

Parental Notification Letter about School Choice in Year 1 of Program Improvement

September 20, 2011

To the Parents/Guardians of students at Willows High School:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that our school has been identified as a Year 1 Program Improvement (PI) school under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.

What is PI?

NCLB requires the state and district to review annually the academic progress of federally funded Title I schools and to identify schools in need of improvement. These schools are identified as PI schools after two consecutive years of not making adequate yearly progress (AYP). California determines AYP by considering the following four measures:

- The percentage of students scoring at the “proficient” or “advanced” level on the California Standards Tests for English-language arts and mathematics
- The percentage of students participating in those tests
- The graduation rate for high schools
- California’s own accountability measurement of progress, the Academic Performance Index (API)

Why is our school identified as PI?

The reason for this identification is that our school did not achieve AYP for two consecutive years in English-language Arts and Mathematics. To view Willows High School’s complete Accountability Progress Reports, please go to the California Department of Education (CDE) AYP Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ay/aypreports.asp>.

Public school choice: What right does a parent have to request a transfer to a school that is not in PI?

All parents/guardians of students attending a PI school have the right to request a transfer of their children to a non-PI district school with district-paid transportation. For parents who select this option, the district will provide transportation to the non-PI school for as long as the home school continues to be identified as a PI school. If the home school exits PI by making AYP for two consecutive years, the student can remain at the school; however, transportation will no longer be district-paid.

What will the school do to address the problem of low achievement?

We are working closely with the district staff to revise our school plan to include:

- Strategies, policies, and practices that utilize scientifically-based research and have the greatest likelihood of ensuring that all groups of students will meet the state’s achievement standards
- High quality professional development for school staff that will lead to removing the school from PI status
- Strategies to promote effective parental involvement in the school

What are the district and state doing to support schools in Year 1 (School Improvement)?

Our district is working closely with the CDE to improve curriculum, instruction, and student performance. The CDE provides information, special help, and access to resources for PI schools. PI schools will receive district and/or state technical assistance in:

- Analyzing various data reports for revising the school plan
- Strengthening core academic instruction
- Collaborating with parents to increase student academic achievement

How can parents become involved?

Research shows that strong parental involvement leads to student success at school. Parents interested in partnering with the school are encouraged to contact the school for additional information regarding:

- Parental involvement policies
- School-parent compact
- Ongoing parent/community meetings
- Advisory committee/school site council meetings
- Parent volunteer opportunities

We will keep you updated and informed about opportunities to discuss plans for our school. If you have questions, need additional information on how you can get involved in our school improvement efforts, or would like to discuss the school’s instructional program and PI status, please feel free to call me at 934-6611 and/or visit the school.

Sincerely,

Mr. Jerry Smith
Willows High School Principal