

# ARLINGTON

## Public Schools

*Educating all students, preparing and inspiring them to achieve their full potential.*

August 12, 2014

Dear Arlington School District Families:

Welcome to the upcoming school year! As always, we are looking forward to the return of staff and students this September. This letter is an opportunity for us to communicate with our families about our academic progress.

Our focus remains on our Strategic Plan goal of ensuring all students graduate prepared for future education and employment by using research-based, aligned curriculum and involve students and families as participants in the learning process. Arlington Public Schools continues to make great progress in student achievement – our schools have been recognized 11 times in the past six years for academic excellence!

Washington State's Education Flexibility Request (ESEA Waiver) that was first approved by the United States Department of Education in 2012 was not renewed on April 24, 2014. This action requires the State to return to determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for school districts and presents us with some challenges in how we clearly communicate with our community on this important topic.

In the following pages we will do our best to communicate with you about the impact of returning to AYP in three sections within this letter:

1. Facts About Returning To AYP
2. Implications for Arlington School District
3. Implications for Students in Title I Schools

We also invite you to a community ***State and Federal Accountability Information Night at 6:00 p.m. on September 15 at Eagle Creek Elementary School.*** We feel strongly that an opportunity to hear about these changes and ask questions will provide the best communication for our community.

### **Facts About Returning to AYP**

- The ESEA/No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 required all states to create their own high academic standards for what a child should know and be able to do for all grades in English-Language Arts (ELA-Reading) and Mathematics. This yearly improvement in school performance, which includes the academic standards and other components, is called Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).
- ESEA/NCLB also requires the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to annually review the performance of each local school. A district receiving Title I, Part A, funds is identified as a district in improvement if it does not meet AYP goals for two consecutive years within specific areas, focused primarily on academic achievement in English Language Arts-Reading and Mathematics.
- As you may know, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires that all students meet proficiency on state standards in reading and math by 2014. The state of Washington no longer has a flexibility waiver from the Federal government. That means that all of our students – 100 percent – must be “proficient” by 2014 to meet the requirements of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).
- ESEA/NCLB requires OSPI to inform parents/guardians of students about district performance. Nearly 100 percent of districts in our state have been identified as districts in improvement, including Arlington. The district did not meet AYP for two consecutive years in reading/mathematics/graduation rates in the district's elementary, middle and high schools. You can find specific AYP data used to make this decision

at <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/summary.aspx?year=2012-13>. If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact Andrea Conley, Public Information Coordinator, at 360.618.6217 and a hard copy of the report will be provided.

### **Implications for Arlington School District**

As a Title I, Part A district "in improvement", we are required to institute the following:

- Write an addendum to our District Improvement Plan. We must consult with parents and school staff when writing the District Improvement Plan Addendum, which will include information on how we plan to use Title I and other funds to improve student achievement. We will post the approved District Improvement Plan on our web site at <http://www.asd.wednet.edu> or you can request a paper copy by contacting Andrea Conley at 360.618.6217.
- Reserve at least ten percent of our annual Title I allocation to provide professional development for teachers and administrators.
- Continue to provide assistance to schools identified in Step 1-5 of school improvement.

### **Implications for Students in Title I Schools**

Schools that receive Title I, Part A funds are required to notify families if the school has not met AYP for two consecutive years in reading or math. Title I, Part A funds help schools with higher numbers of low-income students meet their educational needs. A letter from the principal of your child's school, *Implications for Students in Title I Schools*, will be included with this letter if your child attends a school receiving Title I funds.

How can parents help their school and district improve? Here are some suggestions to help you work with your school and district to support improvement:

- Learn more about the NCLB requirements and become aware of strategies to improve student academic achievement. Additional information and resources are available at the following websites:
  - Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction: [www.k12.wa.us](http://www.k12.wa.us)
  - Washington State School Report Card: <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/summary.aspx?year=2012-13>
  - Adequate Yearly Progress: [www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/AYP/default.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/AYP/default.aspx)
  - The U.S. Department of Education: [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) and [www.ed.gov/parents/landing.jhtml](http://www.ed.gov/parents/landing.jhtml)
- Attend our State and Federal Accountability Information Night on September 15 at 6:00 p.m. at Eagle Creek Elementary School, 1216 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Talk with district staff about the District Improvement Plan and the program changes that must be made to help students meet the state standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- Visit your child's school. You also may participate in voluntary activities to assist your school.
- If you are a parent of a student who attends a Title I, Part A school in improvement (Step 1-5), ask about school choice options to transfer your child, with paid transportation, to a public school that is not identified as a Program Improvement School.
- If you are a parent of a student who attends a Title I, Part A school that is in Step 2-5 of school improvement, ask about supplemental education services (SES) that may be available for your child. Supplemental educational services are free tutoring services provided outside of the regular school day for eligible students.

Students attending Weston High School and Stillaguamish Valley School will be receiving an enclosed letter with this notice regarding their state status based on criteria set by the State Board of Education. Weston High School

is classified as a Focus school due to their graduation rate and Stillaguamish Valley School is a Priority school due to reading and math proficiencies being less than 40%.

Your child's academic success is much more than the score on a state assessment and as a district we are committed to continuing to provide high quality instruction that meets the needs of all students.

Sincerely,

Dr. E. Kristine McDuffy  
Superintendent