

(SCHOOL DISTRICT LETTERHEAD)

Tool 3.1.1

DATE: (Insert)
TO: (SCHOOL NAME) Parents
SUBJECT: Notice of Adequate Yearly Progress and School Transfer Options

Many of you are aware of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which requires schools to assess students annually and to meet student achievement goals. If a school does not meet those assessment and achievement goals (termed “adequate yearly progress” or AYP) for two consecutive years, and if the school receives federal Title I funds, then it is placed on a federal “Schools in Need of Assistance (SINA)” list and subjected to federal sanctions. As a reminder, schools or districts are cited if they a) don’t meet 95% participation rate for assessments, b) don’t meet student achievement goals, or c) don’t meet attendance rate for elementary and middle schools or graduation rate for high school.

I am writing to inform you that (SCHOOL NAME) has been designated as a “School in Need of Assistance,” or SINA, under these federal guidelines because a portion of our students (DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN TESTS AND/OR DID NOT REACH PROFICIENCY GOALS ON THEIR READING AND/OR MATHEMATICS TESTS, AND/OR ATTENDANCE RATE AND/OR GRADUATION RATE) for two consecutive years. As a result, our district is required by law to offer your student the opportunity to transfer to another school within the district that has not been designated as a school in need of assistance, if possible, for the 2004-05 school year.

Please know that the SINA designation refers to federal criteria and does not reflect the overall quality of our school. (SCHOOL NAME) is dedicated to providing a superior education that ensures academic success for all its students. We remain a fully accredited school in complete compliance with State of Iowa regulations, including quality curriculum and teaching staff.

WHY (SCHOOL NAME) DIDN’T MAKE AYP:

Schools don’t make AYP when they don’t achieve one of the measures listed above: a) 95% participation rate for assessments, b) student achievement goals, or c) 95% attendance rate for elementary and middle schools or 90% graduation rate for high school. (SCHOOL NAME) is listed because not enough students met their goals in the following areas:

- Grade level, subject area, proficiency percentage, and state target
- 4th grade, math, 60% (64% was the state AYP goal)
- 11th grade, math, 90% participation (95% required)

You’ll note that some of the improvement areas relate specifically to instruction, such as reading or math, and some relate to test participation. That is because we are required to test fully 95% of our students; if we fall below that mark, we automatically are cited by the federal law, regardless of how well the students performed on the test.

About five percent of Iowa schools have been given the SINA designation, including about (#) in our school district. Under the NCLB law, only schools receiving federal Title I funding must offer school transfer options, if available.

HOW (SCHOOL NAME) WILL IMPROVE:

Although we have many indicators that show (SCHOOL NAME) is offering a top-quality education, we know that continuous improvement is important to ensure all of our students are reaching their highest

potential. Using data about the students and their achievement, our staff already has begun to identify areas for improvement. For example:

- List specific programs you have implemented to improve academic achievement.
- Include professional development opportunities for teachers.

Some student groups may require additional instructional interventions, pending a review of our current programs and services. In addition, the Iowa Department of Education and (NAME OF DISTRICT) district already have begun providing technical assistance to (SCHOOL NAME) as required by the NCLB law.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP:

Parent support is essential to help your student reach his or her highest academic success, but parents may need ideas about the best way to be involved. A few suggestions include:

- Communicate regularly with your child's teachers about overall goals for the year and your child's progress toward those goals.
- Make sure your child attends school regularly. Attendance is important at every grade level. When your child must be absent, please talk with the teacher to coordinate make-up work and assignments.
- Help your child with his or her homework. If you are unable to help, contact the school to request a tutor.
- Volunteer at the school. Every teacher needs volunteers to help in the classroom, or even with projects that can be done in your home. Other areas in the school, such as the office or cafeteria, also need volunteers.

HOW TO REQUEST A SCHOOL TRANSFER:

You may apply for a school transfer by requesting a transfer form from our district office, at (PHONE NUMBER). Space is limited, so requests for transfer will be prioritized by the need of the student, based on ITBS scores. If you wish for your child to remain at (SCHOOL NAME), no action on your part is required. (OR: UNFORUNATELY, OUR SCHOOLS ARE NOT ABLE TO PROVIDE SCHOOL TRANSFERS BECAUSE THERE ARE NO SCHOOLS AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS TO ATTEND. [IF POSSIBLE, GIVE EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS, SUCH AS PROVIDING TUTORS, THAT YOUR SCHOOL IS TAKING.]

As parents, you can be assured your students continue to receive a high quality education at (SCHOOL NAME).

The assessment results cited by NCLB are one useful measurement for us, but we also have many other indicators to demonstrate that our students are indeed high achievers. You'll note from our school report card at (INSERT WEB ADDRESS) that each class at (SCHOOL NAME) has a number of success stories. For instance:

- Specific examples of student achievement, i.e. district assessments, ACT scores, AP courses taken, or graduation rates.
- Teacher qualifications, such as percent with advanced degrees.

We are very proud of our students and of the education they receive from the staff at (SCHOOL NAME). We also are committed to continuous improvement, and so will continue to seek new data and make any changes necessary to benefit student learning. We appreciate and depend on your ongoing support and assistance, and welcome your suggestions.

Sincerely,

Principal