

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

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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 make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). We not only made AYP requirements but far exceeded the requirements this year. We believe this is due to the participation of our entire school community: students, staff, parents, and community, who focused on academic success for ALL students. Although our school made AYP according to the 2006 North Dakota State Assessment data, our school must make

AYP for two (2) consecutive years before being removed from program improvement status. Although our school celebrates our accomplishments, we must also state that our school will remain in program improvement for the subsequent school year.

We are very proud of our school's accomplishments and believe our hard work is leading to higher student achievement. Our school will continue to work hard to provide the quality program and appropriate content to address the needs of all our students. School-wide training and hard work has paid off, as evidenced by our enclosed AYP report. To ensure sustained improvement, the school will continue to support staff training and initiative through the school year.

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 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 been flexed grouped 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, language usage and math.
- All students will be assessed with a school developed standards based writing rubric.
- 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 2008.

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 outlines 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.
 - Continue developing and enriching our Supporting Student Literacy Program.
 - Provide training on use of rubrics, a variety of classroom assessments and differentiating instruction with nationally recognized consultants.
 - All teachers will be trained in effective thinking/reading strategies across all content areas.
 - All teachers will be involved in professional development with secondary nationally recognized reading teachers.
 - Math, special education and title teachers will be engaged in inquiry math instruction.
 - Math, special education and title teachers will visit peer classrooms to observe and reflect on inquiry math practices
 - Continue to 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
- 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