

O'NEILL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Amy Shane, Superintendent

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Dear Parents,

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires all states to create their own high academic standards for what a child should know and be able to do for all grades in reading/language arts and mathematics. Each school and district must improve each year until all students meet these standards. This yearly improvement in school performance is called Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Our state department of education established a minimum percentage of students who must meet or exceed academic proficiency standards on required statewide tests. The elementary grades' goal for the 2010-11 school year was 67% for reading and 51% for math. The goal is that all students will meet or exceed these academic proficiency requirements by the 2013-2014 school year.

NCLB also requires that our state department of education annually review the performance of each district that receives funds under Title I of the NCLB Act. If a school or district's academic performance in any group or sub-group is lower than the state's required level, the school or district will be identified as not making AYP. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) website www.education.ne.gov/ has student achievement data for reading and math. If any group or sub-group does not make AYP in the same subject for two consecutive years, they are designated as Needs Improvement.

During the 2009-2010 and 2010-11 school years, O'Neill Elementary School was identified as not making AYP in the following sub-group(s):

- 3rd – 6th grade special education, reading

O'Neill Elementary was classified as being in need of improvement. The 2011-2012 school year is the first year of the needs improvement cycle. A district with this classification has the responsibility to:

- Inform parents of what the school is doing to address the identified need. The school has implemented a scientifically-based reading curriculum and other interventions for students in need of additional strategies in order to master content. ;
- Reserve at least ten percent of their annual Title I allocation to provide professional development for teachers and administrators. The school has contracted with ERI to provide professional development in the area of reading;



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- Inform parents of what they can do to become involved in their child's education. See ways to become involved listed below;
- Provide technical assistance to schools identified as Title I schools in School Improvement. Technical assistance is being provided by ERI and ESU #8 personnel; and
- Notify parents and patrons about a component called school choice. School choice refers to other public schools in the district. Parents/guardians would have the option of transferring their student to that other public school. Since there is no other public elementary school in O'Neill, this option is not available.

Here are some suggestions to help you work with your school and district to support improvements:

1. Learn more about the new NCLB requirements. Become aware of strategies to improve student academic achievement. Additional information and resources are available from the Nebraska State Department of Education (www.education.ne.gov) and the US Department of Education (www.ed.gov) websites.
2. Talk with school staff about our school's plan to help students meet state standards in reading and mathematics.
3. Support and reinforce your child's good study habits and review their homework and test results.
4. Visit your child's school and volunteer.

Our entire staff is working diligently to ensure that every child meets high academic standards in a safe and caring learning environment. We encourage you to contact our school or district office for further information on any of these requirements and to find out how you can become involved in the district's improvement efforts.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Widner
Elementary Principal

Amy Shane
Superintendent



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