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MEMORANDUM

TO: District School Superintendents
FROM: Jean Miller, Acting Executive Director
DATE: January 22, 2008
SUBJECT: Request for Interest in the Interdistrict Agreements for Expanding School Choice Through Voluntary Public School Choice (VPSC) Models

This is to inform you of an opportunity to apply for funding to support districts in establishing or expanding interdistrict, multidistrict, and open enrollment public school choice programs to provide parents, particularly parents whose children attend low-performing public schools, with expanded education options. As described in the attached form, the Voluntary Public School Choice (VPSC) program supports and strengthens the capacity and quality of schools to meet the demand for choice and to provide equitable access to such programs.

The Florida Department of Education seeks to implement at least three interdistrict transfer models that will create or enhance existing transfer agreements and increase public school choice options. Models can replicate public school choice programs in secondary schools (including middle and high schools), improve transportation, provide interdistrict tuition transfers, or a combination of these strategies. Ideal partnerships would substantially impact students in lower-performing schools. This program complements the scope and magnitude of federal initiatives under No Child Left Behind. Districts that participated in the 2002-2007 VPSC program as Mentee/Mentors may be especially interested in applying.

If you are interested in participating and would like to receive further information, please complete the Notice of Interest and return to the Office of Independent Education no later than February 1. A teleconference will be scheduled to provide specific program details for interested districts.

Should you have any questions, please contact Yolanda Miranda-Hill, Voluntary Public School Choice Program Coordinator, at yolanda.miranda-hill@fldoe.org or (850) 245-9077.

JM/ymh
Attachments

CC: Assistant Superintendents, Charter School Principals, School Choice District Contacts, Career and Technical Education Directors, and Title I/ESE District Contacts

JEAN MILLER
Acting Executive Director
Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

Florida's Voluntary Public School Choice Program

Notice of Interest in the Interdistrict Agreements for Expanding School Choice

If your school district is interested in applying for funding under the Voluntary Public School Choice program, in partnership with one or more other school districts through an interdistrict agreement, we ask that you provide us the following information:

Name of School District: _____

Name of Contact Person(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, and Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Fax Number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Name of Possible School District Partner(s), if known at this time: _____

Please return this form on or before **February 1, 2008** to:
Yolanda Miranda-Hill, Voluntary Public School Choice Program Manager
Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 522
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

In addition to the e-mail address yolanda.miranda-hill@fldoe.org, responses may also be sent by fax to (850) 245-0868.

VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM

Title V, Part B, Subpart 3 (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001)

Interdistrict Agreements for Expanding Public School Choice

The Florida Department of Education (DOE) was awarded a grant under the 2007 Federal Voluntary Public School Choice (VPSC) Program. This grant will assist the DOE and school districts in creating, expanding, and improving public school choice opportunities in Florida. The VPSC Program aims to strengthen the availability, accessibility, and equity of educational options for parents to secure a high quality education for their children.

Voluntary Public School Choice Statutory Priorities

- To provide a wide variety of choices to all students in participating schools;
- To implement various choice options that have the most impact in allowing students in low performing schools to attend higher performing schools; and
- To support partnerships that seek to implement an interdistrict approach.

To accomplish the program priorities, the DOE intends to fund a minimum of three interdistrict or multi-interdistrict partnership models to increase school choice options by expanding student access to higher-performing public schools. Funds are expected to be awarded early in 2008 to allow partnering school districts to begin planning and designing their models. Initial implementation is desirable during the 2008-2009 school year. Consistent with other Florida educational initiatives, the emphasis will be on, but not limited to, school choice options at the secondary level.

Ideas for Possible Partnerships

- Expanding or improving existing interdistrict attendance agreements
- Replicating effective school choice options to reach families in lower-income neighborhoods or hard-to-reach areas
- Creating middle to high school feeder patterns to expand choice options for students
- Duplicating middle and high school career academies
- Offering tuition transfer payments or transportation for students to attend high-performing schools or specialized programs not offered in their district of residence
- Replicating successful strategies for implementing public school choice options to serve more students (charters, magnets, schools within schools, smaller learning communities, etc.)

This program complements the scope and magnitude of federal initiatives under No Child Left Behind, such as Title I, Magnet Schools Assistance Program, Smaller Learning Communities, and the Florida Parent Information and Resource Centers as well as grants that Florida has created, such as the Workforce Development and Matchmaker Innovative Grants.

Visualize – Partner – Plan – Develop – Implement – Evaluate