

Focus School Letter

August 12, 2014

Dear Weston High School Parent/Guardian:

We hope this letter finds your student(s) enjoying the summer and excited for the new school year. The purposes of this letter are several. First, I want to notify you that your school, Weston High School, continues to be identified as a Focus school based on an analysis of graduation rate as compared with other schools in our state. This analysis identified that our school has not met our goals or expectations over the past three years in the area of graduation rate.

Additionally, the school has been designated a Required Action School by the State Board of Education and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction due to the school's lack of progress over the same period of time.

Finally, an equally important purpose of this letter is to reaffirm our commitment to the success of ALL students and to inform you that we are continuing to improve.

To increase learning outcomes for all of our students, we have taken or will take the following action steps over the next few months:

- Engaged in a needs assessment ("academic performance audit") to identify the potential reasons for the school's low performance and lack of progress.
- Identify next steps we will take to improve learning outcomes for our students, by completing our district-required action plan and school improvement plan. The plans address the findings of the needs assessment, identify the state-approved intervention model our school will implement, and outline the steps our district and school will take to turnaround the school's performance.
- Submit the plans to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction for review and to the State Board of Education for approval.
- Re-open or negotiate an addendum to the collective bargaining agreements with the teacher union and other unions that are necessary to support the plans.
- Engage parents/guardians and our school community in our improvement efforts.

During the 2014-15 school year, we will implement our plans, examine a variety of data to ensure we are making progress, and regularly report our progress to the State Board of Education. We will also be posting updated information on the district website at www.asd.wednet.edu in Teaching & Learning.

Attached is a brief description of the basis for the school's identification as a Focus school and the district for required action.

More details about the movement of our state, district, and school in pursuit of ongoing improvement for all our students can be found at: <http://www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/default.aspx>. More information about the required action district process is available at <http://k12.wa.us/StudentAndSchoolSuccess/RequiredActionDistricts.aspx>.

We will be holding a **State and Federal Accountability Information Night at 6:00 p.m. on September 15 at Eagle Creek Elementary School**. Please feel free to contact Diane Kirchner-Scott, Assistant Superintendent, at 360.618.6228 if you have any questions.

We are committed to continued growth as we work together to support our most valuable resource, our children. Thank you for your continued partnership with us in improving our school system to support your child's learning.

Sincerely,

Amie Verellen-Grubbs
Principal

Enclosure: Overview of Focus and Priority Schools Identified

Overview

Priority and Focus Schools Identified for 2014–15

Identification of Schools

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in collaboration with the State Board of Education (SBE), identified a total of 288 schools for accountability and support based on three years of data in either reading/mathematics (combined) or graduation rates. Descriptions for categories of schools follow:

- **Priority Schools:** Bottom 5% of schools based on the performance of all of their students in reading/mathematics (combined) or secondary schools based on graduation rates; includes Priority schools continuing forward from 2013–14 into 2014–15.
- **Focus Schools:** Bottom 10% of schools based on the performance of their subgroups in reading/mathematics (combined) or graduation rates; includes Focus schools continuing forward from 2013–14 into 2014–15.

Requirements

Districts assure OSPI that their Priority and Focus schools will:

- Engage in a Needs Assessment to identify factors contributing to persistent low achievement.
- Implement research-based practices to turn around low performance; these are referred to as *turnaround principles* in federal guidelines.
- Implement meaningful interventions aligned with unique needs of school and identified subgroups.
- Design “Student and School Success Action Plan;” address findings from Needs Assessment; align plan with *turnaround principles*; submit plan to OSPI for review by October 30, 2014.
- Implement action plan; monitor progress toward intended goals; revise plans as needed.
- Engage in professional development aligned with the action plan.

Supports and Services

The Office of Student and School Success provides a variety of services to support Priority and Focus school leadership teams to design and implement their action plan. These include:

- Leadership Coach providing technical assistance, monitoring, and coaching support.
- Needs Assessment for newly identified Priority and Focus schools.
- Comprehensive data packages with data disaggregated by subgroup.
- OSPI review of the school’s action plan.
- Access to professional development and services offered by OSPI and regional Educational Service Districts.
- Minimal funding to support engagement in professional development and services aligned with the school’s action plan.