been eligible for SES.
- The LEA or schools may implement other research-based interventions that are designed to assist struggling students improve academically.

All options should be available to students at the beginning of the school year and must be consistent with the allowable uses of Title I, Part A funds and all applicable fiscal requirements. The Agency strongly suggests that LEAs send letters to parents of children who participated in SES in the 2015-16 school year to notify them of the change and what the options are in the coming school year. If done, the letter should be sent at the end of the current school year but no later than the beginning of the 2016-17 school year. A sample template will be provided to all LEAs.

In regards to public school choice – consistent with NCLB section 1116(b)(13), an LEA must permit a student who previously transferred to another public school under NCLB requirements to remain in that school until the child has completed the highest grade in that school. LEAs will not be required to provide the cost of transporting the students to the school of choice in the 2016-17 school year. However, an LEA may decide that without the transportation assistance, the student would have a barrier in attending the school of choice and provide transportation, with local or Title I funds. The LEA must notify parents of participating children of this change in requirements as soon as possible (no later than the end of the 2015-16 school year) and give parents adequate time to come up with other transportation options and if needed, the LEA should work with those parents to develop alternative options.

Questions about this transition plan may be addressed to Mary Mulloy, State Director of Title I, Vermont Agency of Education at 802-479-1226 or mary.mulloy@vermont.gov.