

## Unsafe School Choice Option (USCO)

**Unsafe School Choice Option (USCO) Facts:** Ensuring that all of Georgia's Schools are Safe Under No Child Left Behind, states must develop a definition of "persistently dangerous" schools and allow public school choice for students who have been victims of a violent criminal offense or who attend a school that meets the definition.

### Georgia's Definition of a Persistently Dangerous School

Any school in which for three consecutive years:

- At least 1 student is found by official tribunal action to have violated a school rule related to a violent criminal offense (including aggravated battery, aggravated child molestation, aggravated sexual battery, aggravated sodomy, armed robbery, arson, kidnapping, murder, rape, & voluntary manslaughter) either on campus or at a school-sanctioned event;
- At least 2% of the student body or 10 students, whichever is greater, have been found to have violated school rules related to other identified criminal offenses, including non-felony drugs, felony drugs, felony weapons, terroristic threats;
- Any combination of 1 & 2.

### Public School Choice

- When a school meets the criteria for three consecutive years, local education agencies (local school districts, herein referred to as LEAs) must within ten school days notify parents of each student attending the school that the state has identified the school as persistently dangerous.
- Within 20 school days from the time that the LEA learns that the school has been identified as persistently dangerous, the LEA must give students the opportunity to transfer to a safe public school, including a safe public charter school, within the LEA.
- LEAs must adopt a policy that facilitates the transfer of students who are victims of violent criminal offenses. This policy shall provide that the transfer shall occur within ten school days of the commission of the violent criminal offense, and to the extent possible, shall allow victims to transfer to a school that is making adequate yearly progress and has not been identified as being in school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

*Transportation will be provided only up to the limit of funds provided by the federal government for transportation.*

### School Improvement Plans

- Once a school is labeled persistently dangerous, it is required to develop and implement a corrective action plan to address the problems faced by the school.
- To get off of the list, the school must go through one school year below the persistently dangerous threshold and reapply to the Georgia Department of Education. After ensuring that all corrective action has been completed, GDOE shall reassess the school using the criteria for persistently dangerous schools as specified in the rule.
- Though a school must meet the criteria for 3 consecutive years in order to be labeled persistently dangerous, local & state officials will work with school administrators, parents, educators, & others to address safety concerns after just one year.