

Frequently Asked Questions: AYP and School Choice for Gwinnett Schools

How is it determined if a school is making Adequate Yearly Progress?

Federal and state determinations of AYP are made based on three requirements:

- 1) Each subgroup of students (ethnic categories, disability, limited English proficiency, and socioeconomic status) must meet or exceed the state's annual measurable objectives regarding the percentage of students scoring proficient on the state assessments (CRCT and GHSCT);
- 2) Each subgroup must have at least a 95% participation rate on state assessments; and
- 3) Each school must show progress on another academic indicator such as attendance or graduation rate.

The majority of students at my child's school seem to be meeting or exceeding expectations on the CRCT, yet the school has been assigned "Needs Improvement" status. Why is my child's school on the list?

The majority of students at a school may be meeting or exceeding expectations on the CRCT. However, if even one of its 10 subgroups does not make AYP over a two-year period, the school would be assigned Needs Improvement (NI) status.

How do I know if my child's school has been identified as a "Needs Improvement" (NI) school, and where can I get additional information?

Each summer, the Georgia Department of Education provides local school systems with information about the schools that did not make AYP. GCPD notifies parents of students who attend these schools. In addition, information about Gwinnett schools placed in NI is posted on this Web site. Elementary and middle schools are assigned NI status based on results of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT), the tests given to measure students' grade-level mastery of Georgia's curriculum. At the high school level, results from the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSCT) determine NI status.

If my child attends a school that has been designated as "Needs Improvement," how do I transfer my child to another school? Are there eligibility requirements?

All students enrolled in schools identified as NI are eligible to transfer to another school that is not in NI status. Parents may choose from a list of schools the district will provide. However, priority in the choice of schools is given to the lowest-achieving children from low-income families.

Parents of all students attending a school designated as NI are notified by letter. The parent or guardian then must complete the choice form on the letter and return it to the principal of the child's current school to request a transfer to a choice school. They will be asked to select more than one choice from the list of schools and to choose schools in priority order.

If I do not want to send my child to any of the schools listed as choices on the school system's list, can I choose another school in the system?

The school system determines which schools to place on the choice list. System officials consider such things as the number of students already served at a school and the performance of that school itself. As NCLB requires, GCPD offers more than one school choice to eligible students. The intent is to provide parents the wisest possible choice for transfers within the law's requirements and the system's ability to manage its significant shortage of classrooms.

What should parents consider when they are given the option of school choice?

The decision should be based on what parents believe is best for their child. If the child is happy, is doing well academically at the current school, parents would be wise to take that into consideration. Parent support and involvement in an NI school can help the school improve academic achievement. On the other hand, if the parent believes that a transfer to a choice school would benefit the child more, then he/she should proceed with requesting a transfer.

Does the school system provide transportation for students who transfer under this choice option?

GCPD does not provide school bus service to choice schools, but it does reimburse the parent or a van service for transporting the student if the student is transferring from a Title I school. A reimbursement form must be completed by the parent. Each month, the student's attendance will be verified and the mileage computed.

When do I have to make the decision whether or not to move my child? Can I change my mind after the school year has started?

The decision to transfer a child to a choice school must be made by the deadline set by the county, which is included in the notification letter concerning school choice. If during the school year, the parent decides that the child should return to the home school, the child may be re-enrolled in the home school at any time. Reimbursement for travel will be discontinued.

If I move my child to another school, do I have to reapply for a transfer each year?

The child may remain in the choice school through the highest grade in that school. The student does not need to reapply each year. If the parent is being reimbursed for transportation, the parent will need to complete an "Intent Form" every year so that the county can continue the reimbursement payments. A parent will not be reimbursed for transportation if the child's original school moves off the NI list but the parent chooses to keep the child at the choice school.

If my child transfers under the school choice option, then his original school is removed from the Needs Improvement list, can she stay at her new school?

Yes. However, a parent will not be reimbursed for transportation to the choice school after the child's original school regains "good standing" as determined by making adequate yearly progress two years in a row.

Frequently Asked Questions: Supplemental Educational Services

What will the school system do to increase academic achievement at schools on the Needs Improvement list?

Each Title I school in NI status has a school improvement plan, which includes instructional strategies, based on scientific research, to increase the academic achievement of all students. Many Title I schools provide individual or group tutoring services during or after school.

In addition, outside providers (tutoring services) will offer Supplemental Educational Services (SES) to eligible students from low-income families during a school's second year of Needs Improvement status. SES is additional instruction designed to increase students' academic achievement in low-performing schools. These services, which may include tutoring, are provided by outside sources approved by the Georgia Department of Education, not by the school itself. The content and instruction are aligned with the county and state academic content standards. SES must be provided outside the regular school day and must include interventions that are of high quality, research-based, and specifically designed to increase student academic achievement. All supplemental services are based on the state and county curriculum objectives.

Parents can select any provider on the list that they feel will best meet their child's needs. GCPS will sign an agreement with the selected provider, who will then provide services to the child and report on the child's progress to the parents, school, and system. This component of Title I offers parents choices in addressing their child's educational needs and offers students extra academic help. Parents will be responsible for the child's transportation to the SES provider.

My family does not qualify for free or reduced-price lunch services. Can my child receive supplemental educational services?

Only students from low-income families are eligible for supplemental educational services. If the funds available are not sufficient to provide SES to each eligible student, GCPS must serve the lowest-achieving eligible students first. The school will continue to provide high-quality academic help to students who are not eligible for SES.

If I would like my child to receive tutoring or "supplemental services" from a provider not approved by the school system, would the school system pay for it?

GCPS is allowed to pay for only SES providers approved by the Georgia Department of Education.

If I transfer my child to a different school, can I also exercise the right for supplemental educational services (tutoring)?

Parents may not ask for both school choice and supplemental services. Instead they must choose between transferring their child to a higher-performing school, or leaving the child at the current school and requesting supplemental educational services/tutoring.