

August 4, 2011

Alief Independent School District

TO PARENTS OF STUDENTS ATTENDING TAYLOR HIGH SCHOOL:

Under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is required to identify Title I, Part A campuses in need of improvement if the campus does not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for the same indicator for two or more consecutive years. TEA has notified the Local Education Agency (LEA) administration in August 2011, that Taylor High School will be subject to Stage 1 school improvement requirements for not meeting AYP in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics for two or more years.

The No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110) requires the LEA to notify you of this 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.

Under the accountability provisions in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, all public school campuses and LEAs are evaluated 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).

If a campus or LEA that is receiving Title I, Part A funds does not meet AYP for two consecutive years, that campus or LEA is subject to certain requirements such as offering school choice, offering supplemental education services, and/or taking a required corrective action. For additional information about the AYP definition please visit TEA's website at <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/ayp/>.

The LEA is required, not later than fourteen days prior to the start of school, following the identification of improvement status, to provide **all students enrolled** in the school with the option to transfer to another public school served by the LEA, which may include a public charter school that has not been identified for improvement. The School Choice option may not be applicable to Open-Enrollment Public Charter Schools or other campuses that are by design schools of choice.

Student Eligibility for School Choice: All students enrolled in a Title I, Part A campus that has been identified for improvement are eligible to exercise the school choice option. However, in providing students the option to transfer to another public school, if the district is unable to grant each parent's first choice of a new school or if the district is unable to provide transportation cost for all requests, the LEA must give **priority to the lowest achieving children**

from low-income families, as determined by the LEA for the purpose of making Title I, Part A campus allocations. LEAs are required to offer the parents of each eligible student a choice of more than one school, if there is more than one school within the LEA that has not been identified for improvement, and to take into account the parents' preference in assigning students to a new school. An LEA is obligated to provide school choice to all students. Transferring students should be treated as students who have moved into the receiving school's attendance zone and allowed to enroll in class and other activities on the same basis as all other students at the public school.

For additional information regarding school improvement requirements, please visit the following website: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=4459&menu_id=798.

Two key responsibilities of the Texas Education Agency are assessing public school students on what they have learned and determining district and school accountability ratings. TEA provides a variety of reports based on the results of student testing and other assessments in order for parents to be able to determine how their child's campus compares in performance to other elementary or secondary campuses in the district and the state. For additional information and to locate the reports that compare campuses and districts, please visit <http://ritter.tea.state.us/student.assessment/reporting/>.

As the parent or guardian of a student attending a campus identified for school improvement status, 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 status. 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.

Elsik High School
Hastings High School

Academically Acceptable
Academically Acceptable

To request a transfer, for additional academic information on campuses available for transfer, or for more information on this school choice option, please contact Pupil Personnel Services at 281-498-8110 extension 3100. The LEA will honor all transfers requested within 30 days of the date of this letter. Attached is a short question and answer document regarding this school choice option.

The campus will be implementing the following activities to address the reasons the campus has been identified for school improvement: scientifically based researched reading and math activities, and intensive and sustained staff professional development.

In addition, the LEA will provide the following assistance to the campus to address the reasons for identification under AYP: assist campus staff in analyzing test data; provide additional instructional support for students; and, assist the campus in increasing meaningful parental involvement activities.

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.

Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), when a Title I, Part A campus is identified in Stage 2, 3, 4, or 5 of the School Improvement Program (SIP), the LEA is required to arrange for the provision of Supplemental Educational Services (SES) free of charge for students from low-income families. For purposes of the School Improvement Program (SIP), supplemental educational services are defined as free tutoring and other free supplemental academic enrichment services that are in addition to instruction provided during the school day and are of high quality, research-based, and specifically designed to increase the academic achievement of eligible children on the state assessment and to assist them in attaining proficiency in meeting the state's academic achievement standards. **Please note, SES is not homework assistance.**

SES must be implemented by the uniform school start date for Stage 2 and above campuses and continue until the campus exits the SIP. If your student is eligible for Supplemental Educational Services, you will receive an additional detailed letter about these services. Additional information on Supplemental Educational Services is available at <http://www.sirctexas.net/>.

If you have questions concerning this letter or need us to provide you with paper copies of the material referenced in the web sites, please contact the Federal Programs/Grants Office at 281-498-8110, extension 5882.

Sincerely,

H.D. Chambers
Superintendent

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://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/nclb/titleia/sip/2010-2011/sip-campus.html>.

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 as in: (1) school improvement; (2) corrective action; or (3) restructuring. 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 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 needs to 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 the low-achieving low-income students. Similarly, if a 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 a 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 is no longer identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, 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 is no longer identified for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

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 a LEA-defined attendance zone or internal boundary, these LEA-defined boundaries may not be used to prevent student transfers.

In these cases, 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. The LEA also must offer other types of supplemental educational activities or other campus reform strategies to students attending campuses in their first stage of improvement who cannot be given the opportunity to change campuses.