



Steve Price, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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August 2011

Dear Hazelwood School District Parent/Guardian:

We have had a very busy and productive summer. Hundreds of staff members have been involved throughout the summer in a number of professional development opportunities focused on ways to improve the academic achievement of our students.

We recently received our Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) and End-of-Course (EOC) test scores. There are four levels of achievement on the test – Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced. The higher the number of students performing in the proficient and advanced categories, the higher the MAP Performance Index (MPI) score. A perfect MPI score is 900.

For the 2010-11 school year, HSD elementary students in grades 3-5 posted increases (in the amount of students proficient/advanced) between 2009-10 and 2010-11 on the math and communication arts MAP tests. Seven elementary schools improved their MPI score by 20 or more in at least one grade level in communication arts. Seven elementary schools improved their MPI score by 20 or more in at least one grade level in math. In fifth grade science, HSD students increased the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced by more than six percent, while students at the state level increased by almost two percent.

In seventh grade communication arts, HSD students increased the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced by more than seven percent, while students at the state level increased by two percent. In seventh grade math, HSD students increased the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced by almost four percent, while students at the state level increased by 1.2 percent. At the high school level, gains were posted in Algebra I, English II and Biology I.

Despite the improvement, HSD has been named “in improvement” under the regulations of the federal legislation, *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*, for not meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP). Almost all of Missouri’s 561 districts failed to meet the rising federal NCLB standards.

AYP is a simple pass or fail grade based on a complex set of 45 different measurements. To make AYP, each school and each district must meet the annual standard in mathematics and in communication arts, in each sub-group, and in each grade level. Sub-groups of students, according to NCLB, are identified according to race/ethnicity, students learning English, students receiving free or reduced lunch, and students receiving special education services. In addition, 95 percent of each sub-group must take the test or the scores do not count. If all sub-groups do not achieve proficiency at the specified levels, then the school, or the district itself, does not meet AYP.

So why are so many districts in Missouri not meeting AYP? Part of the reason is that the law itself is flawed. While the stated intention of NCLB is for every child to be proficient in reading and math by the year 2014, the fact is that no plan that requires every child to progress at the same speed toward the same goal using only one method of assessing progress can possibly succeed. Some argue that the law was designed to make all public schools “fail” rather than help all children succeed. AYP is an all-or-nothing proposition, but student achievement is not. Academic success is measured in many ways, including classroom tests, teacher observations, report cards, homework and standardized tests.

As we start a new school year, I want to assure you that we will continue the fine programs that are a tradition in Hazelwood. We are all aware that we have outstanding teachers, principals and support staff who care about the well-being and academic achievement of all students. Our state achievement scores show that we continue to see improvement in student performance. We have a plan for improvement and that plan is working.

As the reports are released and media coverage about districts “in improvement” and NCLB continues, I urge you to examine the results and look closely at the progress our schools are making. Most importantly, I encourage you to join me in addressing our challenges and applauding the great work student and staff are doing in our classrooms throughout the district. Furthermore, if you find NCLB troublesome and would like to make a comment, I would encourage you to contact Senators Blunt or McCaskill or Representative Clay to express your opinion. The contact information is:

Representative William “Lacy” Clay

Website: lacyclay.house.gov

St. Louis County Office:

8021 West Florissant Ave., Suite F

St. Louis, MO 63136

Phone: (314) 383-5240

Fax: (314) 383- 8020

Senator Roy Blunt

Website: blunt.senate.gov

St. Louis Office:

7700 Bonhomme #315

Clayton, MO 63105

Phone: (314) 725-4484

Fax: (314) 727-3548

Senator Claire McCaskill

Website: mccaskill.senate.gov

St. Louis Office:

5850 Delmar Blvd., Suite A

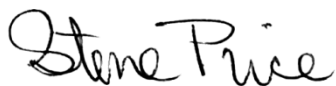
St. Louis, MO 63112

Phone: (314) 367-1364

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I welcome your comments, suggestions and involvement in our schools. Before closing, I want to remind you to sign up for HSD E-Mail Extra to receive the latest information about our schools. Go to www.hazelwoodschoools.org to sign up.

Sincerely,



Steve Price, Ed.D.
Superintendent