

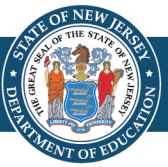
New Jersey Department of Education



N.J.A.C. 6A:12, Interdistrict Public School Choice

Division of Field Support and Services

September 4, 2024





Interdistrict Public School Choice Program Mission



The Interdistrict Public School Choice Program (choice) was created to increase educational opportunities for students and their families by providing students with public school options outside of their district of residence and giving parents the power to select a school district or program that best serves their child's individual needs.

The choice program enables approved choice districts to enroll kindergarten through grade 12 students who do not reside within their districts without cost to their parents.





N.J.A.C. 6A:12, Interdistrict Public School Choice



Background

- The choice program was originally established by the State Board of Education in October 1999 as a five-year pilot. The Interdistrict Public School Choice Program Act followed in 2000 and expired in 2005; rules adopted in 2000.
- Rules readopted in 2004 and 2009.
- The Interdistrict Public School Choice Program Act was amended in 2010 to expand the program to additional school districts; rules amended in 2012 to align with the revised statute.
- The rules were readopted without amendments effective April 2017.

Choice Districts Operating in FY2025

- 125 operating choice districts
- 5,133 choice students (approx. 0.4% of the public-school students in the state)
- Located in 19 counties (all but Essex and Middlesex)
- \$63.8 million choice program cost in the State budget.
- Program growth has been outlined in each annual state budget resulting in the number of choice districts and enrollment of choice students growing minimally since FY2015.

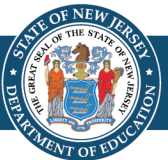




Program Overview



- School districts apply to the NJDOE to become a choice district and once approved, publicize their available seats.
- Choice districts can limit their choice programs to a particular grade range or to specialized programs such as STEM, ROTC, or the arts, with reasonable selection criteria, such as the student's interest in the program.
- A choice district cannot discriminate in its admissions policies.
- Students apply to a choice district and, if accepted, are enrolled in that choice district. Once enrolled, choice students are treated as resident students until the final grade in the district.
- If there are more applicants than available seats, choice districts hold a blind lottery.



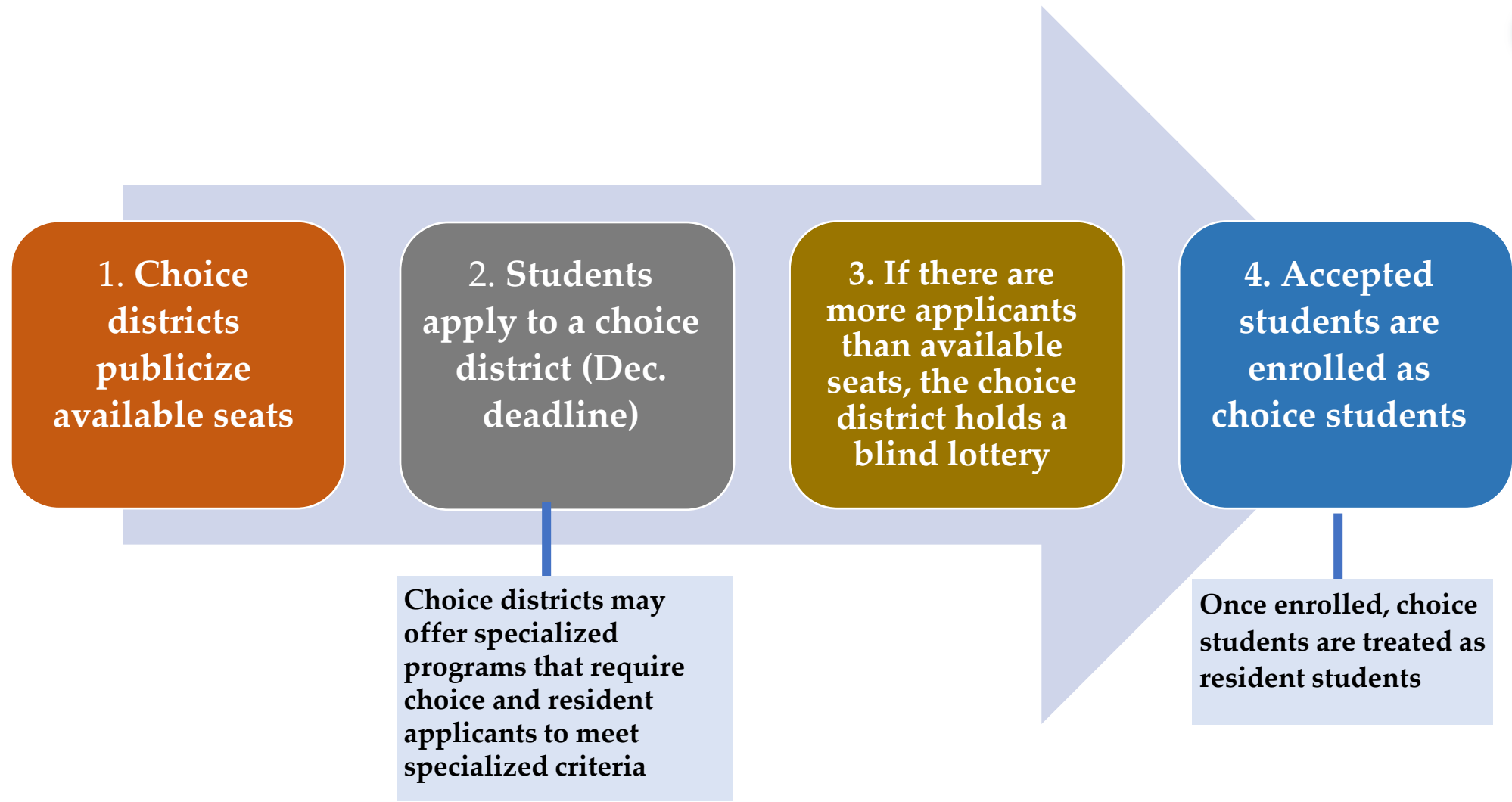


Proposed Amendments and New Rules Overview



- Streamline and consolidate language for clarity and alignment with the statute and for consistency with other chapters in the administrative code.
- Align code with revisions to P.L. 2023, c. 61, which requires payment of tuition for nonresident students.
- Clarify and codify the processes required of choice districts to ensure consistent operation of the program at N.J.A.C. 6A:12-3.1.
- Provide detailed steps in the student application timeline at N.J.A.C. 6A:12-3.2.
- Enumerate the requirements for Department review and approval of a sending district seeking to limit their students' participation in a choice program to ensure consistency with the underlying statute, N.J.S.A. 18A:36B-21 a.(1), and pursuant to an Appellate Division decision at N.J.A.C. 6A:12-3.4(a) through (c).

Student Application & Enrollment Process (12 months)





Proposed Regulatory Adoption Timeline



Sunset Date: April 2024

Description	Date
First Discussion State Board of Education	January 2024
Second Discussion State Board of Education	February 2024
Proposal Level State Board of Education	March 2024
Proposal Summary and Code Published in New Jersey Register (NJR)	April 2024
Adoption State Board of Education	September 2024
Adoption Materials Published in NJR	October 2024



Thank You!



Facebook:
@njdeptofed



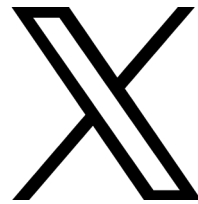
Instagram:
@newjerseydoe



LinkedIn:
New Jersey Department of Education



Threads:
@NewJerseyDOE



X: @NewJerseyDOE



YouTube:
@newjerseydepartmentofeduca6565

