



October 23, 2015

Dear Parent or Guardian:

At Parkview Heights Elementary, we take great pride in the educational opportunities and programs we are able to provide for our children. Our staff is truly committed to the success of every student. We focus each and every day on the individual needs of each child and how we can help him/her reach his/her personal excellence. Our purpose is to prepare every student for success through superior educational programs delivered by highly effective educators who use innovative, research-based strategies in a safe and supportive environment in collaboration with family and community members. Our teachers and staff members work very hard to meet the needs of all students.

In spite of the progress made by most of our students, Parkview Heights Elementary School did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) this year. This is a labeling system required of schools by the federal government under the No Child Left Behind Law. The performance target for the 2014-15 school year is that 100% of all students, regardless of subgroup status, will meet adequate yearly progress (AYP). We are disappointed that Parkview Heights Elementary is labeled as needs improvement. The staff, students, and parents are proud of the fact that in grades 3rd – 6th students at Parkview Heights Elementary are well within the range of the state average. Out of the 55 subgroups and evaluation categories in Reading and Math, Parkview Heights Elementary is “not met” in 6 categories for reading and in the area of math, Parkview Heights is not met in 3 categories.

We have a focused school improvement plan and are pleased with the progress all of our students have made. The teachers and staff at Parkview Heights Elementary have been, and continue to implement strategies to improve student achievement with an emphasis on reading and math with all students. The table on the following page displays the percent of students meeting or exceeding the standards on the state tests. Additional information about how Parkview Heights Elementary compares to other schools in our district, as well as throughout the State, is available on the following Nebraska Department of Education website: <http://www.education.ne.gov/documents/SOSR.html>. A copy of a letter from the Nebraska Commissioner of Education is also attached giving the Nebraska Department of Education’s perspective on AYP.

With all of the public attention being focused on Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA), it is important to keep these results in perspective. NeSA is just one piece of data used to make decisions in the Papillion La Vista Community Schools. To gain a true picture on student achievement one must also look at District Assessments and standardized achievement tests. The staff at Parkview Heights Elementary focuses on what matters - - students! When preparing students to be on the right path for college, career, and citizenship readiness, the focus is on more than test results - it is on the whole child. If we want to use assessment results to reflect true student mastery of content, we had better make sure that our kids are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged, or we will likely be assessing something else, and potentially making inefficient and ineffective decisions based on results that don’t mean what we think they do. The Parkview Heights Elementary staff is focusing on what matters – the whole child, not just test scores.

As parents or guardians, there are things you can continue to do to strengthen the academic achievement of your child. We believe that establishing high expectations for your child, supporting the school in its efforts to maintain appropriate behavior, instilling in your child a positive attitude toward learning, making sure that your child attends school regularly (especially on testing days), communicating regularly with the teachers of your child, supporting your student in reading nightly, and setting aside time for homework will give your child the best opportunity for success.

A requirement for schools at this AYP status is to inform all parents of Parkview Heights Elementary students of "Public School Choice". In compliance with the requirements of the NCLB statute, parents/guardians have the option of "Public School Choice". This states that parents/guardians are eligible to transfer their child to another school within the District that has not been designated as "Needs Improvement". The district will provide transportation for student(s) of parents choosing "Public School Choice". Students may request a transfer to Golden Hills Elementary, Anderson Grove Elementary or Rumsey Station Elementary; however, there are limited openings due to the District policy on capacity. While making your request, you will be asked to identify your 1st choice and the final decision will be made by following district policy.

Parents who choose to have their children participate in "Public School Choice" are asked to contact Deb Rodenburg, Director of Elementary Curriculum at (402) 537-6226 to enroll by November 9, 2015. Once notice has been received, we will make enrollment arrangements as quickly as possible and will notify parents upon approval.

We welcome your involvement at Parkview Heights Elementary School. There are many ways to participate including offering your input to the School Improvement Team, volunteering, participating in home visits, and attending parent conferences with your child's teacher(s). Parkview Heights Elementary School will hold their Title I meeting on November 10, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. to develop our parent involvement policy and to review parent rights under Title I and other information. The Title I district-wide parent involvement policy is reviewed annually. You are welcome to be a part of that review process. We also encourage parents to participate in the PTO and other family activities to provide input to the Parkview Heights school improvement planning.

Please review the information in the table below for academic achievement levels of other schools in this district and feel free to consult with me during this decision process. We are looking forward to continuous improvement for all of our students. Please continue to work with the Parkview Heights Elementary team to make sure we achieve success for all students.

Sincerely,

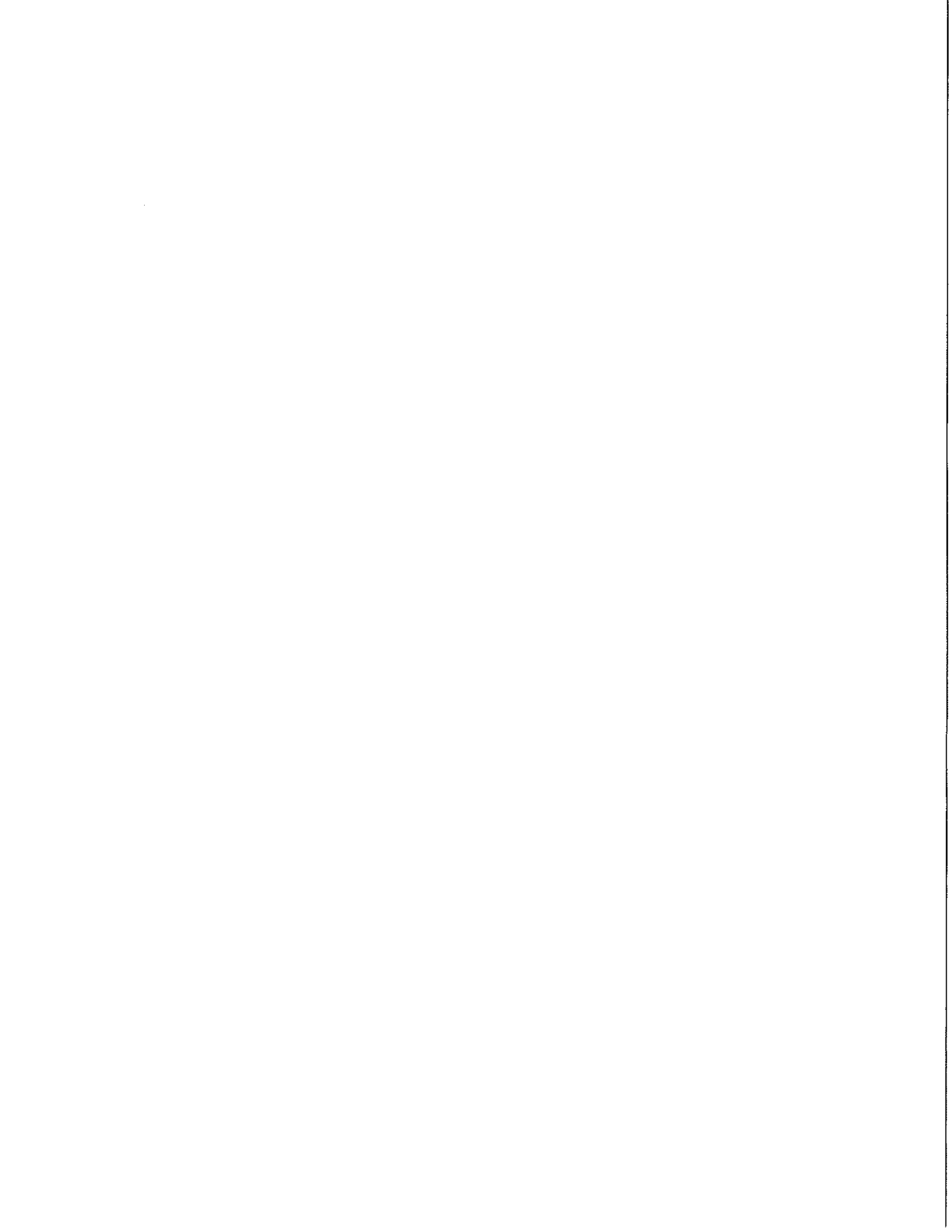


Mrs. Lydia Gabriel,
Principal, Parkview Heights Elementary



Dr. Deb Rodenburg
Director of Elementary Curriculum

2014-2015	Reading	Math	Writing
Anderson Grove	93%	87%	84%
Bell	94%	85%	89%
Carriage Hill	89%	88%	77%
Golden Hills	87%	79%	71%
G Stanley Hall	82%	74%	78%
Hickory Hill	91%	78%	92%
La Vista West	85%	81%	56%
Patriot	96%	92%	97%
Portal	95%	91%	97%
Parkview Heights	82%	85%	83%
Rumsey Station	90%	87%	89%
Tara Heights	87%	84%	84%
Trumble Park	91%	92%	90%
Walnut Creek	91%	84%	95%





NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

www.education.ne.gov
301 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987
TEL 402.471.2295
FAX 402.471.0117

To: Parents and Caregivers
From: Matthew Blomstedt, Commissioner of Education
Subject: Nebraska's Commitment to Every Student, Every Day
Date: September 28, 2015

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), was passed in 1965 during the Lyndon B. Johnson administration as part of the War on Poverty. The act emphasized equal access to education, established high standards and accountability, and authorized federally funded education programs administered by individual states. Congress amended ESEA in 2002 and reauthorized it as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The law was scheduled to be reauthorized in 2007; to date Congress has not taken the necessary steps to update this law. In recent months, both the Senate and Congress have passed their versions of what they believe should be included in reauthorization of the ESEA. The next step is for members of both the Senate and Congress to form a Conference Committee to come up with a single plan for reauthorization. It is anyone's guess whether ESEA will actually be reauthorized by the end of this year.

When states and districts agree to accept federal funds, there are strings attached. Attached to NCLB Title I funding is the stipulation to have statewide assessments and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) decisions for every public school in the state. Under NCLB, the proficiency goal for school year 2014-15 for reading and mathematics assessments was set at 100%. According to the NCLB rules, every student - regardless of disabilities, English language proficiency, or other life-impacting circumstances -- must be proficient in reading and math as measured by state assessments. Because of this unrealistic goal, a number of Nebraska schools will be unfairly labeled as *Not Met* or *In Need of Improvement*.

The Nebraska Department of Education does not agree with the current federal policy. I do not believe that all of our schools are low performing. In fact, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) has granted waivers from the unrealistic expectations of NCLB. Common sense tells us that one child in one grade in one subject area scoring just below a "proficiency cut score" should not brand an entire school community as failing. Yet that is exactly what has happened under NCLB. As a result of this faulty logic, some schools or districts in Nebraska have not met the NCLB requirement for the 2014-15 school year.

In April, 2015, Nebraska submitted a request to the USDE, for waivers from several of the NCLB requirements. NDE has had follow-up conversations with USDE staff, but to date no formal response has been received. This means that for the 2014-15 school year, all NCLB requirements must be followed. NDE was hopeful that some of the requirements, such as the 100% proficiency goals for

reading and math could be waived, but our real hope is that reauthorization takes place very soon, so that all states will be relieved of the unrealistic and harsh consequences of the current law.

Nebraska educators are committed to each and every young person reaching his or her full potential and we are proud of the significant academic progress of our students. While not all students have reached proficiency, the use of targeted resources to assist struggling students and schools has had an impact which is seen in performance data not taken into account by NCLB. Our students, staff members, and schools are not failures. By many measures, they are demonstrating unprecedented levels of achievement. We continue to strive for improvement and excellence in our public schools.

We are committed to continuous improvement. Gains in student achievement are due to the collaborative efforts of teachers, staff, parents, and community members through high-quality instruction, effective leadership, and partnerships. We know that tests are an important part of teaching and learning, but we also understand that basing a student's achievement on a single assessment does not capture everything that is important for our children's learning journey.

As a state, our biggest challenge is finding better ways to engage and support the learning of every student, every day. Nebraska continues to develop and refine a system for Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT). The State Board of Education believes that Nebraska citizens—through the Constitution, the Nebraska Legislature, the State Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education, and other policy makers—are responsible for the total design of this education system. While acknowledging that this education system will be influenced by others, (federal government, other state leaders, and local policy makers) this system will be dependent on and driven by local boards of education, administrators, teachers, parents, communities, and students. This belief requires that we listen well, communicate better, and engage leaders and stakeholders across the state. The goal is to build a quality accountability system that is meaningful to Nebraska. The AQuESTT system focusses on six tenets which are part of two broader principles. We believe that each tenet is equally important.

STUDENT SUCCESS AND ACCESS

Positive Partnerships, Relationships, & Student Success
Transitions
Educational Opportunities & Access

TEACHING AND LEARNING

College and Career Ready
Assessment
Educator Effectiveness

As a parent or caregiver, we encourage you to look at your own child's individual growth and learning, along with evidence your school provides related to your child's progress instead of an outdated mislabeling requirement imposed by the federal government. We also encourage you to work with your local educators to ensure that every child is challenged and supported, learning, and thriving. Schools prosper when parents and caregivers are involved as the first teachers of their children.