

**YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS IF A PRIVATE COMPANY OR
UNIVERSITY MANAGES YOUR CHILD’S PUBLIC SCHOOL
(Philadelphia)**

OVERVIEW	<p>Beginning in the fall of 2002, some private companies (such as Edison Schools, Victory Schools, Chancellor-Beacon Academies, and Foundations) and universities (such as Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania) will have a role in managing certain Philadelphia public schools. These companies and universities are known as EMOs, or “education management organizations.”</p> <p>The fact that an EMO is managing your child’s school does not change your or your child’s legal rights.</p>
ADMISSION TO SCHOOL	<p>Schools operated by EMOs must accept all students of school age who live in the area served by the school. <i>For more information, see ELC’s fact sheet on “The Right to Attend School in Pennsylvania.”</i></p>
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL	<p>Schools operated by EMOs must provide parents with information about the school and about opportunities for parental involvement, including all information required under the No Child Left Behind Act. <i>For more information, see ELC’s fact sheet on “Your Right to Information Under the No Child Left Behind Act.”</i></p>
SCHOOL RECORDS	<p>Schools operated by EMOs must allow parents to see and get copies of their child’s record. The school generally may not release the child’s records (except to other public schools in the district, or other schools to which the student seeks admission) without the parent’s written consent. <i>For more information, see ELC’s fact sheet on “School Records.”</i></p>
SPECIAL EDUCATION	<p>In EMO-operated schools, as elsewhere, parents have the right to request that their child be evaluated for special educational needs. The evaluation request should be made in writing to the principal. The school must follow the same rules and timelines as other public schools in all special education matters. If the parent is not satisfied with the evaluation or the child’s program or placement, he or she can use the same procedures (complaints to the state Department of Education, mediation, and “due process hearings”) as are available to parents in other schools.</p> <p>The school district may recommend that the child be placed, because of his or her special needs, in another public school. Parents have the right to agree or disagree with any such</p>

	<p>recommendation, and use the mediation or “due process hearing” procedures. <i>For more information, see ELC’s fact sheets on special education.</i></p>
<p>ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS</p>	<p>Schools operated by EMOs must provide special services to children who need help learning English (such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction). The school district may (or may not) assign the child to a different public school for this purpose.</p> <p>Also, schools operated by EMOs must provide information to non-English-speaking parents in their native language. <i>For more information, see ELC’s fact sheet on “How to Get Help for English Language Learners.”</i></p>
<p>DISCIPLINE AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION</p>	<p>Schools operated by EMOs must adopt and distribute a “code of student conduct” (that is, a list of school rules and penalties). It appears that EMOs are required to use the same code of conduct that is in use in other Philadelphia public schools. Also, EMO-operated schools must follow the same procedures as other schools when suspending a child, transferring him or her to another school for disciplinary reasons, or seeking to expel the child. <i>For more information, see ELC’s fact sheets on suspension/expulsion and disciplinary transfers in Philadelphia.</i></p> <p>Schools operated by EMOs may not search a student’s clothes or personal effects (such as bookbags) unless the school has a reason to believe that the student has violated a school rule.</p> <p>Schools operated by EMOs must permit students to express their views and opinions, unless this creates a threat of harm to the school community or interferes with the rights of other students.</p> <p>Schools may not promote religious views.</p>
<p>INFORMATION ABOUT THE EMO CONTRACT</p>	<p>Each EMO has a contract with the School District, stating what the EMO must do for students in the school. Parents have a right to a copy of the contract.</p>