

VERNON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent
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April 1, 2010

Dear Parents,

Last month, in March, all students in the Vernon Public Schools participated in the Connecticut Mastery Testing Program, administered in grades 3 through 8 (CMT). As you are aware, the results of these tests are used to determine **Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)** under **No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**. While the results of these tests will not be known until the summer, it is important for us to plan now for potential consequences as mandated by federal law. If your school does not make AYP, it will be designated a school *"In Need of Improvement."* As a school *"In Need of Improvement,"* you will have the option of transferring your child to another school. To that end, we ask that you review carefully the following information:

SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Federal law requires school districts to offer parents in certain public schools the chance to transfer their children to other public schools in the same school district. If designated as schools *"In Need of Improvement,"* Maple Street School, Northeast School, and Skinner Road School will participate in the school choice program beginning in the 2010-2011 school year. To help you understand how the choice program can work for you, here are some answers to questions you may have.

1. DO I HAVE TO TRANSFER MY CHILD TO ANOTHER SCHOOL?

No. We're providing parents with this opportunity as an option. The decision is entirely up to you, so you should base your decision on what you think is best for your child. If you think your child would be better off remaining at your current school, all you have to do is make sure your child is at your current school on the first day of class.

2. TO WHICH SCHOOLS MAY MY CHILD TRANSFER?

Not all schools in the district are eligible to accept transfer students. For the 2010-2011 school year, transfers will only be available to the following accepting schools:

- Center Road School, 20 Center Road, Vernon, CT 06066
- Lake Street School, 201 Lake Street, Vernon, CT 06066

3. IS MY CHILD GUARANTEED A PLACE IN AN ACCEPTING SCHOOL?

We may not be able to transfer every child whose parent applies. Until we hear from all parents whose children have been offered a transfer, we cannot guarantee that if you choose to transfer your child we will be able to make the transfer happen.

4. WHAT IF I WANT TO TRANSFER MORE THAN ONE CHILD?

We may not be able to transfer every child in the same family. If you choose to transfer more than one child to the same Accepting School, we will make every effort to transfer the children to that school. We cannot guarantee, however, that we will approve transfers for brothers and sisters to the same school.

5. HOW WILL STUDENTS BE CHOSEN?

We want to accommodate as many choices as possible, but if many parents request transfers, we may not be able to transfer everyone. Under federal law, we must give first priority to the lowest-achieving, lowest-income students. Achievement will be based on the student's score on the statewide assessment program, and income will be based on a student's eligibility for free or reduced lunch. In the case of a tie, we will award transfers by random lottery.

6. HOW WILL MY CHILD GET TO AN ACCEPTING SCHOOL?

If your transfer is approved, your child will have free busing to the Accepting School for as long as your current school does not make adequate yearly progress on the statewide assessment program standards. Once your school improves and starts meeting state standards, the district is no longer obligated to provide free transportation. However, students will be allowed to remain in the school into which they have transferred until they have completed the highest grade in the school, if parents provide transportation.

7. WHAT IS THE DISTRICT'S FINANCIAL OBLIGATION FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE AND SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (SES)?

A district's financial obligation to provide school choice and supplemental educational services (SES) is to spend an amount that is equal to 20% of the district's total Title I, Part A allocation from which the district must spend:

- * an amount equal to 5% for choice-related transportation (if there is demand);
- * an amount equal to 5% for SES (if there is demand); and
- * an amount equal to the remaining 10% for transportation or SES, or both, as the district determines.

8. WHAT'S THE DEADLINE FOR APPLYING?

If you decide you want to exercise your school choice transfer option for the 2010-2011 school year, you must return the attached form to us **no later than May 15, 2010**.

Please deliver, mail, or fax the form to your current school principal:

Dr. Lois Possell
Maple Street
20 Maple Street
Vernon, CT 06066
FAX: 870-6181

Mr. Michael DeBellis
Northeast School
69 East Street
Vernon, CT 06066
FAX: 870-6095

Mr. Matthew Wlodarczyk
Skinner Road School
90 Skinner Road
Vernon, CT 06066
FAX: 870-6187

If we do not receive the form from you, **on or before May 15, 2010**, your child will remain enrolled at your current school.

Please note that your school choice application is conditional on the results of the school's Adequate Yearly Progress report, the preliminary results of which are due in July.

9. WHAT IF MY TRANSFER APPLICATION IS NOT APPROVED?

If your transfer is not approved, your child will stay in your current school.

10. WHEN WILL YOU TELL ME IF MY TRANSFER APPLICATION IS APPROVED?

We will let you know by August 15, 2010, if your transfer is approved.

11. WHEN CAN I VISIT THE ACCEPTING SCHOOL?

If you're thinking about transferring your child to one of the Accepting Schools, we encourage you to visit them and call us with any questions.

12. QUESTIONS:

If you have any more questions about the school choice program or your options, please call your building principal or contact the Assistant Superintendent at 860-870-6000, ext.143.

For parents/guardians of Maple Street School and Northeast School: If you do not opt to transfer your child to another school, your child may be eligible to receive supplemental educational services (SES). SES is free tutoring that is available to low income students from schools that are identified in need of improvement under NCLB. These services are offered by state approved providers and occur outside of the regular school day. More information on SES will follow in late summer.

Thank you for working with us to anticipate and be prepared to address planning issues for our next school year. Please know that we are working hard to achieve the ambitious goals of **No Child Left Behind**. For more information on our **District Instructional Plan**, please visit our website at www.vernonschools.com. Click on "Publications."

Sincerely,

Deborah Murasso
Assistant Superintendent