



Palmer Public School

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November 9, 2015

Dear Parents and Patrons,

The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 mandated that every student, regardless of disabilities, English language proficiency, or other life-impacting circumstances, must be “proficient” on the reading and math state assessment in 2013-14 and every year thereafter. The state goal for 2014-15 was to have 100% of students score above a state-determined cut-score on the NeSA test in both reading and math. Enclosed with this letter, is a letter from Dr. Matthew Blomstedt, Commissioner of the Nebraska Department of Education explaining the Nebraska Department of Education’s stance on the current federal policy.

Because of the status, the school must develop and implement a plan to help the subgroups to meet the goal. The school has developed and submitted a plan to the State Department of Education, which included incorporating instructional strategies based on scientifically based research. The District implemented several changes intended to help raise student achievement. These included implementing a new math curriculum in grades K-6, along with training and resources for all staff to implement the new curriculum; Increasing math instruction time and additional para-educator support in the classroom; Reviewing reading curriculum to determine vertical alignment; Implementing a 90 minute reading block during each class, along with additional para-educator staff for support in the classroom during reading instruction. It is the hope of the district that these changes, with others will help us have more students scoring proficient this year.

If a school does not meet the state goal two years in a row, in the same grade level and same subject, they are identified as “In Need of Improvement.” Palmer Elementary is in year 2 of Title I School Improvement Status. A school can get out of School Improvement Status after all subgroups meet the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals for two consecutive years. The following table illustrates the percent of students who scored above the state’s cut-score in reading and math over the past three years in grades 3-6.

	Reading	Reading	Reading	Math	Math	Math
Grade	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-15	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-15
3	63	60	62	58	80	85
4	63	53	60	54	84	100
5	47	46	38	47	54	67
6	57	75	71	43	40	71

The State of the Schools Report, http://reportcard.education.ne.gov/Default_State.aspx, shows the AYP results for other elementary schools in the state.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act also requires each school identified for Title I School Improvement to offer Public School Choice. Our students do not have another choice of schools within our district and as a result our students do not qualify for Public School Choice. This identification also requires each school to provide Supplemental Educational Services (SES) to eligible students (students who qualify for the free and reduced lunch program). A list of the SES providers can be found at <http://www.education.ne.gov/federalprograms/Documents/Title%20IG%20School%20Improvement/sesproviders%2015-16%20Final.doc> and is also available in the elementary office. Parents who choose to have their children participate in SES are asked to contact the school office by November 30 to enroll. A second enrollment window will be offered later in the school year.

All students benefit greatly from parents being involved in many ways. Asking questions, having students read aloud, and setting aside a time and place for homework are only a few of the things that you can do. Your child's teacher can give you additional strategies to work on at home. Student achievement is a partnership between school and home and a strong partnership has been proven to be effective in helping student achievement.

Our entire staff is working diligently to ensure that every child meets high academic standards in a safe and caring learning environment. Please call Mrs. Loeffelbein or Dr. Bohlken if you have any questions about the AYP status.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Loeffelbein
Elementary Principal

Dr. Bohlken
Superintendent