

August 3, 2011

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The goal of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of 2001 is to ensure that all children in this country receive a quality education. Under NCLB, each state is required to assess all school districts to determine if the district has made adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward meeting the academic testing standards and additional measures set by the state. Adequate yearly progress decisions are based on the results of state testing in the following areas: communication arts, math, attendance rate and graduation rate. If a district has not met AYP for two consecutive years in any one of the above areas, it is considered "in need of improvement."

The proficiency target measure increases annually, with the final goal of **100%** of our students being proficient by the year 2014. Based on the preliminary results of the 2010-2011 academic testing in communication arts, math and the school's attendance rate or graduation rate, the Billings R-IV School District did not make adequate yearly progress for the following reasons:

The state achievement target for communication arts increased from 67.4% last year to 75.5% for the 2010-2011 school year. This target was met in 2 of 3 groups in the elementary, but not met in any of 3 groups in the high school. However, the state achievement target for mathematics increased from 63.3% last year to 72.5% for the 2010-2011 school year and was met and exceeded in elementary with a 73.2%, but was not met at the high school level. The additional indicators of attendance rate and graduation rate were met.

Many of our neighboring and conference schools are in the same situation or worse, with these increasing proficiency targets. Because of this designation, the district is considered to be in Level 1 of School Improvement in the elementary and Non Title School Improvement Year 2 in the high school. We are required to create a plan for improvement in each building. We will be asking parents to assist us in the development and implementation of this plan.

According to NCLB, schools in school improvement must provide a school choice option when available. Districts do not have the option of transfer if there are no schools with the same grade level available in the district or no school with the same grade level making Adequate Yearly Progress. The Billings District, like our rural neighbors, has only one school available in the district and cannot offer public school choice.

Although we did not meet the increase requirement in communication arts, I am proud that our elementary students moved from 55.9% to 66.1% proficient this year in communication arts, and moved from 66.2% to 73.2% in mathematics, exceeding the target. I appreciate the approved purchase of new text books in communication arts and mathematics that our local board provided in the past two years. I also appreciate the dedication of our faculty and their continual participation in professional development training on Fridays, for the purpose of improving their teaching strategies and working on curriculum.

Our goal is to provide an outstanding educational experience for our students at Billings School. You can help us by increasing your understanding of the assessment, visiting our school, stressing the importance of good attendance and persistence to graduation, and engaging in reading and math strategies, with escalating targets. As these proficiency target levels increase approaching the year 2014, we will continue to strive for improvement!

Additional information about *No Child Left Behind* and what parents can do to improve student achievement may be found at <http://www.ed.gov/parents/landing/jhtml>. If you have any questions, feel free to call me at 744-2623, or stop by the office. I am excited to get the 2011-2012 school year started, and I am looking forward to serving you and your children! As always, I thank you for your continual support of our school!

Sincerely,

Cynthia G. Brandt, Superintendent

*Distinction in Performance-2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010*