

**Voluntary Public School Choice (VPSC)
Mentee District Project (Continuation)**

Narrative

1. An accurate reporting of the educational choices that were offered to students by the school district including:

a. the number and type of existing school choice programs in the district.

For the 2004-2005 school year, the Jackson County School Board had choice options that included: Parental Choice, option to attend another school due to not making Adequate Yearly Progress (NAYP), McKay Scholarship, Gifted Education, Hearing Impaired Class, and Jackson Academy.

In 2004-2005, the Jackson County School District had in place seven attendance zones that define where a student attends school. Students living within the boundaries of these zones are assigned to the schools within the attendance zone by the grade attended. Each zone is designed to contain an elementary, middle, and high school. Each zone is designed to serve one of the seven communities located within Jackson County. Transportation to and from school within the attendance zone shall be provided by the Jackson County School Board according to established transportation guidelines.

Parents are allowed to select a school inside or outside their attendance zone. The District allows parents to make this selection during the first week of each nine-week grading period. Parents who select a school outside their attendance zone are required to complete JC-296, *Student Transfer Request*. The form may be obtained at each school or at the Director of MIS, Middle and Secondary Instruction's office. Every attempt is made to honor the parent's request of placement.

The District has an academy located in Marianna, Florida that serves students in grades 9-12. To attend this school, students must apply and be selected by the school. Students must select a career cluster to study while at the school. The district provides transportation from the student's assigned attendance zone to this school for approximately 96 of the students. The other students drive their personal vehicle to school.

The District operates a hearing-impaired class at Malone school. For the 2004-05 school-year, parents/students chose to attend this school rather than stay at their assigned attendance zone. The district uses two min-vans to transport the eight students from their home attendance zone to Malone. All requests were honored and transportation to the school was provided.

The District has a gifted program that parents chose for their child to attend one day of the school week. Each day of the week is reserved for a particular grade to attend from all the schools within the district. The district transported 222 students to the Gifted center.

b. an accurate reporting from your district reported MIS survey information of the students applying for each choice program.

According to MIS records, the following applications were received for the following choice options; Parental Choice—171 applications; attendance at another school for NAYP—0; McKay Scholarship—17 applications; Gifted Education—233 applications; Hearing Impaired Class—8 applications; Jackson Academy—151 applications.

c. an accurate reporting from your district reported MIS survey information of the students enrolled in each program.

According to MIS records, the following applications were received for the following choice options; Parental Choice—171 applications; attendance at another school for NAYP—0; McKay Scholarship—17 applications; Gifted Education—233 applications; Hearing Impaired Class—8 applications; Jackson Academy—151 applications.

d. identified benchmarks and projected levels of improvement for each of these:

The District has identified the following benchmarks (BM) and improvement goals (IG) for continuation dollars:

BM1. The District will provide transportation to parents/students to attend choice schools/programs within the district.

BM2. The District will identify annually the choice schools/programs within the district and will market and disseminate information on each school/program to parents before the beginning of the next school term.

IG3. The District will create and publish pamphlets to describe the program of studies being offered at the choice schools/programs within the district.

IG4. The District will supplement the fleet of buses and vans used to transport students to schools of choice.

IG5. The District will seek input from parents concerning programs to be offered at each school within the district.

i. did the grant result in a larger number of students in schools or programs of choice?

At the present time, the grant has not resulted in a larger number of students in any of the above programs. The numbers have remained approximately the same as last year.

e. Include a description of any lottery type systems and policies used to determine which students are placed in schools that cannot accommodate the number of requests for transfer.

In the event there are more requests for a school than there are seats available, assignments will be made up to the educational capacity of the school (as determined by the Director of Facilities using the FISH Report). At that time, all assignments will be made in accordance with the racial and ethnic diversity guidelines and the following preferences:

- a. Sibling Preference
- b. Proximity Preference
- c. Special Program Priority (ie. ESOL, ESE, DOP, etc.)
- d. Random Lottery Number

If students can not be accommodated at their parent's school of choice because of over-enrollment, the student will be assigned to the school within their residence zone. If the desired school has reached maximum capacity or there is no space at the school in which the student's zone requires attendance, the name of the student will be placed automatically in an eligibility pool for possible reassignment to their parent's school of choice. If and when space becomes available in their particular grade level using the procedures above and there are no students who meet conditions a-c above, then the district will decide student placement by a random lottery number selected from the list of applicants at the school.

2. A description of how parents were involved in the program, including data regarding satisfaction and concerns.

Parents are more likely to become involved when they have the opportunity to choose the schools that their children will attend and know that school assignment will be stable. Through active participation, parents will be helping to identify the successful components and processes within schools which are worthy of replication in other schools. They also will be helping to identify components or processes within a school which should be changed to make the school more successful and more popular to other parents

Parents are allowed to select a school inside or outside their attendance zone. This selection must be made during the first week of each nine-week grading period. The Director of MIS, Middle and Secondary Instruction will monitor the enrollment at each school. In the event there are more requests for a school than there are seats available, assignments will be made up to the educational capacity of the school (as determined by the Director of Facilities using the FISH Report). At that time, all assignments will be made in accordance with the racial and ethnic diversity guidelines and the following preferences:

- a. Sibling Preference
- b. Proximity Preference
- c. Special Program Priority (ie. ESOL, ESE, DOP, etc.)
- d. Random Lottery Number

For the 2004-2005 school year, all parental requests have been honored. There were no written complaints received by the District in regards to parents choosing a school for their child(ren) to attend.

3. A description of the transportation options provided to students in the school choice plan.

a. type of transportation plan being used.

The Jackson County School Board presently has in place seven attendance zones that define where a student attends school. Students living within the boundaries of these zones are assigned to the schools within the attendance zone by the grade attended. Each zone is designed to contain an elementary, middle, and high school. Each zone is designed to serve one of the seven communities located within Jackson County. Transportation to and from school within the attendance zone shall be provided by the Jackson County School Board according to established transportation guidelines.

Parents who choose for their child to attend a school outside their attendance zone, under the parental choice option, will be required to transport their child at their own expense to the parent's school of choice or to the nearest existing bus route stop within that school zone. Parents who choose for the child to attend Jackson Academy, the Gifted program, or the hearing impaired class, under the Academy choice option, the gifted choice option, or the hearing impaired choice option, will have transportation provided to the school of choice and back to the home school zone. If in the event that a bus becomes overcrowded due to students riding from outside their attendance zone, students who live outside the attendance zone will be removed off the bus first. No child will be reassigned to a school with boundaries which are closed due to an increase in student enrollment.

According to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, if a Title I school is identified as "in need of improvement" due to not making "Adequate Yearly

Progress” (AYP) for two consecutive years, student will be given the option to transfer to another school. The transportation cost will be at district expense. The cost of transportation will be paid by the district for two consecutive years. If the school makes AYP for those two years, then public choice at the district’s expense is terminated. If the school does not make AYP after two years, then public choice will continue until such time as the school makes AYP for two consecutive years.

Once the Title I school is identified as “in need of service”, the parents of the students attending the identified school will receive a letter notifying the parent of the option to transfer. The letter will give choices of schools that have made AYP. Transportation to the nearest school that has made AYP will be provided. The parent will have approximately one month to respond to the letter. If no response is made by the established deadline, the option to transfer expires until the following year, when the opportunity is extended again.

b. number of parents requesting and receiving “school choice” transportation.

The District provided transportation to 392 students to attend their school of choice. This included 96 students to attend the Academy, 222 students to attend the Gifted program, and 8 students to attend the hearing-impaired class.

c. average number of miles, transfers and duration of a choice student’s transportation schedule.

The average number of miles for a bus providing transportation to students attending each of the choice options except the hearing impaired option is 105 miles. The students usually have to transfer one time before reaching their choice school. The average duration of time on the bus is approximately 85 minutes (includes the regular route bus and the transfer bus times). For the hearing impaired option, the average number of miles is 125 miles. There is no transfer and the students spend an average of 60 minutes in the vehicle before reaching their choice school (some spend more than 60 minutes and some spend less than 60 minutes).

d. approximate cost per student of this transportation services.

The district has determined that it costs approximately \$2.77 per mile to transport any student.

e. projected level of improvement for any identified deficiencies.

The district has invested in a routing system to effectively reduce problems associated with mileage and time on buses. The routing system will also monitor usage of fuel used for transportation. Funds from this grant will be used to improve effective route planning and to purchase fuel at the most economical price.

f. Are there any students participating in inter-district choice transportation?

At the present time the district has no students participating in inter-district choice transportation.

4. The number of students moving from low-performing to higher performing schools through their school choice options—for 05-06 project year you will need to report on the NCLB required movement of students from non-AYP schools and the students moving from other non-Title I low performing schools to higher performing schools.

For the 2004-2005 school year, the District had two schools that did not make AYP for the second year in a row. Letters were mailed to each student in the two schools (381 and 547 students) explaining their option to move to the nearest school that did make AYP. The letter explained that transportation would be provided. The District had 0 students request to move.

Although the district did have schools that did not make AYP for the second and third years, for the 05-06 project year, the district has had no parent move their child because of the NCLB requirements allowing movement of students from non-AYP schools. Letters were mailed out from the respective schools to parents informing them of their option to transfer their child. The district has had parents move their child(ren) from other non-Title I schools but no parent has indicated it was because of the school was low performing. The parents have requested the move because of other reasons.

5. The number of students for who the district used part of these funds to pay for tuition transfers to their new school of choice.

The Jackson County School Board, in school year 2004-05, had 17 students use their McKay Scholarship choice option to transfer their child to another school. For the 2005-06 school year, the district has presently 17 students using the McKay Scholarship choice option.

6. The capacity-building efforts that were developed with these funds to alleviate the overcrowding of schools of choice already at capacity.

The Jackson County School Board has no schools at capacity. However, in the event that a school does reach capacity, the district has the following capacity-building effort in place in its choice plan:

In the event there are more requests for a school than there are seats available, assignments will be made up to the educational capacity of the school (as determined by the Director of Facilities using the FISH Report). At that time, all assignments will be made in accordance with the racial and ethnic diversity guidelines and the following preferences:

- a. Sibling Preference
- b. Proximity Preference
- c. Special Program Priority (ie. ESOL, ESE, DOP, etc.)
- d. Random Lottery Number

If students can not be accommodated at their parent's school of choice because of over-enrollment, the student will be assigned to the school within their residence zone. If the desired school has reached maximum capacity or there is no space at the school in which the student's zone requires attendance, the name of the student will be placed automatically in an eligibility pool for possible reassignment to their parent's school of choice. If and when space becomes available in their particular grade level using the procedures above and there are no students who meet conditions a-c above, then the district will decide student placement by a random lottery number selected from the list of applicants at the school.

7. A description of how the current level of public school choice will be improved and expanded if funding is awarded.

If funding is awarded, the District will use funds to supplement the bus/van fleet used to transport students to schools of choice. For the 2005-2006 school year, it is anticipated that five of the District's schools will not make AYP for the second consecutive year, thus requiring the District to notify parents at those schools that they have the choice to transfer their child(ren) to the nearest closest school making AYP using district provided transportation.

8. A description of how the project outcomes have been and will continue to be disseminated to all stakeholders.

Parents are advised at the time of registration of the district's available choice options. District and school brochures have been printed that outline these options and are available for parents and students to peruse. At the conclusion of the project, the results of the project will be tabulated and made available via the district's web page for all stakeholders to peruse.

9. A description of the relationship and support that the program has provided to the district reading initiatives, including but not limited to “Just Read, Florida!” Clearly explain how the reading initiatives have been integrated into the public school choice efforts that the funding supports.

The District will use a structured approach for monitoring instruction and the collection of assessment data to determine if additional intervention and support is needed. The goal for the Jackson County School Board’s K-12 Reading Plan is that every child read on or above grade level by 2012 and continues to do so until graduation from high school. Each school will be regarded as making adequate progress toward this goal if they meet the standards set for each grade for reading at or above grade level (Level 3 or above on FCAT or for students scoring on grade level on the Stanford 10 who do not take FCAT).

The District will ensure that the requirements of the K-12 Reading Plan are being met by using progress monitoring assessments throughout the school year to keep teachers, administrators and parents informed about individual students’ progress in learning to read ,as well as, document intensive remediation efforts. A District Leadership Team will ensure the integrity and efficacy of the K-12 Reading Plan, as well as, assist with evaluation procedures. The evaluation of the plan will begin with the 2005-2006 school year and will be on-going to provide feedback in order to make changes that improve program effectiveness and fiscal efficiency.

Under the present Choice Plan, parents have the option to send their child(ren) to any school within the District, as outlined within the plan. The District has committed that all schools will provide reading instruction as determined by the student’s FCAT level. If additional intervention and support is needed, it will be given at the school. If the school has not met AYP for two years, the students will be given the option to transfer, with transportation provided, to the nearest school that has met AYP. Parents of students from non-AYP schools will have the option to move from their low-performing school to a higher performing school.

10 A report on the progress of the “Plan to Plan” created in conjunction with a mentor district.

The Jackson County School Board has met with the Bay County School Board in “Plan to Plan” sessions to implement this grant. Bay County, the mentor district, has provided guidance and direction to Jackson County, the mentee district. The Jackson County School Board’s Choice Plan was created with the intent to allow for maximum choice in where a student would attend school. The plan allows for parents to have their child(ren) attend school within their assigned attendance zone or to attend any school outside their attendance zone, if the parent provided transportation to the requested school or to the nearest bus stop servicing the school. The District had 171 parents/students select this option. The plan allows for parents to choose to send their child(ren) to the District’s Gifted program if the student qualifies for the program. Transportation is provided from the student’s home school to the Gifted site. The District had 233 students choose this

option. The plan allows for parents of students who are hearing impaired to choose to send their child(ren) to a special school for the hearing impaired. Transportation is provided from the student's home to the special school. The District had 8 students choose this option. The plan also allows for parents of students in grades 9-12 to choose to send their child(ren) to the District's Academy. This school focuses on providing students with intense career enhancing courses that expose the student to content needed in the career chosen. Transportation is provided from the student's home to the Academy. The district had 151 students choose this option with 96 of the students being provided transportation. Finally, the plan allows for students at schools that have not met AYP requirements of the NCLB program to attend another school that has made AYP. Transportation is provided. Presently, no parent/child has selected this option.

Funds from this grant have been used to pay for transportation costs to transport students from their home or home attendance zone to their school of choice. The District has made an attempt to honor all requests that did not result in a school becoming overcrowded. The District has determined that for the 2004-05 school year, the average cost per mile to provide transportation was \$2.77. The District received notification of the School Choice award for the months of August and September of 2005. The District has calculated that the total miles driven per day for transporting students to the choice schools/programs per day at 570 miles. The District calculated 570 miles per day times \$2.77 per mile totals \$1578.90 per day for transportation. For the months of August and September, the District calculated 40 days of transportation costs resulting in 40 times \$1578.90 or **a total of \$63,156.00 for school choice transportation.**

The District is expanding the Choice Plan to offer parents of students with disabilities who are not progressing at their assigned school the option to attend another school of choice if the parent feels that their child(ren) would benefit from transferring to the school of choice. Transportation would be provided to transport the child(ren) to the school of choice.

The mentor district has provided support for this plan by visiting the mentee district and discussing new ideas, conflicts, alternate solutions, and copies of materials used in the mentor district. The mentor district has also made several calls to check on implementation of the Choice Plan.

a. Include a summary description of what the public school choice plan was for the district.

For the 2005-06 school year, the Jackson County School District has in place seven attendance zones that define where a student attends school. Students living within the boundaries of these zones are assigned to the schools within the attendance zone by the grade attended. Each zone is designed to contain an elementary, middle, and high school. Each zone is designed to serve one of the seven communities located within Jackson County. Transportation to and from school within the attendance zone shall be provided by the Jackson County School Board according to established transportation guidelines.

Parents are allowed to select a school inside or outside their attendance zone. The District allows parents to make this selection during the first week of each nine-week grading period. Parents who select a school outside their attendance zone are required to complete JC-296, *Student Transfer Request*. The form may be obtained at each school or at the Director of MIS, Middle and Secondary Instruction's office. Every attempt is made to honor the parent's request of placement.

The District has an academy located in Marianna, Florida that serves students in grades 9-12. To attend this school, students must apply and be selected by the school. Students must select a career cluster to study while at the school. The district provides transportation from the student's assigned attendance zone to this school.

The District operates a hearing-impaired class at Malone school. For the 2005-06 school-year, parents/students chose to attend this school rather than stay at their assigned attendance zone. The district uses two min-vans to transport the students from their home attendance zone to Malone. All requests were honored and transportation to the school was provided.

The District has a gifted program that parents chose for their child to attend one day of the school week. Each day of the week is reserved for a particular grade to attend from all the schools within the district. The district transports the students to the Gifted center.

b. How are you progressing with the public school choice program plan?

The Jackson County School Board believes that the public school choice plan is effectively working. Parental requests to move their child(ren) to the school of their choice has been moving smoothly with little problems.

c. Specifically how you developing/expanding/enhancing their public school choice efforts?

The Jackson County School Board has purchased and is now implementing transportation software to plan for more effective bus routing of students to cut down on the time students spend on buses. The software gives a description of where each home is located within the district and selects the closest bus-stop for the student to meet the bus. The school bus fleet is being upgraded to more modern buses that use less fuel.

The Jackson County School Board has decided to move the location of the district's Academy to a larger site. This will allow more students access to the programs that are career related. The district will continue to transport student to this facility.

The Jackson County School Board has decided to reconfigure two schools by moving the middle school students at school A to school B and moving the high school students at school B to school A. Both schools were nearing capacity and this move will allow for maximum student occupancy. Transportation to both schools will be provided by the district.

d. Identify benchmarks and improvement goals for continuation dollars.

The District has identified the following benchmarks (BM) and improvement goals (IG) for continuation dollars:

BM1. The District will provide transportation to parents/students to attend choice schools/programs within the district.

BM2. The District will identify annually the choice schools/programs within the district and will market and disseminate information on each school/program to parents before the beginning of the next school term.

IG3. The District will create and publish pamphlets to describe the program of studies being offered at the choice schools/programs within the district.

IG4. The District will supplement the fleet of buses and vans used to transport students to schools of choice.

IG5. The District will seek input from parents concerning programs to be offered at each school within the district.

IG6. The District will utilize the bus routing software to maximize the most efficient bus scheduling possible.

Support of Reading/Strategic Imperatives

Describe how the proposed project will incorporate reading initiatives and one or more of the Florida State Board of Education (SBE) strategic imperatives.

The District's Choice Plan incorporates the Florida State Board of Education (SBE) strategic imperative #5: Increase the Quantity and Improve the Quality of Educational Options "Every student and parent has reasonable access to a choice of quality or private education." In keeping with the imperative, The District will ensure that the requirements of the K-12 Reading Plan are being met by using progress monitoring assessments throughout the school year to keep teachers, administrators and parents informed about individual students' progress in learning to read ,as well as, document intensive remediation efforts. A District Leadership Team will ensure the integrity and efficacy of the K-12 Reading Plan, as well as, assist with evaluation procedures. The evaluation of the plan will begin with the 2005-2006 school year and will be on-going to provide feedback in order to make changes that improve program effectiveness and fiscal efficiency.

Under the present Choice Plan, parents have the option to send their child(ren) to any school within the District, as outlined within the plan. The District has committed that all schools will provide reading instruction as determined by the student's FCAT level. If additional intervention and support is needed, it will be given at the school. If the school has not met AYP for two years, the students will be given the option to transfer, with transportation provided, to the nearest school that has met AYP.

Dissemination/Marketing

Describe methods/strategies you will use to disseminate and market information about the project to appropriate populations.

The District produces a pamphlet that describes the services/programs offered within the county. It is available to all stakeholders within the county. Copies have been placed at the Chamber of Commerce and at the public library. Local realtors have been given copies of the district's pamphlet to distribute to visitors and local interested citizens.

School counselors or school registration personnel, at the time of registration; review the District's Choice Plan to parents. Parents are notified of available options that may be chosen.

