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INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT
Margo Olivares-Seck, Ed.D.

July 15, 2009

Dear Tolleson Union High School District Parent:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that Tolleson Union High School District has been identified for Title I Local Education Agency (LEA) Improvement. The reason for this identification is that, under the Federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) and the State's accountability system, our LEA did not meet "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) for two consecutive years in the same indicator.

AYP is a measure that all states use to determine if schools and districts are meeting the high expectations described in NCLB. The goal, under this system, is that 100% of our students will meet or exceed the Arizona Academic Standards by the 2013-2014 school year. In order to meet that goal, schools and districts must meet certain objectives each year.

Recently, we received a report on AYP for all schools and districts in Arizona. The report reviews each indicator and gives a simple *yes* or *no* grade, based on the percentage of students that are meeting or exceeding the Arizona Academic Standards on the AIMS test. In addition, schools and LEAs must meet the additional indicators of percent tested and graduation rate percentage.

Another item to mention is that the data is calculated for all students as well as the following subgroups of students: racial and ethnic groups, English Language Learners (ELL), students with disabilities (SPED), and economically disadvantaged students. If one of these groups does not meet an indicator at the 10th grade level, the LEA will not have made AYP. (Note: only groups larger than 40 are counted.) For the 2008-2009 school year, the only subgroup of students failing to achieve the required test objective/proficiency level were students with disabilities for the AIMS Reading test. **All subgroups met the additional indicators of percent tested and graduation rate (84.3% in 2008) percentage.**

Although students with disabilities continue to make academic progress, there is a percentage of our students whose disability is so significant that the expectation for them to pass a high school level assessment is not reasonable or in most instances, not possible. Unfortunately, the method of calculating annual yearly progress does not take that into consideration. Our students with disabilities are given academic support and enriched curriculum, and our staff participates in ongoing staff development with the goal of increasing student achievement for these students. Our district has a positive image in the community for the broad spectrum of services that we offer and how we promote positive transitions after high school. Tolleson Union High School District's high graduation rate and low dropout rate for students with disabilities far exceeds the State's expectations. The majority of our students with disabilities go on to appropriate day programs, full-time employment, or continuing education after high school.

Table 1: AYP Determination Received by TUHSD

District AYP Determination <i>Grade 10 only</i>	Met Percent Tested?	Yes
	Met Test Objectives Reading?	No – SPED Subgroup
	Met Test Objective Math?	Yes
	Met Graduation Rate?	Yes
	Made AYP?	No

Table 2: Comparison of TUHSD Students' Reading and Math Proficiency Levels to Arizona Schools

Grade	TUHSD		Arizona Schools	
	Proficient in Math	Proficient in Reading	Proficient in Math	Proficient in Reading
10	70%	71%	70%	74%

A similar determination was made for all schools within Tolleson Union High School District. Once the schools' AYP determinations were calculated, all of the data was then combined to determine the LEA's AYP. The LEA's AYP determination includes students that moved from one school to another within the LEA; whereas, the school determination does not include these mobile students.

As a parent, you are a very important part of the educational process. In addition to the assistance and nurturing you give to your child, you can participate in upgrading the quality of education within the Tolleson Union High School District. Your efforts will help your child's school and LEA to make AYP. You may want to get involved by:

- Reviewing your child's homework and test results;
- Supporting and reinforcing your child's good study habits;
- Becoming a member of your school's site council;
- Attending Governing Board meetings and giving input at appropriate times;
- Serving on a school or LEA committee; and
- Coming to parent-school meetings on student achievement.

For more information about AYP, please see the attached Frequently Asked Questions page or visit the Arizona Department of Education's website at www.ade.az.gov/azlearns and go to the NCLB link. You can also call our District Office at 623-478-4000 to find out how we are addressing AYP concerns and how you can become involved in increasing academic achievement at each of our schools.

Sincerely,



Margo Olivares-Seck, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent

MS/trw

Attachment

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the No Child Left Behind Act?

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) signed into law by President Bush on January 8, 2002. NCLB is the central federal law for elementary and secondary education. The ESEA, which was first enacted in 1965, encompasses Title I, the federal government's primary aid program for disadvantaged students.

2. What is Adequate Yearly Progress?

Adequate yearly progress (AYP) is the measure by which schools, districts, and states are held accountable for student performance under Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

Here is how AYP works. NCLB requires states to use a single accountability system for all public schools to determine whether students as a whole, as well as subgroups of students (i.e., racial and ethnic groups, English language learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students), are making progress toward meeting state academic standards. The law also requires that all students reach a "proficient" level of achievement, as measured by their performance on state tests, by the spring of 2014. In Arizona, students that meet or exceed the standards on the AIMS test are considered "proficient." Along the way, schools, districts, and states must demonstrate that all of their students are making continuous and consistent progress toward meeting that goal in public elementary and secondary schools (not just schools receiving Title I funds). This interim progress is what is known as adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward the goal of all students reaching academic standards.

According to the law, states have the flexibility to define this yearly progress but it must include the following elements:

- **Met Percent Tested?**

To make AYP, at least 95 percent of students in each of the four subgroups, as well as 95 percent of students in schools and districts as a whole, must take the AIMS test.

- **Met Test Objectives?**

To make AYP, the percentage of students as a whole, as well as in each of the four subgroups, must meet or exceed the annual measurable objectives set for that year for each subject and grade.

- **Met Graduation Rate?**

To make AYP, districts and high schools must have a four-year graduation rate of 70.5% and above or make at least a 1% gain from the previous year.

3. What is District (LEA) Improvement?

LEA Improvement is an identification given to a Title I LEA if they fail to make AYP for two consecutive years in the same indicator and across all grade spans. (Note: the assessed subjects are mathematics and reading. Each subject is assessed separately; however, each subject requirement includes meeting the required percent tested in the subject and meeting the subject AMO. Failing to meet either percent tested or AMO within a subject results in the subject indicator not being met.)

NCLB specifies a number of consequences for districts identified for improvement. The first step is to notify parents of students who attend a school in a district in need of improvement and provide assistance to the district identified. Additional sanctions are added if a district identified for improvement continues to fail to make AYP for several years.