

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ

Dear Parent,

In 2002 Congress enacted the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that would be labeled the “No Child Left Behind” Act or NCLB. Anticipating the federal government would enact accountability legislation for schools the State of Indiana enacted legislation in 1999. Presently both the federal law and the state law contain very similar provisions directing what will happen when schools fail to make “Adequate Yearly Progress”.

Indiana elected to implement the laws through the administration of the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP) program. The federal and state laws work together to define which schools make adequate yearly progress. This determination is quite complicated. A brief explanation is that a certain percentage of all students and all subgroups of students are required to pass the ISTEP examination each year. Subgroups are based upon economic background, race/ethnicity, limited English proficiency, and special education. In the Lafayette School Corporation we have schools with as many as 29 different subgroups. Each subgroup must make adequate yearly progress or the school and the school corporation fail to make adequate yearly progress. The percentage required to pass each portion of the ISTEP is listed below.

	Language Arts	Mathematics
2008-09	72.6%	71.5%
2009-10	72.6%	71.5%
2010-11	79.5%	78.7%
2011-12	86.4%	85.9%
2012-13	93.3%	93.1%
2013-14	100%	100%

Additional requirements include ensuring at least 95% of all students and all subgroups are tested and have attendance and graduation rates of at least 95%.

Miller Elementary School has 19 subgroups and has not made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). This year in the State of Indiana 44% of all elementary schools, 57% of all middle schools, and 64% of all high schools failed to make adequate yearly progress. Schools with higher numbers of student subgroups comprised of free and reduced lunch, minority, limited English proficiency, and special education were far more likely to fail to make AYP and find themselves in the circumstance of being required to go through restructuring earlier than other schools.

Miller is now at the point in the AYP process which requires the school corporation to consider restructuring the school under the federal law. State officials have indicated beginning with the 2010/2011 school year our local board of school trustees must implement one of four restructuring options. One option is to replace the staff at Miller. There are legal restrictions that may eliminate this option. The second option is to close the school and reopen it as a charter. However this move requires 60% of the teachers and 51% of the parents sign a petition indicating they want the school to operate as a charter school as well as having an entity step forward willing to take financial responsibility for operating the school and creating a working board of governance. If this option were pursued, there is also the question as to what would happen to the staff presently in the building. The third option is hire a professional management company with a proven track record of performance in turning around “failing” schools to manage the school. There are no companies with a proven track record of turning around “failing” schools. Further, nothing in the law describes how resources are to be allocated for the school. Lastly, the corporation may be required to lay off any number of new employees employed at different schools in the district to enable the private management company to hire their own teachers. The fourth option is to close the school. There is no appeal process.

As you can readily appreciate the choices are difficult. In 2005 a corporation task force made recommendations that were subsequently adopted by the school board regarding school closings and new school boundaries. Since these boundaries were established changes in enrollments and the federal and state mandates outlined above have made it necessary to reconsider the board’s previous actions regarding school closings, elementary attendance boundaries, and the choices provided to parents. The board of school trustees will be working through the summer months to establish a new plan to satisfy state and federal laws. This plan will undoubtedly impact the final elementary attendance areas. We understand the information and decisions generated by the school board’s deliberations are important. We will communicate the information to parents and staff as soon as possible next school year in order to allow everyone as much time as possible to plan for the 2010-11 school year. You are encouraged to attend board meetings as well as write board members and school officials with your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions.