

"We urge parents to slow down and take the time to look carefully at the schools available in their zone," she said.

The historic change also means the city is abandoning the integration plan that garnered it national attention in 1968 because of the plan's innovative approach to busing. Under the old system, minority children were bused to primarily white neighborhoods from kindergarten to third grade. At fourth grade, the pattern reversed, and it was the white children's turn to travel to neighborhoods with more minority children.

Busing will still take place, but it will be within the three zones, and children will no longer have to change schools at fourth grade. Integration will still be a goal, which is one of the reasons not all families will receive their first choices for schools.

The integration language adopted by the school board does not tie the district to specific racial

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Berkeley parents have three more weeks to shop for a public school before a crucial February 15 deadline, when they must say where they want their children to learn next fall.

After years of talking, Berkeley is scrapping its complicated mix of kindergarten-to-third grade and fourth-to-sixth grade elementary schools for a kindergarten-to-fifth grade system divided into three city zones. Each will contain some hills and flatlands neighborhoods. Parents will be able to apply for any school within their zone.

"This is not first come, first served," said Nancy Greenman, one of the new parent access coordinators hired to help parents find their way through the new system. "This is not a race; no preference forms will be screened before February 15.

Berkeley Revamps School Enrollment

SF Chronicle '95
By Lori Olszewski
Chronicle East Bay Bureau

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quotas at a school. It says the school district "shall seek to assure that enrollment at a school shall be made so that each school will have a student population which reflects a racial balance for the grade levels that are found within that school."

By the end of this week, all parents of current kindergartners to sixth-graders should have received a white form brought home by their children on which they will list their first, second and third choices within their attendance zones for the fall of 1995. Berkeley residents currently enrolled at a school receive first priority at that school.

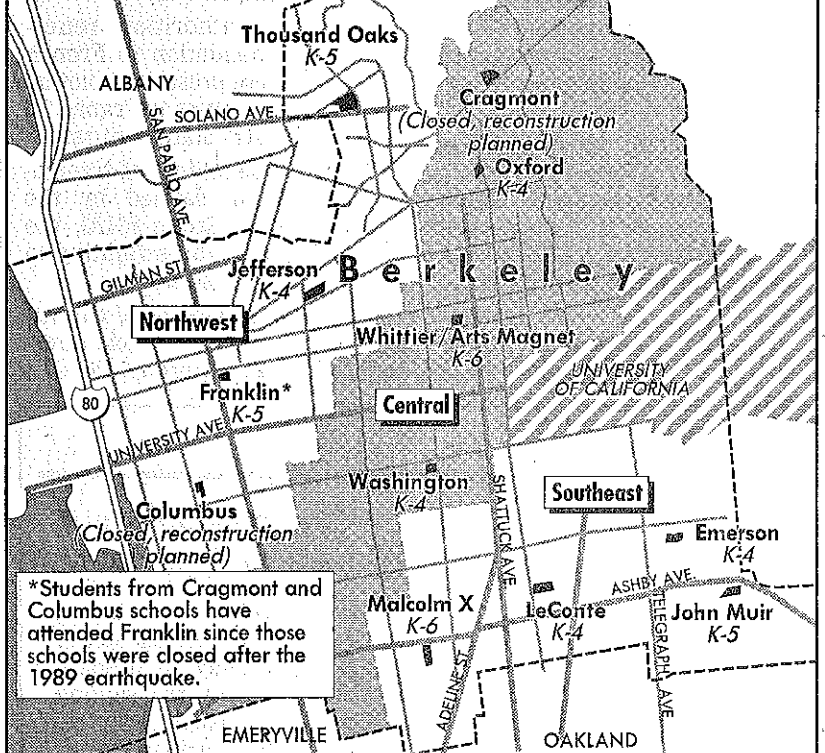
The middle school assignments are a bit more complicated during this transition year as some of next year's sixth-graders will stay at Malcolm X and Whittier elementary schools.

Eventually, the city will have three middle schools, grades six to eight, instead of two junior highs, grades seven to eight. The existing junior highs, King and Willard, have already added sixth grades. The third, smaller middle school will be at Longfellow, a former fourth-to-sixth grade school, which will specialize in arts and technology when it opens as a middle school next fall.

Any current fourth-, fifth- or sixth-grader in the city may apply for the new Longfellow, which

RESTRUCTURING BERKELEY'S SCHOOL ZONES

Berkeley parents will be able to choose which elementary school their children will attend within these new attendance zones:



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will house grades five to seven during this transition year, 1995-1996.

"We're encouraging people who would like to be part of building a pioneering program to take a look at Longfellow," said Greenman. The new middle school will host an open house on February 1. Details are available from the school by calling (510) 644-6360.

The parent preference forms

may be returned to their child's teacher or to any school office by the February 15 deadline. They also can be mailed to the Parent Access Coordinator, Berkeley Unified School District, 2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94704-1180.

Parents will be notified on March 15 of whether they got their first choice.