

Keokuk Community School District

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TO: Hawthorne Elementary School Parents

SUBJECT: Notice of Adequate Yearly Progress and School Choice Options

Many of you are aware of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which requires schools to assess students annually and to meet student achievement goals. If a school does not meet those assessment and achievement goals (termed “adequate yearly progress” or AYP) for two consecutive years, and if the school receives federal Title I funds, then it is placed on a federal “Schools in Need of Assistance (SINA)” list and subjected to federal sanctions. Schools or districts are cited if they a) don’t meet 95% participation rate for assessments, b) don’t meet student achievement goals, or c) don’t meet attendance rate for elementary and middle schools or graduation rate for high school.

I am writing to inform you that Hawthorne Elementary School has been designated as a “School in Need of Assistance,” or SINA, under these federal guidelines because a portion of our students DID NOT REACH PROFICIENCY GOALS ON THEIR MATHEMATICS TESTS, for two consecutive years. As a result, our district is required by law to offer your student the opportunity for school choice to another school within the district that has not been designated as a school in need of assistance, if possible, for the 2015-2016 school year.

Please know that the SINA designation refers to federal criteria. We remain a fully accredited school in complete compliance with State of Iowa regulations.

WHY Hawthorne Elementary School DIDN'T MAKE AYP:

Schools don't make AYP when they don't achieve one of the measures listed above: a) 95% participation rate for assessments, b) student achievement goals, or c) 95% attendance rate for elementary and middle schools or 90% graduation rate for high school. Hawthorne Elementary School is listed because not enough students met their goals in the following areas:

- Grade level, subject area, proficiency percentage, and state target
- 4th grade, math, 60% (64% was the state AYP goal)
- 11th grade, math, 90% participation (95% required)
- One or more subgroups did not meet their target
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You'll note that some of the improvement areas relate specifically to instruction, such as reading or math, and some relate to test participation. That is because we are required to test 95% of our students. If we fall below that mark, we automatically are cited by the federal law, regardless of how well the students performed on the test.

Under the NCLB law, only schools receiving federal Title I funding must offer school choice options, if available.

HOW HAWTHORNE ELEMENTARY WILL IMPROVE:

Although we have many indicators that show Hawthorne Elementary School is offering a top-quality education, we know that continuous improvement is important to ensure all of our students are reaching their highest potential. Using data about the students and their achievement, our staff already has begun to identify areas for improvement. For example:

- Continued implementation of GO Math curriculum via Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
- Targeted, research based professional development focused on:
 - Gradual Release of Responsibility D. Fisher N. Frey
 - Professional Learning Communities
 - Common Formative Assessment (K-5)
 - Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) via Great Prairie Area Education Agency

- Hawthorne Elementary School Goal: We will increase the average percent that met the projected growth in the areas of Math and Reading by 10%.
- Targeted, research based professional development focused on:
 - Gradual Release of Responsibility D. Fisher N. Frey
 - Professional Learning Communities
 - Common Formative Assessment
 - Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Some student groups may require additional instructional interventions, pending a review of our current programs and services. In addition, the Iowa Department of Education and Keokuk Community School district already have begun providing technical assistance to Hawthorne Elementary School as required by the NCLB law.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP:

Parent support is essential to help your student reach his or her highest academic success, but parents may need ideas about the best way to be involved. A few suggestions include:

- Communicate regularly with your child's teachers about overall goals for the year and your child's progress toward those goals.
- Make sure your child attends school regularly. Attendance is important at every grade level. When your child must be absent, please talk with the teacher to coordinate make-up work and assignments.
- Help your child with his or her homework. If you are unable to help, contact the school to request a tutor.
- Volunteer at the school. Every teacher needs volunteers to help in the classroom, or even with projects that can be done in your home. Other areas in the school, such as the office or cafeteria, also need volunteers.

HOW TO REQUEST A SCHOOL CHOICE:

UNFORUNATELY, OUR SCHOOLS ARE NOT ABLE TO PROVIDE SCHOOL CHOICES BECAUSE THERE ARE NO SCHOOLS AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS TO ATTEND.

As parents, you can be assured your students continue to receive a high quality education at Hawthorne Elementary School. The assessment results cited by NCLB are one useful measurement for us, but we also have many other indicators to demonstrate that our students' achievement. You'll note from our school report card at www.keokukschools.org that each class at Hawthorne Elementary School has a number of success stories.

We are very proud of our students and of the education they receive from the staff at Hawthorne Elementary School. We also are committed to continuous improvement, and so will continue to seek new data and make any changes necessary to benefit student learning. We appreciate and depend on your ongoing support and assistance, and welcome your suggestions.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Negus
Hawthorne Elementary Principal

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