



Washington Office of Superintendent of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

*Student Transfers: Choice  
Transfers, Interdistrict  
Agreements, and Standard  
Choice Transfer System  
(SCTS)*

**2023**

# STUDENT TRANSFERS

Choice Transfers, Interdistrict Agreements, and Standard Choice Transfer System (SCTS)

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# PURPOSE

This publication provides information and requirements for enrolling students that are not residents of a school district and claiming their enrollment for state funding. Additionally, this publication provides information on the Education Data System (EDS) Standard Choice Transfer System (SCTS). This publication replaces Bulletin #035-18.

Definitions for the purposes of this guidance document:

- “Alternative Learning Experience (ALE)” means any courses where the student’s enrollment claimed for state funding is done in whole or in part outside of the classroom and meets the requirement of Chapter 392-550 Washington Administrative Code (WAC).
- “Fully executed” means a completed transfer or agreement that is signed by both districts.
- “Nonresident district” means the district where a student attends school but does not live within the district’s boundaries.
- “Parents” means a student’s parent(s) or guardian(s).
- “Resident district” means the district where the student resides.

# BACKGROUND ON ENROLLMENT

School districts that provide educational services to students may claim those students for state funding under three specific circumstances:

1. A student is a resident of the district, resides on federal or tribal lands contiguous to a district, or resides in a district that does not offer a grade in which the student is eligible to enroll.
2. The district has a Choice Transfer in place which gives a district the authority to claim a student who is not a resident of the district.
3. An Interdistrict Agreement is in place which gives a nonresident district the right to claim a specific portion of the student’s enrollment, given by the resident district.

Without one of these three circumstances in place, a district cannot claim a student’s enrollment for state funding.

Residence is defined in WAC 392-137-115:

## **“WAC 392-137-115 Student residence—Definition.**

As used in this chapter, the term “student residence” means the physical location of a student’s principal abode—i.e., the home, house, apartment, facility, structure, or location, etc.—where the student lives the majority of the time. The following shall be considered in applying this section:

- (1) The mailing address of the student—e.g., parent’s address or post office box—may be different than the student’s principal abode.
- (2) The student’s principal abode may be different than the principal abode of the student’s parent(s).
- (3) The lack of a mailing address for a student does not preclude residency under this section.
- (4) If students are expected to reside at address for twenty consecutive days or more.”

Charter and tribal compact schools are not required to have a Choice Transfer or Interdistrict

Agreement in place with their students' resident districts. A records request from a charter or tribal compact school provides notification to the student's resident district that the student has enrolled in a charter or tribal compact school.

Students residing in a district that does not provide the grade the student is eligible to enroll (often referred to as a nonhigh student), can enroll in any district that provides this grade (often referred to as a high district). There is no requirement to have a Choice Transfer or Interdistrict Agreement in place for nonhigh students.

Contracts for instruction entered into by two districts as provided in WAC 392-121-188 do not give a district authority to claim a student who does not reside within their district. A separate Choice Transfer or Interdistrict Agreement for each nonresident student is required in order for the nonresident district to claim the student.

Students attending a skill center program do not need a Choice Transfer or Interdistrict Agreement if the student resides in a district that is part of the skill center cooperative. If instead the student lives in a district that is not part of the skill center cooperative, a Choice Transfer or Interdistrict Agreement with one of the skill center cooperative is required. Additionally, for non-skill center courses, a Choice Transfer or Interdistrict Agreement is required regardless of whether the student lives in a skill center cooperative district.

## Information on Choice Transfer

Under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.225.200 through 28A.225.240, students have the right to request enrollment in a district other than their resident district through a Choice Transfer request. Choice law allows districts the ability to grant a student's choice, as well as instances where the Choice Transfer request may be refused by either of the districts. This law provides students and parents the opportunity to appeal a Choice Transfer denial decision to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for final determination, as defined in RCW 28A.225.230.

A Choice Transfer occurs when the following takes place:

1. There has been a release from a student's resident district, at the student or parents' request, and there has been acceptance from another district within the state of Washington, AND
2. The student's resident district retains no responsibility for provision of, or funding for, the student's educational program.

For the duration of the Choice Transfer, the nonresident district is responsible for all services and state and federal requirements related to the student (the same responsibilities they have for a student that resides within their district boundaries). This includes, but is not limited to, basic education, special education, home/hospital services, truancy, Running Start, Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) reporting, and administration of state educational assessments.

Important things to remember:

1. A Choice Transfer is initiated by a student or parents through a Choice Transfer request that is first submitted to the student's resident district and then fully executed by the two districts.

2. Choice Transfers require beginning and ending dates and should be limited to one school year. If the student wishes to continue attending the nonresident district school for the following year, a renewal request is required. An annual renewal ensures the student has not moved to a new resident district, which would require a new Choice Transfer with the new district.
3. Prior to a fully executed Choice Transfer and before the beginning date of the Choice Transfer, the student remains the responsibility of the resident district and must continue to attend the student's current school until the transfer begins or otherwise be subject to truancy laws.
4. Once a Choice Transfer is fully executed:
  - The student and parents must be notified the Choice Transfer is approved, and
  - The nonresident district accepting the student should enroll the student according to their district's standard enrollment processes, which could include a records request from the resident district.
5. When a Choice Transfer is denied or rescinded:
  - Districts are required to have policies in place that establish rational, fair, and equitable standards for denials and rescindments of Choice Transfers.
  - Students and parents must be notified and given the specific district policy for the denial or rescindment.
  - Students and parents must be notified of their right to appeal to OSPI.
  - For a rescindment of a Choice Transfer, the nonresident district is responsible for notifying the resident district. The effective date of the rescindment is the date the resident district is notified. Until the resident district receives the notification, the nonresident district remains responsible for the student's education.
6. Under a Choice Transfer, the resident district retains no ability to claim the student's enrollment for state funding unless the Choice Transfer has been supplemented by an Interdistrict Agreement.
7. Requests must be processed in a timely manner. Specific timelines include:
  - The resident district must process and submit the request from the parent with a deadline of 45 days from "when the request for the release was mailed or delivered to the superintendent of the resident district". At this point, the parents can assume the request was denied and the parent can appeal with the OSPI per WAC 392-137-155.
  - The nonresident district must also process the request from the parent in a "timely manner." Their deadline is 45 days from "receipt by the nonresident district" or the application will be deemed to have been denied and the parent can appeal with OSPI.
    - Receipt of requests for the following school year may be temporarily deferred through district policy and procedure. The nonresident district policy may set a date that they receive requests with start dates for the following school year. This date and timeline should be transparent and communicated with parents so they understand when the district will receive their request and 45-day deadline begins.

## Information on Interdistrict Agreements

Interdistrict agreements provides a method for districts to share a student's enrollment. In contrast to a Choice Transfer, when an Interdistrict Agreement is in place, the resident district retains the responsibilities for the student's education. However, the provision of the student's basic education, special education, or transitional bilingual instruction program (TBIP) services are shared with another district within the state of Washington. The nonresident district sharing the student

becomes a contractor of the resident district and has only those obligations so noted in the Interdistrict Agreement. The resident district maintains ultimate responsibility for the education being provided by the nonresident district.

Contrary to Choice Transfers, there is no law mandating Interdistrict Agreements or requiring a resident district to enter into an Interdistrict Agreement to share a student's basic education full-time equivalent (FTE) or provision of special education and TBIP services with a nonresident district. Further, there is no law that requires districts to offer an appeal right to students when districts choose not to share a student via an Interdistrict Agreement.

Important things to remember:

1. Interdistrict Agreements require beginning and ending dates and should be limited to one school year and renewed for the following school year. Annual renewals ensure the student has not moved to another district which would require a new Interdistrict Agreement with the new district.
2. Students must continue to attend their current school schedule until notified of the acceptance of the Interdistrict Agreement and its start day or be subject to nonattendance procedures.
3. Once an Interdistrict Agreement is fully executed, the nonresident district would enroll the student based on the district's enrollment processes, which could include a records request from the resident district.
4. Interdistrict Agreements must specify the maximum amount of FTE each district is allowed to claim for the student. The total FTE in Grades K–12 must not exceed 1.0 FTE. Enrollment when combined with Skill Center or Running Start classes can exceed 1.0 FTE but the high school FTE is limited to 1.0 FTE.
5. A district serving a student with an Interdistrict Agreement in place may claim up to the amount of time a student is enrolled subject to the limitation specified in the agreement.
6. When sharing the student's special education or TBIP services, an Interdistrict Agreement must specify which district will claim the student's headcount for special education or TBIP funding.
7. An Interdistrict Agreement should clearly state the conditions that would lead to a student's disenrollment from the nonresident district. It should also specify how the resident district is to be notified of a student's disenrollment from the nonresident district.
8. When a student is shared between two or more districts through an interdistrict agreement, one of the districts will need to be identified as the "primary" district for purposes of report card and any services or regulations not articulated in the interdistrict agreement. While the districts may assume this to be the district initiating the agreement, the agreement may need to clarify this AND the primary district should indicate in CEDARS they are the primary district.

Interdistrict Agreements must comply with all the requirements of the Interlocal Cooperation Act, chapter 39.34 RCW.

## **Information on the Standard Choice Transfer System**

The SCTS application within EDS was developed in 2013 as required in RCW 28A.250.070 and implemented in March 2014. Districts are required to use this application for all students who are released through a Choice Transfer from their resident district to a nonresident district for the purpose of enrolling in an ALE school or program. However, this application can also be used by

districts for students being released through a Choice Transfer to enroll in a non-ALE school, as well as for sharing a student's enrollment through an Interdistrict Agreement.

To access the SCTS, the district must assign the EDS Choice Coordinator role to the district staff responsible for processing the Choice Transfer and Interdistrict Agreements.

## REPORTING OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT

### P-223 and P-223H Reporting for State Funding

Resident district's data reported on the P-223 and P-223H forms is used to calculate a district's special education funding, Levy Authorization, and Nonhigh payments. Based on whether the nonresident student has a Choice Transfer or an Interdistrict Agreement in place, the instructions for reporting the student's resident district differs.

- Choice Transfer: A student who attends a nonresident district through a Choice Transfer is considered to be a resident of the nonresident district and, accordingly, is reported on the P-223 and P-223H forms as a resident of the nonresident district.
- Interdistrict Agreement: A student who is attending a nonresident district through an Interdistrict Agreement, is reported by the nonresident district on the P-223 and P-223H forms as a resident of the actual resident district. The basic education FTE and special education and TBIP headcount claimed by the nonresident district is limited to what is specified in the Interdistrict Agreement.

### School Apportionment and Financial Services (SAFS) ALE Reporting

For ALE enrollment reporting in the SAFS ALE application, students are reported by their home district, which is defined as the district where the student lives regardless of a Choice Transfer.

### CEDARS Reporting

For CEDARS reporting, the following instructions apply:

- Choice Transfer: A student who attends a district through a Choice Transfer would be reported as IsPrimary=Y.
- Interdistrict Agreement: For a student attending two districts through an Interdistrict Agreement, the student's resident district would report the student as IsPrimary=Y while the nonresident district would report the student as IsPrimary=N. This allows OSPI to count each student once at the IsPrimary=Y district when an unduplicated count is needed (i.e., federal accountability, graduation rates, etc.).

# EXAMPLES OF CHOICE TRANSFERS AND INTERDISTRICT AGREEMENTS

## Example 1

A student wishes to attend classes full time in a neighboring district, District B. The student's parents submit a Choice Transfer request to the resident district, District A asking for the student to be released to District B. District A begins a Choice Transfer and sends it to District B who approves the transfer. After a fully executed Choice Transfer is complete, notification is sent to the parents that the student has officially been accepted.

The student is the responsibility of District A until there has been a release from their district and acceptance from District B. Until District B approved the Choice Transfer, the student remains the responsibility of District A, even though they signed off releasing the student. Once both parties have approved the Choice Transfer, District B now assumes responsibility for the education of the student, upon the beginning date specified on the transfer.

## Example 2

A student who resides in District A wants to attend District C's ALE program full time. The student enrolls in the ALE program and District C serves him without a Choice Transfer.

District C may not claim the student for funding because they have not been given the authority to do so from District A through a fully executed Choice Transfer. District A retains responsibility for the education of the student.

## Example 3

A student previously has been released from District A to attend District D through a Choice Transfer. The student wants to return to District A before the Choice Transfer expires. District A cannot claim the student for funding until they have received written notification from District D that states the Choice Transfer has been rescinded. Once District A has the notification, they can claim the student for funding. Until District A has the release from District D, District D is responsible for the student.

## Example 4

A student attends two separate districts through an Interdistrict Agreement. The agreement states District A is able to claim the student for a 0.5 FTE and District B may claim the student for a 0.5 FTE. The agreement dates are for the entire school year. At the beginning of the second semester, the student wishes to take an extra class at District B and one less class at District A.

Unless an amendment is made to the Interdistrict Agreement for this student, the districts are limited to claim a maximum 0.5 FTE each. If District A is serving the student for less than 0.5 FTE, they are limited to claim the student's enrolled hours.

## Example 5

A 5th grade student resides in District A but attends District C through a Choice Transfer. The student then wishes to attend District A for a band class and a physical education class, totaling 600 weekly minutes. District C proposes an Interdistrict Agreement with District A stating District C will count the student for a 0.64 FTE and releasing 0.36 FTE (600/1,665) to District A for band and physical education classes. If the districts enter into an Interdistrict Agreement and the student doesn't enroll in either district for the full amount of class time allotted by the agreement, the districts are limited to claim the FTE based on the student's weekly enrolled minutes. In this example, District C remains responsible for all of the educational services the student receives, regardless of which district is providing the education.

## Example 6

A student resides in District A but attends District B through a Choice Transfer. Later in the school year, the student wishes to attend District C full time. The following must take place:

1. District B rescinds the Choice Transfer between themselves and District A.
2. District A initiates new Choice Transfer between themselves and District C.

## Example 7

A nonresident district accepts the Choice Transfer but the student does not enroll. The nonresident district must rescind the Choice Transfer.

# INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

For questions regarding this publication, please contact the following:

- Rhett Nelson, Director, Learning Options, regarding the Choice Transfers, Interdistrict Agreements, and SCTS application at 360-725-6266 or by email at [choicetransfer@k12.wa.us](mailto:choicetransfer@k12.wa.us).
- Becky McLean, Manager, Enrollment and Categorical Funding, regarding fiscal requirements or enrollment reporting at 360-725-6306 or by email at [becky.mclean@k12.wa.us](mailto:becky.mclean@k12.wa.us).

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*Download this material in PDF at [Enrollment Reporting | OSPI \(www.k12.wa.us\)](#). This material is available in alternative format upon request. Contact the Resource Center at 888-595-3276, TTY 360-664-3631. Please refer to this document number for quicker service: 23-0025.*



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