

October 29, 2008

Dear Families:

Federal Way Public Schools takes pride in our efforts to meet the needs of all students. A variety of programs, interventions, and teaching techniques provide avenues through which our dedicated staff strive to reach all children. There is much of which to be proud in the results of this focused and passionate work.

However, with the announcement of WASL scores this past August, our district joins many other districts in the state and many thousands more across the country that have been designated as a District "in improvement." A school or district is categorized as "in improvement" when its student test scores in 37 separate categories have not improved at the level required by the federal government for two consecutive years.

These categories were set out in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001, also known as "No Child Left Behind" or NCLB. Meeting these goals is referred to as making "Adequate Yearly Progress" or AYP. Student scores on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) are used to calculate AYP in Washington State.

FWPS did not make AYP as a district in the following areas:

Elementary:

- Black students in math
- Hispanic students in reading and math
- English Language Learners in reading
- Special education students in reading and math
- Low-income students in reading and math

Middle School:

- All students in math
- Black students in math
- Hispanic students in reading and math
- English Language Learners in reading and math
- Special education students in reading and math
- Low-income students in reading and math

High School:

- All students in math
- Low-income students in math

Because FWPS is "in improvement" we are required to create a district improvement plan by June 2009 that will address all of these areas and lead a greater number of our students to meet or exceed standards. FWPS has established a committee, led by Jason Smith, Principal of Adelaide Elementary, and comprised of administrators, teachers, parents, and community members to create a district improvement plan that will assist our schools, teachers, and students in meeting and exceeding standard in math and reading. We must reserve at least ten percent (10%) of our annual Federal Title I allocation to provide focused, professional development for teachers and administrators in the areas where we have not met the target. This requirement aligns with our overall focus on professional development, influenced in part by the findings from an international report, the McKinsey Report, which can be summed up in a single statement: "The quality of a school system rests on the quality of its teachers." (For more information please see: http://www.mckinsey.com/client-service/socialsector/resources/pdf/Worlds_School_Systems_Final.pdf).

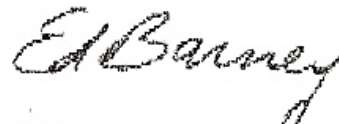
We continue to be committed to the success of each student in our district and are focused on raising each student's academic performance. This clear focus on ALL children will not change. We will continue to believe that ALL students can achieve. We continue to be grateful for and honor the parents who send us their best child every day.

Please contact your student's school or Jason Smith (AYP Committee Director), 253-945-2333, jasmith@fwps.org, or Joshua Garcia (Executive Director, Teaching for Learning), 253-945-2184, jgarcia@fwps.org, with questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,



Thomas R. Murphy
Superintendent



Ed Barney
President, Board of Education