



# MADISON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**TO:** Madison Board of Education  
**FROM:** Craig A. Cooke, Ph.D., Superintendent  
**SUBJECT:** Open Choice Program

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## **Proposal:**

Request that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent to pursue Madison Public Schools being a participant in the ACES area School of Choice Program. The first step in the process is to request the legislature to approve Madison to participate in a different RESC area for the purposes of the School Choice Program than we are assigned. Madison is in the LEARN RESC area and would remain in the LEARN area for all other services. LEARN does not have the Choice Program and is in agreement with Madison's proposal to participate in the ACES program. Guilford Public Schools' request was granted in 2022.

## **Background:**

Open Choice is an interdistrict public school program intended to improve academic achievement; reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation; and provide a choice of educational programs for public school students.

Madison Public Schools has previously considered participating in the Connecticut Public Schools' Open Choice Program. The Board of Education adopted a policy in 1999 and then updated the policy with a technical revision in 2006 (attached). Madison's policy states that the district would participate in School Choice with the New London Public Schools. Currently in CT, participation is open on an equal basis to all students, including students with disabilities, attending public schools in Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven and their surrounding districts. New London does not participate in School Choice to send students to area districts.

The state pays a grant as follows:

- \$3,000 per student enrolled to the receiving district if the number of Open Choice students is less than 2 percent of the total population of the receiving district;
- \$4,000 per student enrolled if the number of Open Choice students is greater than or equal to 2 percent but less than 3 percent of the total population of the receiving district;
- \$6,000 per student enrolled if the number of Open Choice students is greater than or equal to 3 percent but less than 4 percent of the total population of the receiving district;
- \$6,000 per student if enrollment is greater than 4,000 students and the number of students in the program increased by 50 percent; or
- \$8,000 per student enrolled if the number of Open Choice students is greater than or equal to 4 percent of the total student population of the receiving district.

It is unlikely that Madison would be higher than 2% of our student population, which would be 50 students, for the foreseeable future. Funding received for the Open Choice would be utilized to support students' attendance in Madison Public Schools and participation in afterschool activities. For example, a potential use of funding may be to transport students home from after school activities.

Transportation costs to and from school for the regular school day are paid by the state. Arrangements for transportation are made by the regional educational service center serving the area. This also applies to students with disabilities unless transportation is considered a related service and is required by the student's individualized education program (IEP).

The following towns participate in the New Haven area:

Ansonia	New Haven
Bethany	North Branford
Branford	North Haven
Cheshire	Orange
East Haven	Reg. Dist. #5
Milford	Wallingford
Woodbridge	

Many of our district reference group (DRG) B school districts participate in the Choice Program. Including:

Avon	Simsbury
Farmington	South Windsor
Glastonbury	West Hartford
Granby	

If approved, each year Madison would notify ACES of the seats we are offering to students through the Choice Program. This notification would be made after careful consideration of enrollment numbers. The attachment illustrates the number of seats offered for the current school year by member districts. My intention would be to offer approximately 10 seats per year; however, that may fluctuate based on current enrollment. After participating in the program, students have the option to continue each year through graduation.

**Conclusion:**

I would ask that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent to pursue Madison participating in the Choice Program. The following steps would be enacted:

1. Draft proposed legislation to approve Madison's participation.
2. Seek support from local state level legislators and advocate at the State level.
3. Begin communication with staff.
4. Report back to the Board of Education on the status in January 2023.

**#5030.2**

**Interdistrict School Attendance Areas**

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The Board of Education recognizes that students may benefit from having a choice of schools to attend within the Connecticut public school system that is not limited by school and/or Madison's district boundaries. Public school choice will (1) provide parents and students with greater opportunities to choose the school and / or program that best meets the academic needs of the student; (2) influence positively the level of parent involvement and student motivation; (3) improve academic achievement; (4) reduce racial, ethnic and economic imbalance; and (5) provide a choice of educational programs for students.

The Madison Public Schools will cooperate with the appropriate regional educational service center in the planning and implementation of the state-wide interdistrict public school attendance program in accordance with the timelines and provisions contained within C.G.S. 10-4a as amended by PA 97-290, "An Act Enhancing Educational Choices and Opportunities," and C.G.S. 10-266aa as amended by P.A. 99-289, "An Act Concerning School Choice and Interdistrict Programs."

Nonresident students from the New London district who apply pursuant to the regulations approved by the Board, may enroll in particular programs or schools in districts in the surrounding areas on a space available basis, without payment of tuition except that the Madison Public Schools shall receive an amount, within available appropriations, from the Department of Education, for each out-of-district student attending a school within the Madison Public Schools. It is recognized that the Regional Service Centers shall determine which school districts in its area are located close enough to a priority school district to make transportation feasible.

In providing for admission of nonresident students, the Madison Public Schools shall consider:

#5030.2 (cont.)

1. Issues pertaining to the availability of space within a requested school to accommodate the enrollment request. The Madison Public Schools will notify its RESC by March 31 of each year of the space it will have available for students from the surrounding area for the new school year.
2. Programs available and the possible establishment of new programs.
3. Eligibility criteria for participating in a particular program, including age requirements, course prerequisites and required levels of performance.
4. Dates of enrollment of nonresident students in a school or program.
5. The requirement that participants attending school in the Madison Public Schools may do so until they graduate from high school.

It is the policy of the Madison Public Schools to receive nonresident students as part of the state-wide interdistrict public school attendance program in accordance with plan developed with the Regional Educational Service Center. Such planning, the Board believes, should consider, but not be limited to, the issues of definition and determination of space availability, choice of students, transportation to and from school and for after-school activities. Further, planning should consider issues related to special education, prior disciplinary behavior, and acceptance of prior academic work. The Madison Public Schools will not recruit students under this program for athletic or extracurricular purposes. Records of students involved in the interdistrict program will be promptly forwarded to the receiving district.

The Board directs the Superintendent and staff not to make any distinction based on race, sex, ethnic group, religion or disability of any student who is in attendance or who seeks admission to any school within the Madison Public Schools in the determination or recommendation of action under this policy.

### #5030.2 (cont.)

(cf. 5020.1 - Nondiscrimination)  
(cf. 5030 – Assignment of Students to School)  
(cf. 5030.1 – Intra-District / School Attendance Areas)  
(cf 5060.1.2 - Nonresident Attendance)  
(cf 5100.9.1 Student Recruitment)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-4a Education interests of state defined, as amended by PA 97-290 -An Act Enhancing Education Choices and Opportunities  
10-226a Pupils or racial minorities  
10-226b Existence or racial intolerance  
10-226c Plan to correct imbalance  
10-226d Approval of Plan by State Board  
10-266aa Statewide interdistrict public school attendance program, as amended by P.A. 99-289, An Act Concerning School Choice and Interdistrict Programs.

Date of Adoption: December 7, 1999

Technical Revision: August 22, 2006

These seats are only for New Haven residents, which is considered the urban district.

<b>22-23 NEW Open Choice Seats - Out of New Haven</b>				
<b>District / School</b>	<b>22-23 New Seats Grade Levels</b>	<b>22-23 # New Seats</b>	<b>Total New Seat by District</b>	<b>Total Suburban Seats</b>
<b>Bethany</b>				
Bethany Community	K	1		
			1	
<b>Branford</b>				
Branford High	9	5		
Francis Walsh Inter.	5	4		
	6	1		
John B. Sliney	K	2		
	1	2		
Mary R. Tisko	K	2		
	1	2		
Mary T. Murphy	2	3		
			21	
<b>Cheshire</b>				
Cheshire High	9	5		
Chapman	K	1		
	1	1		
	3	2		
Doolittle	K	1		
Norton	1	1		
			11	
<b>East Haven</b>				
Deer Run	K	2		
			2	
<b>Milford</b>				
John F. Kennedy	K	3		
	1	3		
Orange Avenue	K	3		
			9	
<b>North Branford</b>				
North Branford High	9	3		
North Branford Inter.	6	2		
Totoket Valley	3	1		
Jerome Harrison	1	1		
			7	
<b>North Haven</b>				
Clintonville	K	5		
Green Acres	K	5		
Montowese	K	5		
Ridge Road	K	5		

			20	
<b>Reg. Dist. #5 (Amity)</b>				
Amity High	9	7		
Amity Middle (Bethany)	7	1		
	8	2		
Amity Middle (Orange)	7	4		
	8	2		
			16	
<b>Woodbridge</b>				
Beecher Road	K	4		
			4	
				91