

C.R. school assignments expected by week's end

The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — By the end of the week, Cedar Rapids students who moved from their homes or lost their school due to flooding will know where they will attend school this fall.

The school district collected data from schools and families to identify where the estimated 1,834 students displaced by the flood disaster were living. This number includes students from each of the 33 district schools — because some lived in a dry area but used a permit to attend a flooded school.

Taylor Elementary School, 720 Seventh Ave. SW, was seriously damaged in June when 3 feet of floodwater rose on the first floor. The school will not be open for the 2008-09 school year.

The two-phase student

placement process will begin first with those who still live in the Taylor neighborhood who were not displaced by the flood. These students will be placed in schools next to the Taylor neighborhood.

When identifying schools, the district will consider class sizes, space availability, programming needs and middle school attendance areas.

"Keeping families together is a priority," said Jay Marino, associate superintendent.

After that, officials will identify school locations for any student who is homeless under federal law.

According to the law, a student is homeless if he or she is living in a shelter, motel, vehicle, campground, Federal Emergency Management Agency mobile home, in an abandoned building, doubled-up with friends or relatives, or on the street. The law provides that these students may attend the school in the neighborhood in which they reside or may request transportation to the school they last attended (when feasible).

The district is still checking

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where some students are living in order to form a transportation plan for all students. The district will establish centralized transportation "pickup points" for busing. They will be no farther than three-fourths of a mile from where students are staying. Students will be transported to various schools from the pickup points.

"We want to minimize the amount of time that students spend on a bus and ensure they arrive safely at school," said Marino.

Students living outside the district should follow the usual open enrollment process for placement.



Jay Marino
Associate
superintendent