



USD 497 NEWS

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USD 497 Celebrates Achievement Growth, Focuses on Continuous Improvement

Adequate Yearly Progress or AYP is the federal government's method for determining the progress of schools, school districts, and states in meeting the No Child Left Behind Act's goal of having 100% of students proficient in reading and math by 2014. The Kansas State Department of Education will release its list of Title I schools/districts designated as "On Improvement" on August 10 and preliminary state assessment data on September 14.

To meet AYP, schools and school districts must reach annual targets for performance on the state reading and math assessments for all students in grades 3 through 8, and one time in high school, as well as goals for attendance, participation, and graduation rates. AYP performance targets, which rise each year, must be met not only by the "All Students" population of a school and school district, but also by subgroups of students. A subgroup is any group of 30 or more students that can be identified by characteristics related to ethnicity, income level, English proficiency or special needs.

There are 20 identified subgroups in the Lawrence Public Schools that must meet AYP targets: ten each in reading and in mathematics: All Students, Students Qualifying for Free or Reduced-Price Lunches, Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, White Students, African-American Students, Hispanic Students, Asian Students, American-Indian Students and Multi-Ethnic Students.

Preliminary Assessment Data

The 2009-10 preliminary assessment data for Lawrence Public Schools, to be shared with the Lawrence Board of Education on August 9, show that the following 14 schools met all the requirements for AYP in both reading and mathematics: Broken Arrow, Deerfield, Hillcrest, Langston Hughes, New York, Prairie Park, Quail Run, Sunflower, Sunset Hill, Wakarusa Valley, Woodlawn, Southwest Junior High, West Junior High and Free State High.

Lawrence Public Schools have much to celebrate! Seventeen of the district's 22 schools maintained or improved the percentage of students scoring at "Proficient or Above" in reading and mathematics. In eleven elementary schools, more than 90% of students scored "Proficient or Above" in reading. In seven elementary schools, more than 90% of students scored "Proficient or Above" in math. At the secondary level, more than 95% of Southwest Junior High students scored "Proficient or Above" in both reading and math. West Junior High and Free State High made significant gains in both reading and math student performance. The district also made significant gains in reading in seven of 10 reported subgroups and in math in eight of the 10 reported subgroups.

In addition, the United States Department of Education named Broken Arrow Elementary School a national "Blue Ribbon School of Excellence" in 2009-10, while the Kansas State Department of Education tabbed Woodlawn Elementary School as a state nominee for the national "Blue Ribbon School of Excellence" award.

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However, eight Lawrence schools did not make AYP with at least one subgroup: Cordley – Reading and Mathematics (Free/Reduced-Price Lunch); Kennedy – Reading (All Students, Free/Reduced-Price Lunch, Students with Disabilities, White Students); Pinckney – Reading (Students with Disabilities); Schwegler – Reading (Free/Reduced-Price Lunch) and Mathematics (All Students, Free/Reduced-Price Lunch); Central Junior High – Reading and Mathematics (Students with Disabilities); South Junior High – Reading (Students with Disabilities, African-American Students) and Mathematics (All Students, Free/Reduced-Price Lunch, Students with Disabilities, African-American Students); Lawrence High School – Reading (All Students, Free/Reduced-Price Lunch, Students with Disabilities, African-American Students) and Mathematics (African-American Students); and Lawrence Virtual School – Reading (Free/Reduced-Price Lunch, and Students with Disabilities) and Mathematics (All Students, Free/Reduced-Price Lunch, Students with Disabilities).

In addition, the Lawrence school district as a whole did not meet AYP targets, according to the preliminary data in reading (Free/Reduced-Price Lunch, Students with Disabilities, African-American Students) and mathematics (Students with Disabilities, African-American Students). As a result, the district will be designated “On Improvement” for Title I for 2010-11. As part of this designation, 10% of the district’s Title I allocation must be withheld for professional development. The district also must write a comprehensive improvement plan and be monitored for improvement by the state.

When Title I schools don’t meet AYP for two consecutive years in the same subject area and category, they are considered “on improvement.” No individual Lawrence schools are “on improvement.”

Continuous Improvement

Some of the strategies Lawrence Public Schools are using to address identified needs include:

- Completion of a district-wide review of K-5 mathematics curriculum, instruction and assessment, resulting in the purchase of new instructional materials and the implementation of a comprehensive professional development plan to improve mathematics instruction.
- Implementation of systematic classroom-level assessments in K-7 mathematics.
- District-wide review of 6-12 mathematics curriculum, instruction and assessment.
- Training of teaching staff to incorporate a new district instructional framework and effective instructional strategies in daily classroom practices.
- Continuation of a reduced, instructional coaching model, using master teachers to provide in-the-classroom professional development, instructional support and consultation for teachers in their schools/classrooms. (During last year’s budget cuts, 10 of 15 coaching positions were eliminated.)
- Continuation of professional development for administrators, board members and teacher leaders regarding the achievement gaps among various student subgroups.
- Development of district and school-level equity leadership plans designed to address specific issues related to racial equity in achievement.
- Implementation of a “Pyramid of Interventions,” including research-based programs/services at each school with greater focus on monitoring student performance as a result of targeted interventions.
- Continuation of junior/senior high intervention programs for students struggling with reading/math.
- Continuation of senior high school student mentoring programs.
- Continuation of junior and senior high school after-school tutoring programs
- Continuation of a senior high credit recovery program.
- Collaboration with institutions of higher education to identify and implement effective practices to address some of the specific gaps in reading and mathematics for students with disabilities.
- Extension of learning time through before- and after-school programs.

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- Reorganization of responsibilities assigned to district-level specialists in curriculum and instruction to provide better aligned support from pre-kindergarten through high school.
- Review and revise our transition planning and communication practices to ensure the continuation of academic interventions for students moving from early childhood to kindergarten, elementary to middle school, and middle school to senior high school.
- Continue to improve collaboration among general education, special education and English as a Second Language staff to meet the needs of students with specific learning differences.
- Use of some Wednesday early-release time to plan for the 2011-12 implementation of effective, research-based practices in 6-8 middle schools
- Use of some Wednesday late-start time to plan for the 2011-12 implementation of effective four-year high schools.
- Ongoing communications with parents and community members about “Re-Designing for Student Success:” 6-8 middle schools and four-year high schools.
- Continued use of Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing, Kansas Computerized Assessment (KCA) and locally-developed formative assessments to monitor student learning and guide teacher planning for classroom instruction.
- Consideration of the purchase of a data warehousing software system to allow administrators and teachers to more effectively manage, analyze and utilize the volume of student learning and achievement data.
- Use of the Skyward Family Access system to communicate with parents about student progress.

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