

Williston Middle School
501 14th St West
Williston, ND 58801
Phone: 701-572-5618

June 2009

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 *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) requires states to set proficiency standards for schools to identify if schools are making Adequate Yearly Progress. Schools are then measured against these proficiency standards in terms of the percentage of students who are meeting or above the standard. Adequate Yearly Progress is then determined in terms of the following criteria:

- Whether the percentage of students in the composite and subgroup categories on the North Dakota State Assessment are proficient or advanced proficient.
- Whether 95% of the students in total school as well as in each subgroup took the state assessment.
- Whether the school has met the secondary indicator:
Elementary/Middle Schools-attendance rates.
- Whether the school's achievement and participation rates have passed the test for statistical significance.

Did our school make AYP?

Enclosed you will find our school's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report(s). On that report, you will note at the bottom our school's AYP status. According to the report, our school

- Met or exceeded the required proficiency percentages and made AYP.

What happens when a school is identified as not making Adequate Yearly Progress?

Once a school or district has been identified as not making Adequate Yearly Progress for two or more consecutive years, the school or district enters what is called Program Improvement status. Under Program Improvement, a school must write a plan for improving the academic achievement of its students and additional resources must be focused toward instructional strategies and supportive programs aimed at meeting the needs of all students, including educationally disadvantaged students. In addition, a school then enters a timeline of sanctions required under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. As our school has made Adequate Yearly Progress, we are not facing any of these sanctions at this time.

Under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), the state has set the aforementioned proficiency standards. In addition, NCLB requires that states continue to raise these percentages so that, by the year 2013-2014, 100% of students will be expected to be at or above the proficiency levels in reading and mathematics or the school will be identified as not making Adequate Yearly Progress.

What is our school doing to maintain its AYP status?

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

- All students will be engaged in our successful Supporting Student Literacy (SSL) program for 20 minutes each day. This program provides opportunities for students to read silently, write, discuss reading and participate in read-alouds.
- Several classes will be available to assist those students who are performing below grade level in reading and math.
- All students have skills identified in language arts and math to address needs through differentiated instruction.
- All students will be assessed to monitor growth with MAP two (2) times during the school year (Winter and Spring) in reading, math, and science.
- All students will be assessed each quarter with a school developed standards based writing rubric.
- All students will be taught the use of SMART goals through Prime Time (Advisory).
- With support from teacher advisors, all students will use the new “My Goal” document for assessments, goals, and growth.
- Students identified with non proficient skills after fall MAP will attend a 30 minute enrichment to be held prior to NDSA testing.
- All students will be involved in a student-led conference to develop a learning portfolio and take ownership of assessment growth.
- Students identified after the various school year assessments with weak skills attended Summer Success 2009.

What does this mean for me?

In order to reach the high academic goals for student proficiency set in *No Child Left Behind*, our school needs your participation. Supporting the school and becoming involved in your child’s education is key to his/her academic progress. We would like to enlist your participation in our improvement planning and initiatives. We need your support, and would certainly welcome any ideas you have to continue our work to attain high academic standards for all students at our school. Please contact the school at 572-5618 to become involved. For more information on Adequate Yearly Progress please check out the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction’s Website at www.dpi.state.nd.us/title1.

Yours in Education,

Marcia Armogost, Principal