

I-LES Designation of School in Need of Improvement

You may have heard or read in the papers that Inter-Lakes Elementary School has been designated by the State as a School in Need of Improvement (SINI). I would like to share some information regarding how and why this has occurred.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Each year, students in grades 3 ó 8 take a State-mandated test called the NECAP (*New England Common Assessment Program*). This is required under the federal government's No Child Left Behind law. No Child Left Behind requires 100% of all students to be "proficient" in reading and math by the year 2013.

After our students take the NECAP, they are scored in one of 4 ways: *Proficient With Distinction*, *Proficient*, *Partially Proficient*, or *Substantially Below Proficient*. Each year, the State requires that more and more of our students score Proficient or above, again, with the goal being that every student will be proficient or above by 2012.

The state takes a school's test scores and uses a mathematic formula to determine if the school has made AYP (*Adequate Yearly Progress*). The target score to achieve AYP gets increased every 2 years, requiring a higher percentage of students to score Proficient or above in order for the school to make AYP. But here is where it gets challenging: not only must the entire student body (whole school) make AYP, but each "subgroup" of students within the school must make AYP. Subgroups include students who are considered "economically disadvantaged", students who have been identified as having an educational disability (special education), and students whose first language is not English. *If any one of these subgroups fails to make AYP, then the whole school is considered not making AYP.* I personally find this problematic because it is not always appropriate to expect a child with a documented learning disability to be able to take the same test as everyone else and be expected to achieve the same level of proficiency and performance on such a test.

RESULTS FOR I-LES:

This year, our school as a whole made AYP in both reading and math. This means that all of our students, as a group, met the State's AYP target for this year. The state's target in reading was an index score of 86. Our school's index score is an 87.5. The state's target in math was an index score of 82. Our school's index score is an 88.4.

The problem arises when "subgroup" scores are then calculated. Our special education students did not make the targets mentioned above in either reading or math. Our group of "economically disadvantaged" students did not make AYP in reading but did make AYP in math. Since this is the 2nd year that the special education subgroup has not made AYP in math, our school is now designated as a **School in Need of Improvement in math**. If we do not make AYP in reading again next year, we will be a School in Need of Improvement in both reading AND math.

CONSEQUENCES FOR NOT MAKING AYP:

It is worth noting that once a school is designated as a SINI, it takes 2 consecutive years of making AYP in order to have this designation removed. Also, it is important to know that there are sanctions that are imposed against schools that have been designated as a SINI. If a school does not make AYP for **two years in row**, the school is identified as a "School In Need of Improvement" (SINI) ó That is where I-LES right now! The school must develop an improvement plan and offer school "**Choice**" in year one of School Improvement. If the school does not make AYP for **three years in row**, the school must offer "**supplemental education services**" (SES) in addition to school choice. Parents must be notified of their options to take school "choice" in 1st year or "SES" in 2nd year of School Improvement. If school does not make AYP for **four years in row**, the school is placed on "Corrective Action" and must make one or more corrective actions as outlined in the law. If school does not make AYP for **four years in a row**, the school is placed on "Restructuring", a 2-year process. An alternative governance plan must be developed in 1st year and activities begin in 2nd year of Restructuring.

Again, please know that our school, as a whole, is making AYP and we will continue to seek ways to help all students achieve the challenging standards that are measured by the NECAP. We will be developing a school improvement plan to address math in the coming year.

SCHOOL CHOICE:

You have or will be receiving a letter from our Superintendent, Dr. Phillip McCormack, stating that our school has been designated as a School In Need of Improvement and that you have the choice to send your child to the Sandwich Central School at any time during the 2009-10 school year. If you wish for your child to attend Sandwich Central School, please notify Dr. McCormack or Dr. Kelley as soon as possible!