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Mead Public Schools

115 North Elm P.O. Box 158
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Preparing For The Future . . .



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Dear Patrons:

In 2002, Congress passed legislation entitled, “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB). The legislation was enacted in response to concerns over the large number of dropouts in many urban school districts coupled with the recognition that 21st Century skills would require more competitive performance in mathematics, reading, science and technology to maintain our place in an economy that is increasingly global in nature.

The premise of NCLB was good; that is, none of us wish to consciously ‘leave behind’ children in the learning process and we all want our graduates to be well prepared for their future life experiences when they leave school.

While the premise of NCLB was good, the reality of the legislation was that it took numerous compromises to gain passage through the US House of Representatives and the US Senate. The initial legislation established performance benchmarks in math and reading that increased progressively each year. That increase was called Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). When passed, the legislation carried an expectation to ‘revisit’ the proficiency standards and AYP expectations in 2007 to set them at a realistic level.

While the premise of NCLB and AYP was good, Congress failed to revisit the proficiency standards and AYP expectations in 2007. Since Congress failed to follow its mandate of revisiting NCLB, the language in the initial bill indicated that unless the standards were reestablished, they would gradually increase until 2014 when 100 percent of students would be expected to demonstrate proficiency in mathematics and reading. If even one student fails to meet the proficiency standard, the school is labeled as failing AYP. By not meeting AYP for two years in a row, a school is identified as “In Need of Improvement”.

While student scores at Mead have increased over time, we, along with many other schools, were not able to reach the federal expectation of 100 percent proficiency. Listed below is the average percent proficient in Nebraska as well as the percent proficient at Mead from the most recent tests taken in 2014-15

Percent of students reaching Proficiency in	Reading	Mathematics
Mead Public Schools	82%	82%
All Nebraska Schools	80%	72%

For further information on performance of schools in Nebraska, the State of the Schools Reports link is www.education.ne.gov/documents/SOSR.html

While we are pleased that we compare well with other Nebraska schools, the fact is that neither Nebraska as a state nor Mead as a school district have met the federal requirement of 100 percent proficiency for the last three years. The Nebraska Education Commissioner recently shared his concern about this federal expectation and a copy of that letter follows this notification.

Schools that have not met the NCLB requirement of 100 percent proficiency and are labeled as “In Need of Improvement” are required provide notification to parents of that label. The Mead Elementary School is designated as being in Year 2 Title I School Improvement. This is due to the fact that in the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years one of the groups tested in reading at Mead Elementary School did not meet the requirements for

adequate yearly progress (AYP) required by NCLB. The elementary school will remain in Title I School Improvement status until all subgroups are able to meet the goals two years in a row.

In addition to measuring each school, NCLB also requires the Nebraska Department of Education to annually review the progress of each school *district*. Based upon Nebraska state testing results, the Mead School District was identified by the department as a district in need of improvement, Year 1 for the 2015-16 school year. A district is identified for improvement if it meets this criterion: *Does not make AYP in all grade spans within the district- elementary (grades 3-5), middle school (grades 6-8) and high school (grades 9-12) for two consecutive years in either content area of math or reading, considering all eligible student subgroups.* To be removed from the district improvement status, the district must meet the grade span achievement standards for two consecutive years. It is not believed that this is an achievable objective given those standards require 100 percent proficiency in all areas by all students.

The notification of “In Need of Improvement” is expected to address the following components:

- Parents must be offered a choice to take their child to another school in the district if the district has multiple attendance centers. Since Mead does not have multiple attendance centers serving the same grade, this option is not available.
- Actions we are taking to improve include focusing instruction upon those areas of the curriculum tested by the NeSA tests, providing additional learning opportunities through additional teaching strategies and endeavors and working with outside experts to improve learning effectiveness in our schools.
- Parents/Guardians can assist by establishing high expectations for learning with their child/children, supporting the school by helping children realize the value of learning, ensuring regular attendance at school, communicating with your child’s teacher or teachers and helping to see that your child successfully completes homework assignments.
- Offering supplemental educational services to eligible students. (“Eligible” students are those that qualify for Free or Reduced price meals.) A listing of these services may be found at the following Nebraska Department of Education link. A paper copy of these resources is also available in the elementary school office.
www.education.ne.gov/federalprograms/Title_1_Part_A_SIG.html

As a Title I district identified as in need of improvement we are required to communicate the district improvement plan and strategies designed to address the needs of low achieving students. The components of that plan are as follows:

- ✓ Disaggregating data to identify specific sub populations of students that are having difficulty achieving proficiency in the NCLB requirements
- ✓ Small group instruction and targeted instruction in areas where students are not performing at the proficient level measured by NCLB
- ✓ Offering supplemental educational services to eligible students. These providers are on a list that has been approved by the Nebraska Department of Education and represent individuals and organizations that could provide tutoring services for your child. Parents who choose to have their eligible child/children participate in the supplemental educational services are encouraged to contact the school office by December 30 to enroll their child/children for these services. A second window of opportunity for supplemental educational services may also be offered next spring.

Parents who have questions about our schools are encouraged to stop in or call as we would be happy to visit with you about your child’s education.

Sincerely,

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c: letter from Nebraska Commissioner of Education dated September 28, 2015