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SUPERINTENDENT

October 12, 2010

Dear Rother School Parents and Guardians,

Please allow me to provide information on the recently enacted California Open Enrollment Act. This new state legislation provides notification and student placement options for parents of identified public schools.

Let me begin with some background information. In order to make California eligible for federal Race to the Top (RTTP) funding, our state needed to pass legislation that identified low-performing schools. The Open Enrollment Act establishes such an identification method through the use of a formula that applies the California API score and the school decile rank from 2009. (School performance is organized into 10 groups or “deciles” according to API scores – Decile 1 is low-performing; Decile 10 is high-performing.) This is how it works:

1. The state chose the 2009 Base API as its identifying indicator.
2. The state looked at all of the California schools in Decile 1 during 2009 and calculated the percentage of elementary, middle, and high schools (68.7% were elementary; 16.5% were middle schools; 14.8% were high schools).
3. The state applied this percentage to selection of 1,000 “low-performing” schools (687 on the list are elementary; 165 on the list are middle schools; and 148 on the list are high schools).
4. The state added a limiting cap – no district would have more than 10% of its schools on the low-performing list.

With this selection process, many persistently low-performing schools are not included on California’s proposed list. As lower-performing schools are eliminated (because of the ‘no more than 10% from any school district’ clause), higher-performing/improving schools are swept onto the low-performing list. This is the case with an Enterprise Elementary School District school – Rother Elementary School.

The intent of the Open Enrollment Act is to provide parent options for student attendance. Those parents of students at schools on the state list have the option to request transfer to another higher-performing school within the district or across the state. Transportation is not provided.

We oppose the inclusion of Rother Elementary School on the draft state-wide list of low-performing schools for these reasons:

- Rother Elementary School is not low-performing. In fact, Rother Elementary School is much higher-achieving than many schools that were excluded from the list due to the 10% limitation cap.
- The schools on the list are not all Decile 1 or even Decile 2 schools. These schools represent the lowest-performing schools in the state. Rother School was a Decile 9 school in 2009.

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- The 2009 Base API for Rother Elementary School was 817 - up 123 points in six years. The average 2009 Base API for elementary schools was 795.

As required, we are committed to:

1. Notify you, as a Rother Elementary School parent or guardian, of the new legislation and your right under the current situation to request a transfer to a school with a higher 2009 Base API.
2. Work with the Shasta County Department of Education to develop county-wide policies, procedures, and forms in alignment with the law.
3. Notify parents/guardians of students that attend Rother Elementary School of your right to request a transfer to a school with a higher 2009 Base API for the 2011/2012 school year.

If you are considering applying for a transfer from Rother Elementary School to a school with a higher 2009 API, we will accept applications from December 1 through December 30, 2010, to transfer to a school with a higher 2009 API score for the 2011/2012 school year. Forms will be available from the District Office on Wednesday, December 1, 2010. The district will notify parents of the approval or denial of their transfer request within 60 calendar days of January 1, 2011.

Should you have any questions or need additional information regarding the California Open Enrollment Act, please call our District Office at 530-224-4100. Thank you for your continued support of the Rother Elementary School staff and program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian N. Winstead". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Brian N. Winstead