

Westwood School District – NCLB Notice

In 2001-2002 the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) program requires schools to report students' achievement annually, and to meet certain student achievement goals. If the students do not meet those achievement goals for two consecutive years then the school is placed on a School in Need of Assistance (SINA) list.

The requirements for NCLB are constantly increasing until 2014 where 100% of all students are expected to be proficient. Below is a graph of what they expect for our students in reading in the various grades.

Reading							
YEAR	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G11
2001-02	61.2	64.0	64.6	54.5	57.3	60.0	69.0
2003	61.2	64.0	64.6	54.5	57.3	60.0	69.0
2004	61.2	64.0	64.6	54.5	57.3	60.0	69.0
2005	67.7	70.0	70.5	62.1	64.4	66.7	74.2
2006	67.7	70.0	70.5	62.1	64.4	66.7	74.2
2007	67.7	70.0	70.5	62.1	64.4	66.7	74.2
2008	74.1	76.0	76.4	69.7	71.5	73.3	79.3
2009	74.1	76.0	76.4	69.7	71.5	73.3	79.3
2010	74.1	76.0	76.4	69.7	71.5	73.3	79.3
2011	80.6	82.0	82.3	77.3	78.7	80.0	84.5
2012	87.1	88.0	88.2	84.8	85.8	86.7	89.7
2013	93.5	94.0	94.1	92.4	92.9	93.3	94.8
2014	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

You may have heard of other schools in our area dealing with this issue. Sioux City was identified over six years ago. West Monona and Sergeant Bluff have been identified more recently. This increasing scale is why more and more schools are being identified. This year over three hundred and fifty school buildings in Iowa were labeled, and unfortunately Westwood Elementary School was included on that list. Other than being on that list, there are no consequences that affect us at this time. We are still a fully certified school district with the State of Iowa Department of Education. We had excellent reports from both the education and equity visits done by the Department of Education in the past couple years.

We noted our scores were not improving fast enough a couple years ago and formed a Literacy Team to work on this issue. Some, but not all, of our scores have improved, but it is a challenge we continue to work on in our district. Last year we worked with our local Area Education Agency in Sioux City to analyze the district's needs and form a plan to improve. We spent several days working with educational experts reviewing our student data and school curriculum and assessing the needs of the district. We also surveyed our staff and helped focus down to two areas for us to concentrate our professional development time.

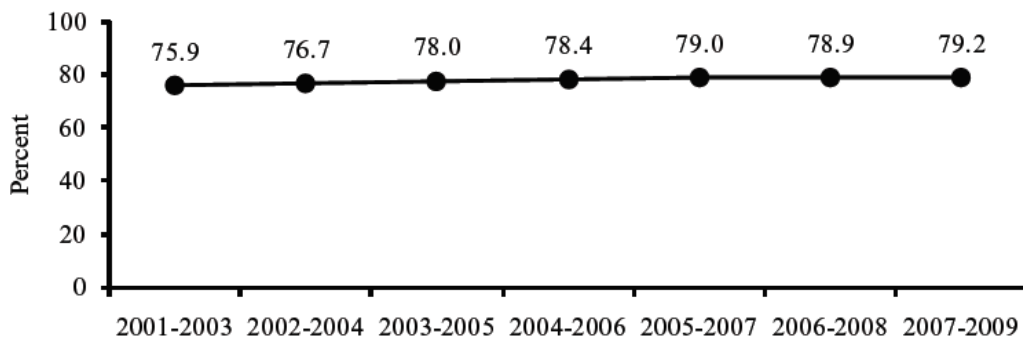
Formative assessment and curriculum mapping are the two areas we believe can help us improve our instructional program the most. This year every single teacher and administrator is taking a course on formative assessment in our school. We are working in a large group then breaking into study teams. There are a series of assignments to complete and putting the skills learned into practice in the classroom is also included. The students will be surveyed as well to see what affect our work in formative assessment has on them. This is what happens on those late starts or early outs we have each month, and also on the full day professional development days you see

scattered throughout the school year. We hope to start mapping our district's curriculum to ensure we are teaching everything that is being measured by the NCLB tests, and in particular we are teaching it at the right time.

We need you involved in the efforts to improve our school's student achievement. First, if you can volunteer at the school, please call the high school or elementary and let us know. We are very grateful so many of you already do this; it is what makes Westwood so successful. But we can always use more volunteers in a variety of areas. Second, as parents we want you to know about your child's progress toward NCLB measurements. If we forget to let you know at Parent/Teacher conferences, ask how your child is doing in regard to the NCLB measurement. Finally, our District Leadership Team (DLT) continues to work year after year on school-wide issues, like our activity policy, graduation requirements, good conduct policy, and NCLB issues. If you are interested in serving on this group please contact the superintendent's office.

We continue to try to find ways to improve. I also want you to know the future challenge we face in Iowa. All schools in Iowa are working on these requirements. Below is the record of their work on 4th grade reading scores from 2001 through 2009.

**PERCENT OF IOWA FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS PROFICIENT ON ITBS READING
COMPREHENSION TEST BIENNIAL PERIODS 2001-2003 TO 2007-2009**



If you compare this graph to the set of expected scores in the NCLB graph at the beginning of this letter, you can see that while the score have improved they are not going up fast enough to reach the required 100% in 2014. This is the challenge all schools in Iowa will continue to face. At Westwood, we will continue to find better ways to help our students succeed, not only in the academics issues, including the NCLB requirements, but also in other areas such as athletics, the arts, and the Iowa Core Curriculum's 21st century skills they need, which includes technology. We want our children to succeed in life beyond Westwood.

I am very proud of our students, the staff and the community that provides the educational program we have at Westwood, and very thankful for your ongoing support of Westwood and our children.

Go Rebels!

Kirk Ahrends, Superintendent