



Transfer Options Dwindle

Other APS schools have few openings as many struggle to meet progress standards

By Andrea Schoellkopf Journal Staff Writer

Parents seeking highperforming public schools are finding their choices dwindling.

Four out of five APS traditional schools failed to make adequate yearly progress in 2007-2008, up from about three in five last year.

Sandia High, which met AYP but must repeat the improvement this year to be removed from the state's list of Schools in Need of Improvement, was already filled even before the state announced results.

"I don't think AYP (makes a difference)," Sandia High Principal Mike Bachicha said.

And while schools that have not met AYP for two or more years must offer transfers to students who want them, there is less of a pool for those students to choose from.

"We get hundreds of requests a day," said Toby Herrera, director of the APS student service center, which handles the transfer process. "By that time, there's not a whole lot of space left, but we continue to accept them and place as many as we possibly can."

The majority of applications are received between Feb. 1 and March 15 the year before and continue through the end of the school year. Requests start picking up again in July, before the new school year starts.

"There's very few openings at any school," he said. "I don't think people are transferring to a school because it's not a school in need of improvement. The No. 1 reason for transferring is usually convenience for parents."

At several high-demand schools, children who don't get in the entry level year of that school — such as kindergarten at an elementary — are not likely to find room available when they want to move.

Griegos Elementary Principal Tom Graham said transfer requests to attend his school have increased each year his school has met adequate yearly progress, but older students aren't leaving so he has no place for the children to go.

"The kindergarten's the best shot," Graham said.

Several schools throughout the city may have openings in a particular grade, such as Alvarado Elementary or A. Montoya Elementary, he said, but that may be a different story the very next day.

Herrera said 9,000 to 10,000 students are attending schools different from their assigned areas.