

August 2014

Dear Parent or Guardian:

In March 2014, the U.S. Department of Education declined to renew the State of Washington's conditional Elementary and Secondary Education Act Flexibility Waiver for schools receiving Title I, Part A funds. The impact of this decision is that all school districts in the State of Washington are now subject to the punitive and regressive requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind act (NCLB).

After careful deliberation and with strong support from 28 school districts in the Puget Sound Educational Service District, we are sending you this letter to notify you that our districts and schools did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as required by NCLB. For our schools to meet AYP this year, 100 percent of all students – regardless of special needs, English language mastery, or other life-impacting circumstances – must meet proficiency standards.

As educators, we are fully committed to each and every student reaching his or her full potential and are proud of the significant academic progress our students are making. While not all students have reached proficiency, our use of targeted resources to assist struggling students and schools has made a significant difference.

By reverting back to NCLB, we are now required to set aside approximately 20 percent of Title I funds we receive from the federal government. The money is reserved for the district to either transfer students to a school that meets the federal requirements or pay for private tutoring. In addition, parents whose children attend schools that don't meet federal standards and receive federal Title I funding receive this notice that their child's school is failing to meet those guidelines.

The label of "failing" schools is regressive and punitive, as nearly every Washington school will not meet the NCLB Requirements. Some of our state's and districts' most successful and highly recognized schools are now being labeled "failing" by an antiquated law that most educators and elected officials – as well as the U.S. Department of Education – acknowledge isn't working.

Our bottom line: Your child's school district is effectively addressing the needs of all students. Our outstanding progress is due to the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders through high-quality instruction, effective leadership, and collaborative partnerships. On behalf of the school districts in our region, we appreciate your support of our students, staff and schools.

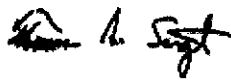
Sincerely,



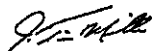
John P. Welch  
PSESD Superintendent



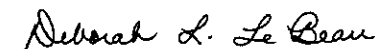
Dr. Kip Herren, Superintendent  
Auburn School District



Thomas Seigel, Superintendent  
Bethel School District



Dr. J. Tim Mills, Superintendent  
Bellevue School District



Debbie LeBeau, Superintendent  
Clover Park School District