

Union Parish School Board

*Post Office Box 308
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Superintendent

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Bernice High School ***School Choice Information***

July 22, 2009

Dear Parent and/or Guardian:

Federal law requires school districts to offer families in schools that have been identified as in need of improvement the chance to transfer their children to other public schools in the same district. Your child's school has been identified as a school in need of improvement and you are allowed to choose to enroll him or her in another school. To help you understand how the choice program works, here are some answers to questions you may have.

Why was Bernice High School identified as a “school in need of improvement” and how does it compare to other schools in Union Parish and in the rest of Louisiana?

Bernice High School was identified as a school in need of improvement because the school performance score dropped below sixty and the students did not meet performance goals established by the State in areas of standardized testing. Any school that falls below sixty is considered academically unacceptable and becomes a school in need of improvement. Bernice High School's School Performance score is 59.7. The average School Performance score for Union Parish is 69.1. The average State Performance score is 85.7.

What is Bernice High School doing to address the problem of low achievement, and what are the school system and the Louisiana State Department of Education doing to help them address the problem?

The school system administration will evaluate all areas of instruction at Bernice High School. This evaluation will include observations, interviews and surveys of students, teachers, and parents to determine what areas need to be improved. The information obtained will be used to prepare a School Improvement Plan. These plans require classroom instruction and teacher training to focus on improving the areas in which students at Bernice High School are having difficulty. Bernice High School will analyze test scores and other data to target all areas of academic need. The school will implement literacy strategies, tutorial programs and innovative math strategies. Consultants will work along with the administration and staff to identify the most effective instructional practices for the diverse student population that attends Bernice High School. The State Department of Education will be sending assistance in the form of additional funding and technical assistance through the Regional Service Centers. The district will provide a lower pupil/teacher ratio and work with the school weekly in monitoring its success.

Additional assistance includes:

- ♦ Staffing with highly qualified teachers;
- ♦ The target student/teacher ratio will be twenty students per teacher;
- ♦ Additional support staff will include a curriculum assistant, instructional coaches,

- behavioral strategist, and full time In-School Isolation Program;
- ♦ Supplemental services or tutoring

How can I become involved in addressing the problems that caused Bernice High School to be identified as a school in need of improvement?

Families are encouraged to arrange a private conference with their child’s teachers to discuss ways to improve academic performance. Families are also invited to participate as members of the School Improvement Team at Bernice High School. The School Improvement Team is a group made up of the principal, teachers, and parents that works to improve the education and overall learning experience for all students at Bernice High School. Even if a family member does not serve as a member of the School Improvement Team, he or she may attend meetings of the team to discuss possible changes in any area of instruction to improve Bernice High School.

Do I have to transfer my child to another school?

No. We are providing families 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 choose to have your child remain at Bernice High School as registered, all you have to do is make sure he or she attends the school on the first day of class. If you do choose to transfer your child to the new school, he or she must remain there for the full school year.

To which schools may my child transfer?

Under the School Choice Program, students at Bernice High School may choose to attend one of the following three schools:

| | | |
|---|------------------------------------|------|
| Farmerville Elementary School | 2008-2009 School Performance Score | 70.7 |
| 7195 Hwy 33 Farmerville, Louisiana 71241 7:50 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. | | |
| Farmerville Junior High School | 2008-2009 School Performance Score | 72.5 |
| 606 Bernice Street Farmerville, Louisiana 71241 7:50 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. | | |
| Spearsville High School | 2008-2009 School Performance Score | 76.8 |
| 115 Hwy 3265 Spearsville, Louisiana 71277 7:50 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. | | |

If you choose to have your child attend one of these schools, please select your first and second choices, with your first choice as number one and your second choice as number two on the enclosed choice form. These schools did made Adequate Yearly Progress and have higher School Improvement Scores than Bernice High School. The 2008-2009 School Performance Score for Bernice High School was 59.7. The 2008-2009 average State Performance Score is 85.7.

Is my child guaranteed a place in an accepting school?

Every effort will be made to give parents their first choice if requesting a transfer. However, it is possible that your child may not be granted enrollment in your first school of choice. Students will be

granted enrollment in the schools above based upon enrollment limits, individual achievement scores, and income levels as prescribed by NCLB.

Will my child be eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities in the new school?

Your child will be eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities at the new school as per Louisiana High School Athletic Association guidelines.

How will my child get to a receiving school?

If your transfer application is approved, your child will have free transportation to the receiving school. If your child will be attending one of the Choice Schools, then your child will ride the bus to Bernice High School where another bus will transport your child to the Choice School.

What is the deadline for applying?

If you decide you want to send your child to one of the receiving schools, the enclosed *Choice Request Form* must be returned to Bernice High School Office or the school of choice no later than **Thursday, July 31, 2009**. If we do not receive the Choice Request Form from you by **Thursday, July 31, 2009**, your child will remain enrolled at Bernice High School.

When will you tell me if my transfer application is approved?

Parents will receive an official notification informing them if their transfer application is approved within 14 days. Students may start attending the choice schools on Friday, August 14, 2009, or as soon as official notification is received by parents. Transfers will be handled as soon as possible.

What if I choose to have my child continue to attend Bernice High School?

You would continue to send your child to Bernice High School as registered.

Important Facts to Know:

Transportation will be provided by the Union Parish School Board and bus information will be available by August 7, 2009. Students participating in the Choice Program will catch their normal/regular assigned bus to Bernice High School. Another bus will be at Bernice High School and will transport students from Bernice High School to their choice school. All choice schools take in later and let out earlier than Bernice High School. All choice schools let out at 3:15 p.m. Transportation will not be available until August 14, 2009.

A choice transfer is valid with transportation while Bernice High School is considered a "School in Need of Improvement." When Bernice High School is no longer considered a "School in Need of Improvement," your child **may continue** to attend the chosen school of choice until he/she completes the highest grade the school has to offer. **However, bus transportation is not provided.**

Questions?

If you have any more questions about the School Choice Program, you may contact:

Union Parish School Board
P.O. Box 308
Farmerville, Louisiana 71241

Federal Programs Director
Sharon Stewart
(318) 368-9715 ext. 131

Accountability Supervisor
Glenda Reynolds
(318) 368-9715 ext. 150

School Choice information can be found at the district's website at unionpsd.org. Click on *School Choice Information*.

Sincerely,

Steve Dozier, Superintendent
Union Parish Schools

Enclosure: *School Choice Request Form*

SCHOOL CHOICE REQUEST FORM

"No Child Left Behind"

Public School Choice (Section 1116)

Union Parish School District
P.O. Box 308
Farmerville, Louisiana 71241
(318) 368-9715

Student Name: _____ SSN: _____
(please print) Last First

Address: _____ Zip Code: _____

Grade: _____ (2009-2010)

Name of parent or legal guardian: (please print) _____

Home Phone: _____ Business Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Return this form to the School Office of your child's school or to one of the three choice schools by the end of the day (3:00 p.m.) Thursday, July 31, 2009.

Please indicate school by ranking 1st or 2nd next to your choice. All schools take in at 7:50 a.m. and dismiss at 3:15 p.m.

_____ Farmerville Elementary School

_____ Farmerville Junior High School

_____ Spearsville High School

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Comments:

Union Parish School District will make an effort to assign your child to your first school choice; however, we cannot assure you that we will be able to honor your request. The lowest achieving students on free/reduced lunch will receive priority in Section 1116 transfers.

Office Use Only

Approved

1st Choice
 2nd Choice

Denied

Reason Denied _____

Supervisor Signature _____

Date _____

Fax copy to Receiving School, Bernice High School; Original to Sharon Stewart, Federal Programs Director