

March 4, 2005

Dear Parents,

In accordance with the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), states must provide parents of students in districts that are identified for improvement because the district did not make adequate yearly progress. This communication acts as the notification to meet this federal requirement.

The Illinois State Board of Education has asked your superintendent to distribute this letter and data to you. The data identifies why the district did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP). Under the NCLB and state law, for a district to make AYP:

- (i) 40% of the district's students (as a whole, and for certain subgroups) must exceed the state's targets in math and reading on state assessments;
- (ii) 95% of the districts students (as a whole, and for certain subgroups) must participate in state assessments for mathematics and reading;
- (iii) the district's students (as a whole, and for certain subgroups) must meet an 89% attendance rate for grade schools and a 66% graduation rate for high schools.

If the district does not make AYP for two consecutive years, it is deemed to be in "improvement status" and certain state and federal sanctions apply. Two consecutive years meeting AYP criteria are required for a district to be removed from "improvement status".

While AYP is an important measure of student learning, it is important to remember that a district that does not make the AYP should never be considered a "failing" district. Teaching and learning is an ongoing process that changes constantly to meet the unique needs of students and communities. One of the most important goals of NCLB is to identify areas in each district and school where improvement is needed.

As the State Board, we feel it is important for educators, parents and communities to work together to address those areas of need. Parents can assist districts in the improvement process by participating in improvement planning with the district and participating with local school improvement planning. If you are interested in helping your district in the improvement process, please contact your local school principal or superintendent.

Sincerely,
Donna J. Luallen
Division Administrator
Accountability Division