



Sulphur Springs Independent School District
631 Connally Street
Sulphur Springs, Texas 75482
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Betty Lawson
Director of Elementary Education

August 10, 2012

Sulphur Springs Independent School District

TO PARENTS OF STUDENTS ATTENDING Bowie Elementary:

Under the accountability provisions in the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (P.L. 107-110), all public school campuses and districts are evaluated annually for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Campuses and districts are required to meet AYP criteria on three measures: Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, and either Graduation Rate (for high schools and districts) or Attendance Rate (for elementary and middle/junior high schools).

On August 8, 2012, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) notified the Sulphur Springs Independent School District (hereafter referenced as the Local Education Agency or LEA) that Bowie Elementary will be subject to Stage One school improvement requirements during the 2012-2013 school year for not meeting AYP in Reading for two or more consecutive years. You may read about the AYP definition on the TEA's website at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/ayp/>. The TEA's website at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=4459&menu_id=798 describes the requirements for schools identified in the School Improvement Program (SIP).

The NCLB Act requires the LEA to notify you of the campus' SIP status and to provide you with the following information. Please be advised that the campus will have the opportunity to appeal this school improvement designation later this fall. However, the requirements described in this letter must be implemented for the entire school year, regardless of the outcome of the appeal.

As the parent or guardian of a student attending a campus identified for school improvement, you have the option to request a transfer of your child to another public school within the LEA that is not identified for school improvement. You have the option to request a transfer beginning immediately or at the beginning of the second semester. As stated above, even if the campus is granted an appeal of this designation, the school transfer requests will be honored through the end of the school year. The following campuses are available to you to request a transfer.

Lamar Elementary
Travis Elementary

Met AYP
Met AYP

For more information on this school choice option or the performance of campuses available for transfer, or to request a transfer for your child, please contact Betty Lawson, Director of Elementary Education. The LEA will honor

all transfer requests received within 30 days of the date of this letter. Attached is a short question and answer document regarding this school choice option.

The Bowie Elementary staff will be implementing the following activities to address the reasons the campus has been identified for school improvement: develop professional development to address reading instruction, schedule student assessments to routinely evaluate reading proficiency, and utilize data to provide content specific instruction to meet student's needs in small group or one-on-one settings. In addition, the LEA will provide the following assistance to the campus to support improvement efforts at a system level: provide support for additional staff development, implement district wide common assessments to evaluate student learning, and disaggregate assessment data to determine campus and district needs.

You may become involved in addressing the reasons the campus is identified for improvement by assisting in the following ways: assist campus staff in revising the campus improvement plan; participate in parent involvement activities that assist you in learning how to increase your child's achievement level; and attend parent-teacher conferences.

A campus identified in Stage 2 school improvement, or above, is required to offer Supplemental Educational Services (SES), which is free tutoring, to eligible students from low-income families. If your student is eligible for SES, you will receive additional detailed information about these services. Information on SES is available at <http://www.sircetexas.net/>.

If you have questions concerning this letter or require paper copies of the material referenced in the web sites, please contact Betty Lawson, Director of Elementary Education
631 Connally Street
Sulphur Springs, Texas 75482
903-885-2153 X 1106

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betty Lawson".

Betty Lawson

Attachments

Questions About Public School Choice Under NCLB School Improvement Programs

For detailed information on Title I Public School Choice provisions, additional guidance will be posted at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=2147501017&menu_id=798.

Which campuses and LEAs are required to offer public school choice?

LEAs receiving federal funds under Title I, Part A are required to make choice available to all students who are enrolled in Title I campuses if their campus has been identified on school improvement. The LEA is responsible for paying all or a portion of the transportation necessary for students to attend their new campuses, subject to the limitations in statute.

Note: Open-enrollment public charter schools are, by design, schools of choice. Public School Choice is not applicable to open-enrollment charter schools that are identified in school improvement or other types of campuses that are by design already schools of choice.

Which students are eligible to change campuses under the Title I public school choice provisions?

All students enrolled in Title I campuses identified for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring are eligible to transfer to another public school campus within the LEA (which may be a district charter school) that is not in school improvement. This requirement for all students applies whether the campus in which a child is enrolled administers Title I as a schoolwide program or as a targeted assistance program. The only exception applies in the situations when there are no other campuses in the LEA (or outside the LEA) to which students could transfer.

In the case of a campus that operates a targeted assistance program, all students in the campus, not just those receiving Title I services, must have the opportunity to change campuses.

Is there any priority for students to be allowed to transfer under the Title I public school choice option?

The LEA must give all students in a campus identified for improvement the opportunity to transfer to another public school. In implementing this option to transfer, however, there may be circumstances in which the LEA must give priority to the lowest-achieving children from low-income families. For example, if not all students can attend their first choice of campuses, a LEA would give first priority in assigning spaces to low-achieving low-income students. Similarly, if an LEA does not have sufficient funding to provide transportation to all students who wish to transfer, it would apply this priority in determining which students can receive transportation.

How long must an LEA continue to offer students in eligible Title I campuses the option to attend another public school?

The LEA must offer choice to all students in an eligible Title I campus until the campus no longer is identified for school improvement, i.e., until the campus makes Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two consecutive years.

How long must students who change campuses be allowed to attend the campus of their choice?

If an eligible student exercises the option to transfer to another public school campus, the LEA must permit the student to remain in that campus until he or she has completed the highest grade in the campus. However, the LEA is no longer obligated to provide transportation for the student after the end of the school year in which the student's campus of origin no longer is identified for school improvement.

What if providing the option to transfer to another campus within the LEA is not possible?

A number of LEAs may not have campuses available to which students can transfer. This situation might occur when all campuses at a grade level are in school improvement or when the LEA has only a single campus at that grade level. It also may occur in rural areas where a LEA's campuses are so remote from one another that choice is impractical. For example, if the only other elementary school is over 50 miles away, then choice likely is impractical. On the other hand, if other potential elementary school choices are located outside an LEA-defined attendance zone or internal district boundary, these LEA-defined boundaries may not be used to prevent student transfers.

When an LEA is unable to offer school choice for any reason, the LEA must, to the extent practical, enter into cooperative agreements with other LEAs in the area (or with open-enrollment charter schools in the State) that can accept its students as transfers. If an LEA is unable to enter into such cooperative agreements, the LEA then must offer additional educational services and supports to students or must implement campus reform strategies to address areas of low performance.