

December 21, 2009

Dear Parents and Patrons,

The federal education legislation, No Child Left Behind, mandates that all students must be proficient on reading and math academic standards by 2014. Schools are expected to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward that goal. The state goal for last year was to have 81% of all students in grades 3 - 5, 81% of all students in grades 6 - 8, and 83% of 11th graders proficient on the reading standards. The state math goals were: 83% for grades 3 - 5, 79% for grades 6 - 8, and 81% for grade 11. Additional information about how our school district compared to other school districts in the state was made available on the State of the Schools Report, released for public viewing on October 5, 2009. You can access this information at the following web site: <http://reportcard.nde.state.ne.us>

If a school does not meet the state goal two years in a row, in the same grade level and same subject, they are identified as "In Need of Improvement." A school can be released of "Needs Improvement" status after all subgroups meet the AYP goals for two consecutive years. Emerson Elementary is in year 1 of Title I "Needs Improvement" status. One sub-group in reading and one sub-group in math in grades 3 – 5 did not meet the performance goal in 2008-09. One sub-group in reading in grades 3 – 5 did not meet the performance goal in 2007-08. The following table illustrates our students' overall performance over the past two years.

	Reading		Math	
	2007-2008	2008-2009	2007-2008	2008-2009
Grades 3-5	85% overall 1 subgroup did not meet goal	81% overall All subgroups met goal	88% overall All subgroups met goal	88% overall All subgroups met goal
Grades 6-8	96% overall All subgroups met goal	94% overall All subgroups met goal	91% overall All subgroups met goal	96% overall All subgroups met goal
Grade 11	90% overall All subgroups met goal	91% overall All subgroups met goal	95% overall All subgroups met goal	97% overall All subgroups met goal

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires each school identified for Title I School Improvement to offer Public School Choice to all students who attend the identified school. Your child has the option of attending any of the three schools listed below. Emerson is included at the bottom of this table so you can compare the performance percentages.

Grades K-5	Reading 07-08	Reading 08-09	Math 07-08	Math 08-09
Lost Creek	96%	87%	91%	88%
North Park	89%	78%	93%	86%
West Park	77%	87%	84%	88%
Emerson	81%	77%	79%	81%

If you would like to request a transfer for your child to attend another Columbus Public Elementary School, the district is required to provide transportation or reimburse mileage costs. The deadline for immediate transfer requests for the 2nd semester of the 2009-2010 is Tuesday, January 5th. None of the 290 students in grades K-5 requested transfers for the 2009-2010 year. Requests for transfers for the 2010-2011 school year will be accepted at a later point this year. Please watch for information later. One student requested a transfer for the 2010-11 school year. Use the attached form to submit a request for second semester.

Because of the status, the Emerson must develop and implement a two-year plan to help the subgroups to meet the goal. Currently, a committee of the elementary principal, teachers, curriculum director, and educational experts are developing a plan to be submitted to the State Department of Education. The plan will include strategies to promote parent involvement as well as incorporate instructional strategies based on scientifically-based research. In addition, the District is implementing several changes intended to help raise student achievement. These include revising both the reading and math curriculum guides, implementing new reading and math programs in grades K-5, and providing additional training for teachers. Students scoring well below their grade level are receiving additional assistance in smaller groups. It is the hope of the district that these changes and others will help us to meet the AYP goal this school year and in years to come.

You may contact Elementary Principal, Sara Colford, if you are interested in more information on the improvement plan. Please call Ms. Colford if you have any questions about the plan to improve the academic achievement of all subgroups at Emerson Elementary.

Sincerely,

Sara Colford, Emerson Principal
Amy Romshek, Curriculum Director

