

Williston Middle School
501 14th St West
Williston, ND 58801
Phone: 701-562-5618

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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.
 - Elementary/Middle Schools-student attendance rates
4. Whether the school's achievement and participation rates have passed the test for statistical reliability.

Did our school make AYP?

Enclosed you will find our school's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report. You will note our school's AYP status at the bottom of the report. According to the report, you will find that our school did NOT make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). This is the school's second consecutive year for not making Adequate Yearly Progress; therefore, our school has been identified as a school in need of improvement, otherwise known as program improvement.

What specific area(s) resulted in our identification as not making AYP?

In both reading and math our overall scores made AYP but our subgroup populations did NOT make the expected growth. In Reading our students with disabilities and our economically disadvantaged students did NOT make adequate yearly progress. In Math our students with disabilities did NOT make adequate yearly progress.

How does our school compare with other schools in the state?

According to the press release from the North Dakota Department of Education, 40 schools did not meet AYP and 44 had insufficient data to determine AYP status.

What does our status as a Program Improvement School mean?

Meeting the educational needs of all of our students is a high priority at our school. Because we have been identified for program improvement, our staff has defined a plan to improve student test scores in reading and mathematics. The plan is based on data identifying the needs of our students, staff, and school and is focused on research backed methods of raising student achievement. The specific activities that we are undertaking to try and improve the number of students reaching proficiency on the North Dakota State Assessment include the following:

- All students will be engaged in a new Supporting Student Literacy (SSL) program for 15 minutes each day. This program provides opportunities for students to read silently, write, discuss reading and participate in read-alouds.
- Several new classes will be available to assist those students who are performing below grade level in reading and math.
- All students will be assessed to monitor growth with MAP three (3) times during the school year (Fall, Winter, and Spring) in reading, language usage and math.
- We will provide before/after school instruction in literacy and math for students.
- All students will be taught the use of SMART goals through “GO” Program.
- 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 will attend Summer Success 2007.

What does this mean for our school?

Once a school has been identified as not making AYP for two or more consecutive years, the school enters what is called a program improvement status. The information below outline the sanctions our school must follow during this stage of its program improvement:

- Our school will provide parents with information on AYP status, our improvement plan, further analyze student achievement data and other school data, and share our targets for instructional improvement and increased student learning. In addition, during the school year we will host a variety of parent meetings to discuss our progress. Please plan on attending these meetings so that you can offer input on our decisions and learn about how you, as a parent, can participate in our school’s effort to leave no child behind.

- Professional Development Requirement-Our school is required to use 10% of the district's Title 1 allocation on professional development that is specifically designed to improve classroom teaching. Our school plans to implement the following high-quality, ongoing professional development within the school:
 - Provide training on use of SMART goals for instructional and team planning.
 - Provide training on new Supporting Student Literacy Program.
 - Provide training on use of rubrics, a variety of classroom assessments and differentiating instruction.
 - All teachers will be trained in effective thinking/reading strategies across all content areas.
 - All teachers will be involved in professional development with a secondary nationally recognized reading teacher.
 - Math, special education and title teachers will be engaged in Developing Mathematical Ideas (DMI) book study focusing on the standard *Number Sense*.
 - Math, special education and title teachers will visit classrooms in Bismarck schools to observe teachers utilizing DMI practices.
 - Math, special education and title teachers will have a follow-up session with DMI facilitator to reflect on practices, observations and set "next steps".
 - Provide training for special education staff on instructional delivery on standards to match skills of each student.

The Williston School District #1 is also supportive of our initiatives. The district assists us in our professional development by:

- NWEA/MAP support
 - Summer School programming
 - All language arts and special education teachers will attend 6 Traits of Writing training in June 2007.
- Additional Resources-Our school believes with the dedication of staff, the support of families, the cooperation of the community, and adequate resources, all children can succeed. Our school remains committed to *No Child Left Behind's* goal of closing gaps in the achievement among our students.

Getting Involved

As you can see in the activities identified, we have strong plans for working to improve the educational program at our school. We would like you and your child(ren) to continue to be an active participant in our educational system. Please help support our high expectations for student achievement by participating in the school's program improvement plan and offering input and support in our endeavors to raise student achievement. If you would like to be involved, by volunteering at the school or participating on one of our school improvement teams, please contact the school at 572-5618.

Yours in Education,

Marcia Armogost, Principal