



PRINCIPLES FOR EQUITABLE AND DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL CHOICE

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1. Adequate and Equitable Educational Resources

Students and parents should be able to choose from excellent schooling alternatives. All public schools should provide the conditions necessary for a high quality education and they should draw upon roughly equivalent resources. Schools of choice should distinguish themselves by curricular or programmatic emphasis rather than by providing substantially more resources than others.

2. Inclusive and Representative Student Population

Enrollment at choice schools should be roughly representative of all public schools in the geographic area. Student demographics, including the proportion of Special Education students and English Learners, should mirror other local schools.* The principle of inclusiveness should apply to continuing students as well as new admissions. Choice schools should adopt policies that ensure that no demographic category of students is excluded from the school through unfair discipline policies or other "push out" mechanisms. Further, choice schools should not adopt policies, such as required parent volunteer hours, that are burdensome for students living in foster care as well as other students whose families cannot make such contributions. To ensure fidelity to this principle of inclusivity, all schools should report the demographics of applicants, admitted students, students who enroll at beginning of school year, and students still enrolled at end of school year.

3. Fair and Open Choice process.

All students should have the same opportunity to enroll in all choice schools. Families should receive timely information in accessible language about all schooling options in their attendance area. The district (and any other school operators) should partner with community-based organizations that can provide independent information and support to families as they make their educational decisions.

4. Participatory Governance

Parents and community members should have a meaningful voice in improvement efforts and budgetary decisions at all public schools. Such participation enriches school decision-making and promotes civic engagement. All public schools should inform parents and community members of opportunities for participation and, in partnership with community-based groups, provide training to parents so that they understand governance and budgetary issues.





5. **Transparent and Responsive Accountability System**

Parents, community members, and policy makers need information that allows for meaningful comparisons across all public schools. All choice and district schools should agree to gather and report common information on school conditions, outcomes, and resources. The information should include data collected for purposes of state reporting as well as surveys of students, parents, and educators. It should also include school-level information on expenditures and revenues. This data should be reported in a common report card used across all public schools.

6. **Fair Treatment for Workers and their Families**

Teachers, clerical staff, cafeteria workers, custodians, and other school employees should be able to choose representation from a collective bargaining unit. These workers are critically important to the quality of school programs and they deserve good working conditions and a democratic workplace. Further, many workers in public schools are also parents of public school students in the local community. These families need and deserve the financial security and other essential benefits that often come with union membership. Collective bargaining agreements should allow for most work rules to be crafted at the school level, in recognition that local autonomy and flexibility are critical to the development of powerful learning environments.

*Exceptions to the general principle of representativeness should hold for existing magnet schools that seek demographic diversity for purposes of racial integration or choice schools whose programs are designed to serve the needs of special education students or English Learners.

