

Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton Schools

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DATE: September 25, 2015

TO: Exira-EHK Parents

SUBJECT: Notice of Adequate Yearly Progress and School Choice Options

Many of you are aware of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which requires schools to assess students annually and to meet student achievement goals. If a school does not meet those assessment and achievement goals (termed "adequate yearly progress" or AYP) for two consecutive years, and if the school receives federal Title I funds, then it is placed on a federal "Schools in Need of Assistance (SINA)" list and subjected to federal sanctions. Schools or districts are cited if they a) don't meet 95% participation rate for assessments, b) don't meet student achievement goals, or c) don't meet attendance rate for elementary and middle schools or graduation rate for high school.

I am writing to inform you that Exira-EHK has been designated as a "School in Need of Assistance," or SINA, under these federal guidelines because a portion of our students DID NOT REACH PROFICIENCY GOALS ON THEIR READING at the high school AND MATHMATICS TESTS in the middle school for two consecutive years.

Please know that the SINA designation refers to federal criteria. We remain a fully accredited school in complete compliance with State of Iowa regulations.

WHY Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton CSD DIDN'T MAKE AYP:

Schools don't make AYP when they don't achieve one of the measures listed above: a) 95% participation rate for assessments, b) student achievement goals, or c) 95% attendance rate for elementary and middle schools or 90% graduation rate for high school. Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton CSD is listed because not enough students met their goals in the following areas:

- ☒ Grade level, subject area, proficiency percentage, and state target
- ☒ 4th grade, math, 60% (64% was the state AYP goal)
- ☒ 11th grade, math, 90% participation (95% required)
- ☒ One or more subgroups did not meet their target

You'll note that some of the improvement areas relate specifically to instruction, such as reading or math, and some relate to test participation. That is because we are required to test 95% of our students. If we fall below that mark, we automatically are cited by the federal law, regardless of how well the students performed on the test.

Under the NCLB law, only schools receiving federal Title I funding must offer school choice options, if available.

HOW Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton CSD WILL IMPROVE:

Although we have many indicators that show (Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton CSD) is offering a top-quality education, we know that continuous improvement is important to ensure all of our students are reaching their highest potential. Using data about the students and their achievement, our staff already has begun to identify areas for improvement. For example:

- PK-8 reading teachers are identifying struggling readers and are grouping them by the area in reading where they struggle. These students are placed then in groups to work on that skill (ex. fluency and comprehension). When fully implemented all students will be working in a group in an area of individualized need. This process is a program the State of Iowa is encouraging school districts to start called Multiple Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- The staff will be participating in professional development to give the teachers the opportunity to learn strategies to increase engagement during core instruction and how to implement interventions for students that need more intense instruction.

Some student groups may require additional instructional interventions, pending a review of our current programs and services. In addition, the Iowa Department of Education and Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton CSD district already have begun providing technical assistance to Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton CSD as required by the NCLB law.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP:

Parent support is essential to help your student reach his or her highest academic success, but parents may need ideas about the best way to be involved. A few suggestions include:

- ☑ Communicate regularly with your child's teachers about overall goals for the year and your child's progress toward those goals.
- ☑ Make sure your child attends school regularly. Attendance is important at every grade level.
When your child must be absent, please talk with the teacher to coordinate make-up work and assignments.
- ☑ Help your child with his or her homework. If you are unable to help, contact the school to request a tutor.
- ☑ Volunteer at the school. Every teacher needs volunteers to help in the classroom, or even with projects that can be done in your home. Other areas in the school, such as the office or cafeteria, also need volunteers.

HOW TO REQUEST A SCHOOL CHOICE:

Unfortunately, our school is unable to provide another school choice because there are no other schools available for students to attend in our district.

As parents, you can be assured your students continue to receive a high quality education at Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton CSD. The assessment results cited by NCLB are one useful measurement for us, but we also have many other indicators to demonstrate that our students' achievement. You'll note from our school report card at www.exira-ehk.k12.ia.us, that each class at Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton CSD has a number of success stories. For instance:

- Our students show continuous growth at grade level even though it is not as fast as the state growth; our students have an Average Daily Attendance Rate of 96%, with a graduation rate of 98%.
- A number of our teachers have their Master's Degree while others are working on high education goals.

We are very proud of our students and of the education they receive from the staff at Exira-Elk Horn-Kimballton CSD. We also are committed to continuous improvement, and so will continue to seek

new data and make any changes necessary to benefit student learning. We appreciate and depend on your ongoing support and assistance, and welcome your suggestions.

Sincerely,

Mr. Schnoes, Superintendent/HS Principal

Mr. Humphrey, MS Principal