

Managing the School Choice (SC) Option:  
*Best Practices from a  
Battle-Tested Veteran*



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# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## *Background*

- Harford County Public Schools
- In June 2010, three HCPS Title 1 schools were in danger of going into 2 year of improvement - potential to offer School Choice
- School Choice offered at one school in HCPS five years ago
- Retrieved data from five years to attempt estimates of cost/participation, etc



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## *Planning*

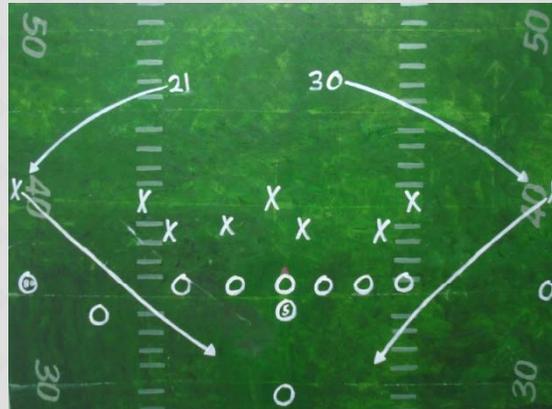
- Difficult to plan for costs and participation
- The dreaded 20% Required Reservation
  - *HCPS Operating picked up cost*
  - *If not, 20% would have come out of FY '11 Title 1 allocation*
- Educating everyone in HCPS about School Choice
- Consulted frequently with MSDE Title I POC
- Reviewed Title 1 Regulations



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

*Created a School Choice Action Plan -  
"The Game Plan"*

1. Timing/Duration
2. Eligible Students
3. Parent Notification of School Choice
4. Data Collection



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## *Section 1 - Timing/Duration*

### A. Receiving Schools are identified

- *Can be other Title I Schools*
- *Overcrowding cannot be a factor*
- *HCPS goal was to pick elementary Schools that were feeder schools to the Middle Schools.*



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## B. Transportation Plans

- *New Bus Routes for school choice students needed to be created*
- *Shuttle Buses*
- *Preliminary Budget Estimates*
- *Transportation Options*

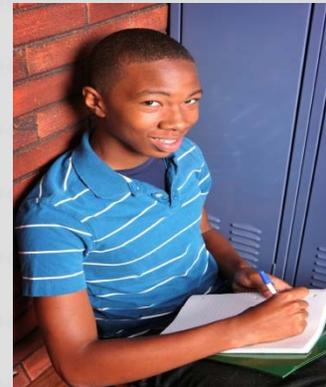


# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## *Section 2 - Eligible Students*

### C. Currently Enrolled Students

- *Any one in grades K-5, currently enrolled, (In HCPS, PreK is not a system wide program)*
- *School Choice dependent upon enrollment*
- *Boundary Exception Students*



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## D. Student "Classification"

- *Received the July 22<sup>nd</sup> Mass mailing (Currently Enrolled Student)*
- *Enrolled between July 22<sup>nd</sup> and August 13<sup>th</sup> (New Enrolled Student, prior to 8/13/10)*
- *Enrolled after August 13 (New Enrolled Student, after to 8/13/10)*



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## E. Transfer Process

- *Confirmation Letter*
- *Two weeks to get student into receiving school*
- *Daily / Weekly / Monthly Email Updates*



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## F. Tracking of Student Data for Students Accepting and Declining School Choice

- *Able to track students who received initial mass mailing*
- *Tracking Log created for additional students*
- *Back-end Database checks used to double check the Student Data tracking process*



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## *Section 3 - Parent Notification of School Choice*

### G. Initial Written Parent Notification of Students currently enrolled at Choice Schools

- *Federal Guidelines vs. State Guidelines*



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## H. Initial Written Parent Notification of Students currently enrolled at Choice Schools (Mass Mailing)

- *MSDE embargo ended July 22<sup>nd</sup>.*
- *Parents must receive 14 days notice before the start of school.*
- *First Wave of School Choice Confirmation letters sent out August 16<sup>th</sup>*
- *School Choice Bus Routes determined by August 23<sup>rd</sup>*
- *First day of School - August 30<sup>th</sup>.*



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## I. Parent Information Meeting

- *Informational Meeting to Parents about what School Choice entails*
- *Multiple Speakers*
- *Alert now messages*



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## J. Website Information

- *Title I School Choice Informational document*
- *“Old” 2-page parent letter*
- *“New” 7-page School Choice packet*
- *Parent Information Meeting PowerPoint Presentation*
- *Required (updated monthly) School Choice student count information*



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## *Section 4 - Data Collection*

### K. Student Enrollment

- *Demographic Data*
- *Address change information*
- *Somebody is going to ask for data that you are not tracking*
- *Required Monthly School Choice student count information*



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## L. Budget

- *Projected Transportation Costs - \$120,000.00*
- *Superintendent committed to having HCPS fund additional transportation costs*
- *Final Transportation Costs - \$118,963.80*



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## M. Complaints

- *Parent Logs*
- *Email Logs*
- *Complaint Procedure*



# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## *Need to Educate Principals of Receiving Schools*

- What is going on?
- Why me?
- How long will this last?



## *Odds and Ends*

- The “boundary exception” question
- Revokes
- Student is on School Choice but moves within county

# MANAGING THE SC OPTION

## *Collaboration / Communication*

- Title I School Choice Principals
- Pupil Personnel Workers (PPWs)
- Director of Student Services
- Superintendent, Executive Director of Elementary Education
- Director of Transportation, Director of Technology
- Finance
- MSDE



# MANAGING THE SCHOOL CHOICE (SC) OPTION

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