



Controlled Open Enrollment

What is controlled open enrollment?

Controlled open enrollment is a public education delivery system that allows school districts to make student school assignments using a parent's indicated preferential public school choice as a significant factor.¹

Are school districts required to implement controlled open enrollment?

No, although each district school board is required to develop and submit a controlled open enrollment plan to the Commissioner of Education. Whether a district school board implements its controlled open enrollment plan is optional.²

What elements are school districts required to consider in the development of a controlled open enrollment plan?

School districts must develop a system of priorities for controlled open enrollment plans which include consideration of the following elements:

- ❖ An application process related to the open enrollment program.
- ❖ A process that allows parents to declare school preferences and encourages placement of siblings within the same school.
- ❖ A lottery procedure to determine student assignment.
- ❖ An appeals process for hardship cases.
- ❖ Procedures to maintain socioeconomic, demographic, and racial balance.
- ❖ Availability of transportation.
- ❖ A process that promotes strong parental involvement, including the designation of a parent liaison.
- ❖ A strategy that establishes a clearinghouse of information designed to assist parents in making informed choices.³

How many students are enrolled in controlled open enrollment programs?

To evaluate the implementation of controlled open enrollment across the state, the Department of Education (DOE) created a reporting format that requires school districts to annually collect and report data regarding educational choice options. This data is submitted in August of each year.⁴

¹ Section 1002.31(1), F.S.

² Section 1002.31(2), (3), and (6), F.S.

³ Section 1002.31(5), F.S.

Data for the 2008-09 academic year indicates that 342,969 students or approximately 11.88 percent of the total number of students enrolled in the state⁵ attended a Florida public school through a district controlled open enrollment program.⁶ DOE analysis of student participation data for the three academic years between 2006 and 2009 indicates that the percentage of students participating in controlled open enrollment has remained steady, with approximately 12 percent of the total kindergarten through grade 12 student membership attending schools based on controlled open enrollment plans in each of those years.⁷

Do constitutional class size requirements affect controlled open enrollment?

The Florida Constitution's class size requirements⁸ may result in limiting district flexibility to provide controlled open enrollment for students. A district may be unable to provide greater parental choice options in many schools due to the class room capacity limits.

Where can I get additional information?

Florida Department of Education

Bureau of Federal Education Programs

850-245-9939

<http://www.fldoe.org/flbpso/>

Florida House of Representatives

Education Committee

(850) 488-7451

<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov>

⁴ Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Student Assistance, Office of Public School Options, *Controlled Open Enrollment Annual Report for the 2009-2010 School Year*, at 5 (Nov. 30, 2009), COE Annual Report 2009-2010.pdf. Received from DOE staff by email on June 16, 2010.

⁵ During the 2008-09 academic year, 2,885,854 students were enrolled in a Florida public school. *Id.* at 6.

⁶ *Id.* at 5. Fifty-five school districts implemented a controlled open enrollment program. *Id.*

⁷ *Id.* In addition to controlled open enrollment options, many districts offer students the opportunity to access other public school options, such as magnet schools, charter schools, McKay Scholarships, Florida Virtual School, and career academies. In the 2008-09 academic year, 398,256 students or approximately 13.8 percent of the K-12 students attended schools other than their assigned school. This is in addition to the 342,969 students attending schools pursuant to the school districts' controlled open enrollment options. Therefore, 741,225 students or 25.68 percent of the total K-12 membership attended schools based on parental school choice options in the 2008-09 academic year. *Id.*

⁸ See s. 1(a), Art. IX of the State Constitution; see also Class Size Fact Sheet.

