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Lafayette School District Considers Transfer Policies

By Jean Follmer

The Lafayette School District Governing Board discussed its current policies on both inter-district and Allen Bill transfers in a recent study session. The District policy only allows for inter-district transfers for children of Lafayette School District employees. There are currently 15 students in the Lafayette School District who have transferred in from other districts. The District policy does not allow for employment-related Allen Bill transfers. The California Allen Bill, as cited in California Education Code Section 48204(b,) enables students to transfer from one district to another based on "parental employment in lieu of residency in district of attendance." The District used to accept Allen Bill transfers, but did away with them in the late 1990s as a result of overcrowding. Board Member Shayne Silva was on the Board when that decision was made. "We were bulging at the seams and just plain ran out of space. We had over 900 (students) at Burton Valley and 1,300 at Stanley," said Silva.

While Districts do receive approximately \$5,800 per student from the State of California, it does not receive parcel or bond taxes for those transfer students. This also contributed to the decision to do away with Allen Bill transfers. "We had just passed a parcel tax and kids were transferring in that weren't paying (the tax)," said Silva. As a result, there was some bad sentiment amongst some of the Lafayette parents. Superintendent Dr. Fred Brill said a neighboring district that currently allows Allen Bill transfers lets the parents of incoming transfer students know how much resident student families are paying in parcel taxes and bonds. Brill said that district has a high level of transfer families that are willing to match the amount.

Brill said Acalanes currently accepts Allen Bill transfer students of Lafayette School District employees and the Lafayette District does not reciprocate. Brill said he "feels an obligation to serve kids of Acalanes employees and kids of school (site) daycare workers." The Board discussed the possibility of "tiering" the Allen Bill requests as some districts do. But, in a subsequent Board Meeting, Brill said he'd learned that they can't tier Allen Bills; it's essentially all or nothing.

The District has not made any decisions and any changes to current policies will likely be dependent upon the outcome of the budget cuts. "We wouldn't be considering Allen Bills if we weren't financially pressed," said Board Clerk Ann Appert.

By comparison, the Moraga School District revised its inter-district transfer policy in 2008. "Our policy allows inter-district transfers if there is space available. Our first priority is to keep sufficient opening to serve the children of residents. For 08/09, our classes are very full and we did not accept transfers. Accepting transfers could require us to add additional classes," said Moraga Superintendent Rick Shafer. When inter-district transfers are considered, preference is divided into 5 categories of priority: 1. children of Moraga School District employees, 2. children of Acalanes High School District employees, 3. children whose parent(s) are employed full-time by St. Mary's College, the Town of Moraga or the Moraga-Orinda Fire Department, 4. children of parents employed full-time within the attendance boundaries of the Moraga School District and 5. children whose grandparent is a Moraga resident.

Jerry Bucci, Director of Business Services at the Orinda Union School District said, "We do review all requests for inter-district transfers every year. We do try to

accommodate employees. We consider as many others as we can." Bucci said the number of inter-district transfer students fluctuates from year to year. He noted they have 123 inter-district transfer students as of October, 2008. Bucci said the District is not considering any changes to its inter-district transfer or Allen Bill transfer policies at this time.

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