

August 24, 2007

Austin Can!
2406 Rosewood Avenue
Austin, TX 78702
512-477-4226

TO PARENTS OF STUDENTS ATTENDING Austin Can!

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 consecutive years. TEA has notified the school district administration on August 2007, that Austin Can! will be subject to Stage 3 school improvement requirements for not meeting AYP in Math Performance, Math Participation, and Graduation Rate for two or more years.

The No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110) requires the district 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.

You may read about the AYP definition on TEA's website at www.tea.state.tx.us/ayp/. In addition the website also describes the school improvement requirements at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/nclb/titleia/sip/2007-08/2007-08_sip.html. If you do not have access to the internet, please call the contact person listed at the end of this letter and this information will be provided to you.

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 district that is not identified for school improvement status. We are not able to offer school choice because we are a charter school.

In lieu of not being able to offer the school choice option, the campus will offer the following supplemental activities:
Individualized decision making through the personal graduation plan process to target areas of concern.

Additional information related to the following areas is available on the TEA website:

- an explanation of what the school improvement status means (http://www.tea.state.tx.us/nclb/titleia/sip/2007-08/2007-08_sip.html);
- how the campus compares in performance to other elementary campuses or secondary campuses in the district and the state (<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/reporting/>); and
- more detailed information on the reason(s) for the status (<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/ayp/>).

The campus will be implementing the following to address the reasons the campus has been identified for school improvement:
Provide scientifically based researched training in reading, writing, math, science, social studies and test taking skills. Offer intense and sustained staff development. Provide a personal graduation plan for every student..

In addition, the district will provide the following assistance to the campus to address the reasons for identification under AYP: Provide technical assistance in analyzing data, increasing parental involvement, curriculum and instructional design and implementation, and staff development.

You may become involved in addressing the reasons the campus is identified for improvement by assisting in the following ways: Participating in parental involvement activities that assist you in learning how to increase your child's achievement level. Attend parent/teacher conferences. Attend open houses. Communicate regularly with the school related to your child's performance. Communicate with your student advisor related to your child's personal graduation plan.

In addition, any campus identified in Stage 2 and above is required to offer Supplemental Educational Services (SES) to eligible students from low-income families. If your student is eligible for Supplemental Educational Services, you will receive additional detailed information about these services. Additional information on Supplemental Educational Services is available at <http://www.esc13.net/statewide/ses/>.

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 your campus principal or Karlyn Strickland at 214-943-2244 x2005.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joe E. Gonzalez
Your Campus Principal

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/nclb/titleia/sip/2007-08/2007-08_sip.html.

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

School districts 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 school district 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 district (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 district (or outside the district) 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 school district 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 school district 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 school district would give first priority in assigning spaces to the low-achieving low-income students. Similarly, if a school district 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 school district continue to offer students in eligible Title I campuses the option to attend another public school?

The school district 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 school district must permit the student to remain in that campus until he or she has completed the highest grade in the campus. However, the school district 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 district is not possible?

A number of school districts 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 school district has only a single campus at that grade level. It also may occur in rural areas where a school district'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 district-defined attendance zone or internal boundary, these school district-defined boundaries may not be used to prevent student transfers.

In these cases, the school district must, to the extent practical, enter into cooperative agreements with other school districts in the area (or with open-enrollment charter schools in the State) that can accept its students as transfers. The school district 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.