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San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Parents/Guardians of Students attending San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools (SBCSS):

### **NOTICE OF SCHOOL IDENTIFIED FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT:**

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that one or more of SBCSS Schools have been identified as a Program Improvement (PI) school under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.

#### **What Is PI?**

Our county office of education receives funding from many sources, one of which is Title I, Part A, a grant from the federal government. As a condition for receiving these funds, NCLB requires all states to create academic standards that identify what a child should know and be able to do in kindergarten through grade twelve in English-language arts and mathematics. California already has highly regarded content standards in place in our schools. Schools must then test students each year to determine if they are proficient in these subjects. Each school is reviewed annually, using a system approved by the California State Board of Education, to determine if students at that school are making adequate yearly progress (AYP). AYP is based upon several factors including:

- California's own accountability measurement of progress, the Academic Performance Index (API)
- The percentage of students scoring at the "proficient" or "advanced" level on the California Standards Tests for English-language arts and mathematics or the California Alternate Performance Assessment for eligible special education students.
- The percentage of students participating in those tests
- For high schools, the graduation rate

When reviewing the progress of schools in the district, the state looks at the school as a whole and subgroups<sup>1</sup> of students. In order to make AYP, each school must test at least 95 percent of its students and 95 percent of students in significant subgroups. Targets are set for the percent of students scoring proficient, and that target increases each year with the expectation that all students will score proficient by the year 2014. Every school and subgroup is also expected to increase its API and graduation rate each year (as a County Office of Education, SBCSS is assigned the county-wide graduation rate).

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<sup>1</sup> A subgroup is numerically significant and included in the AYP report if there are 100 students or more with valid test results or 50 or more students with test results who make up at least 15 percent of the total valid scores. There are ten subgroups that are used in the AYP: African-American or Black, American Indian, Asian, Filipino, Hispanic or Latino, Pacific Islander, White (not of Hispanic origin), socioeconomically disadvantaged, English learners, and students with disabilities.

The California Department of Education (CDE) must annually publish the data necessary to determine if each school has or has not made AYP. *Only schools that receive Title I, Part A, funds and do not make AYP for two years in a row are identified for PI.* Each PI school must take certain steps to give parents choices concerning their students' education and to improve the school's performance.

A report of the PI status of all schools in the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools is available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ar/index.asp> or at the County Schools Web site at <http://data.sbcss.k12.ca.us/DATA/> . If you do not have access to the Internet, contact the Student Services Division at (909) 777-0778 and they will provide this information to you.

### **Your Right to Request a Transfer**

If the child's placement in the county-operated school is voluntary, the student may have the option of transferring. If the placement of your child in SBCSS Schools is by order of a court or other legal process, court approval would be required for any change. Special education students attend programs as determined by the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team. Should you wish to explore assignment to a different school for your child, you may do so by requesting an IEP team meeting.

### **Supplemental educational services (SES): How does a parent obtain a provider for their child?**

Students from low-income families at continuing PI schools are eligible for free SES. These services are classes or tutoring which occur outside the regular school day with educational providers approved by the State Board of Education. If the number of eligible students who apply for the SES program exceeds the financial resources available, the lowest achieving students from low-income families will receive SES first. (Note: SES is a Title I service and is not an Independent Education Plan (IEP) Service).

If you are interested in SES, please review the list of providers willing to serve the district. Then complete and return the SES application form to the district. If you need assistance in making a selection of an SES provider(s) for your child(ren), please contact the Categorical Coordinator at (909) 777-0778. All forms and resources are available online at <http://www.sbcss.k12.ca.us/stuServe/suppEdServ.php>.

### **What Are the County and School Doing to Improve Student Achievement?**

The San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools is working closely with each school to improve curriculum, instruction, and student performance at the school. Listed here are some of the steps that have been taken or that will be taken by the beginning of the second semester of this school year.

- We are working closely with the district staff to revise school plans 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 targets
- We have started a new assessment program that will help to better target the specific needs of students.

- Students most in need of help can receive after-school tutoring in reading and mathematics.
- We are training our teachers on how to help students who are not at grade level.
- We will work to help parents become involved at the school and at home.

### **How Can Parents Help to Improve Student Achievement?**

Although it often is difficult to find the time, you can help to improve student achievement at your child's school by becoming involved. Here are some things you can do:

1. Learn more about the NCLB requirements. Additional information and resources are available at the following Web sites:
  - The California Department of Education, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/sw/t1/titleparta.asp> and <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/sw/t1/titlelpf.asp>
  - The U.S. Department of Education, <http://www.ed.gov> and <http://www.ed.gov/parents/landing.ihtml?src=fp>
2. Attend the School Site Council meetings to revise the school plan. The school plan should address the issues that caused the school to be identified for PI.
3. Participate in activities that encourage parents to get involved at your school. The research shows that strong parental involvement leads to student success at school.

For additional information or concerns, or to find out more information about how you can help at your child's school, we encourage you to contact the school office.