

August 2008

Dear Parents:

Our school district is dedicated to providing its students the education they need to prepare them to graduate from high school and enter their adult lives. Our school is committed to maintaining a high quality education for our students, and we are working hard to provide continuous support to our teachers and our students as they work toward achieving the high academic standards we have set for them.

What is Adequate Yearly Progress?

Federal law, under the *No Child Left Behind Act*, requires increased accountability for schools to reach high standards for all students in reading and mathematics. Each year, as part of the requirements for the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the state releases Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports for each school building in the state of North Dakota. These reports measure our students' performance in terms of the percentage of students who are at or above state-defined academic standards in reading and mathematics as measured by the North Dakota State Assessment. The reports are called Adequate Yearly Progress reports (otherwise known as AYP reports), and the school is required to share these reports with its parents.

How is AYP determined?

The *No Child Left Behind Act* requires states to set proficiency standards (or goals) for schools. The state uses these proficiency standards to indicate if schools are making AYP. The state looks at the percentage of the school's students who are meeting or above each standard. There are actually four specific criteria that the state reviews to determine if a school has made AYP. These four criteria include:

1. Whether the percentage of students taking the North Dakota State Assessment (in both the composite and each subgroup) meet the state's annual AYP goals in the proficient and advanced proficient areas in reading and math.
2. Whether 95% of the students in the school, as well as in each subgroup, took the state assessment.
3. Whether the school has met the secondary indicator for participation rates. (high school graduation rate)
4. Whether the school's achievement and participation rates have passed the test for statistical reliability.

Did our school make AYP?

As indicated on the bottom of the enclosed school AYP report, you will find that our school did NOT make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP); however, our school has not been identified as a school in need of improvement. In order to be identified as a school in need of improvement, also known as program improvement, a school must fail to make

AYP for two consecutive years. In other words, if our school's North Dakota State Assessment results fall below the goals set by the state next year, our school will be identified as a program improvement school since it would be our second consecutive year for not making AYP. Being identified for program improvement would mean that our school would be required to write an improvement plan and face certain sanctions as outlined in the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

What is our school doing to improve its AYP status?

Improving the educational achievement of our students has always been a priority. We are constantly working to implement research-based methods of teaching and assessment that will present our students with a quality educational program that provides them with the skills and background they need to succeed upon graduation from our school. Currently, our school is undertaking the following improvement measures:

1. Implementing 6+1 reading strategies in the English Department.
2. Integrating mathematical concepts during (Sustained Silent Reading) time in targeted classrooms.
3. Hire additional math teacher to work with struggling students in Math and reduce class sizes in other math classrooms.
4. Initiate JAG program to work with At-risk freshman in order to help them transition into the high school.
5. Hire an additional English/Title instructor to assist with struggling students in the area of English.
6. After-school tutoring program will be initiated to allow students not receiving services throughout the day to get help from a teacher after school.
7. Work with special education department to ensure that all necessary accommodations are being implemented into students Individual Education Plans.

What does this mean for parents?

In order to reach the high academic goals for student proficiency set in the *No Child Left Behind Act*, our school needs your participation. Supporting the school and becoming involved in your child's education is key to his/her academic progress. Because we are facing a second year of not making AYP, your involvement is key to our school improvement efforts. We would like to enlist your participation in our school improvement efforts. We would certainly welcome any ideas you have to further our work to attain high academic standards for all students at our school. Please contact the school at 572-0967 to become involved.

Sincerely,

Chris Kittleson, Principal
Williston High School