

School reports show progress needed

By Parker Philpot
Sentinel-Voice

Clark County School District announced last Thursday its initial recommended Adequate Yearly Progress, results for the 2004-2005 school year at a news conference at the district office at 2832 E. Flamingo Rd.

Results were made official when the Board of Trustees accepted the recommendations at a special general meeting held later that day, said Public Information Officer Jaime Lee.

Scores that measure whether schools are meeting the Adequate Yearly Progress program, or AYP, are compiled for public schools in the state in accordance with the federal No Child Left Behind law and the state's own plan designed to comply with the NCLB goals for school improvement.

The Clark County School District accounts for 320 schools sites (Kindergarten through grade 12 and some special programs) subject to AYP analysis. For the 2004-2005 school year, results show that 205 did not meet AYP, according to the CCSD spokespersons.

One of the outcomes is the release of a list showing whether each school in the district is meeting its designated AYP target or not. The local district publishes the AYP for the public to determine how many school rates.

Schools are placed into categories depending on how many times the goal was met or not since the program began in the 2002-2003 school year following the 2001 enactment of NCLB laws.

Schools that did not meet the AYP goals are placed in designated categories that indicate whether this is the first, second or third school year it did or did not meet AYP. The ratings include "Made AYP," "High Achieving (HA)," "Need Improvement (NI) Year 1," and "NI Hold," and variations based on how many times AYP is met or not. "Watch List," is for schools that made AYP in the prior year, but did not in the recent one.

AYP ratings are a set of measurement standards made per NCLB guidelines requiring schools and districts in every state to target, test and track progress toward meeting student achievement and school improvement goals. The ultimate goal is for 100 percent of all schools to show marked improvements in students' essential academic skills proficiency by the 2013-2014 school year.

Scores were compiled and

preliminary results made available to schools and their regional superintendents several weeks ahead of the announcement. The statutory period for school administrators to contest results by way of the appeals process ended last week. During open appeals, any discrepancies in how numbers were calculated or in the raw data could be challenged, according to Assistant Superintendent Dr. Karlene Lee-McCormick in Research, Accountability and Innovation.

"There must be a 30-day appeals window," she explained. "About 95 percent of the appeals are for incorrect coding." She said the majority of the 100 appeals were settled.

The Nevada Department of Education is responsible for the implementation of the AYP and accountability programs for districts statewide.

According to Gloria Dopf, deputy superintendent in the NDE office in Carson City, "608 sites is the number of schools in the state that are included in the AYP analysis."

Yesterday, she said how the schools in the state did overall, "The number that met AYP is 285; the number that did not is 323."

The numbers for the state include CCSD, the largest district. It is possible that the final numbers may change slightly after the appeals process adjustments are put into the record.

The public can access online or request printouts from the child's school or the district showing the overall results for the state and the local district, as well as for each individual school. Personal data on any individual student is held confidential, officials point out.

Results are posted on the Nevada Department of Education website, www.doe.nv.gov, and there is a link to current AYP results and other accountability reports on all schools. CCSD's website, www.ccsd.net, also contains related information and demographics for all schools.

AYP scoring is based on a complex series of calculations that are combined and then categorized into several subgroups. Some of the results are "disaggregated," broken down by specific criteria like ethnicity, socioeconomic level, English language proficiency, learning disabilities and other specifications.

Testing and scoring makes allowances for schools and student groups

that are considered "special populations", such as learning disabled or smaller class sizes. This adjustment is called a "safe harbor" and is used to avoid unfair bias and to avoid disadvantages in scoring.

Some parents will receive letters pertaining to their child's school AYP if it is a "Title I school site" because there are special terms and options available called "School Choice" that allow a parent to transfer a child from a school with AYP score problems to a school meeting AYP. Furthermore, the

district must share in transportation cost in these instances.

"On Monday, approximately 27,000 letters were sent," said Lee. The letters give the information on how parents can use the "choice" option if they desire to change the child's school.

District Interim Co-Superintendent Dr. Walt Rulffes said that the standards, though not clear-cut, provide some way to begin positive measures to attain overall improvement in student achievement.

"The lines are arbitrarily

drawn between pass and fail," he said, quickly adding that the AYP scores give some basis from which "action" can be taken to progress.

Rulffes expressed his viewpoint, and the consensus among the speakers is that a "glass half full" rather than a negative approach should be taken to bring about positive change.

One well-established school that did not meet AYP is Rancho High School on East Owens in Las Vegas. School Principal Robert Chesto was brought into the

discussion at the news conference and was part of an impromptu demonstration of how a school administrator is told that his site didn't meet AYP. Afterward he commented on one of the challenges in meeting AYP:

"It's a moving target," he said and explained that with a student population that is very transient, with a high "turnover rate of 30 percent" it is difficult to manage. He did express that the scores can be used for some good.

For further information the call the district office at (702) 799-5005.



A healthy start for a healthy school year!

Children entering the Nevada school system for the first time require appropriate immunizations. Newer requirements include: hepatitis A, hepatitis B and chicken pox vaccination (if they have never had the chicken pox disease).

**Back-to-school immunization extended clinic hours:
Ravenholt Public Health Center • 625 Shadow Lane
Monday, Aug. 22-Friday, Sept. 9 • 8 a.m.-6 p.m.***

**Other clinic locations:
East Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Henderson
Monday-Friday • 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.**

An administrative fee of \$16 for one shot or \$20 for two or more per patient will be charged. Medicaid and Nevada Check Up are accepted.
Please bring your insurance card, along with shot records.

All necessary paperwork is located on the health district's website (www.cchd.org).
Bring completed forms to expedite your visit.

*No other health district services will be available after 4:30 p.m.

For clinic locations, hours and dates, call 383-1351.

CLARK COUNTY
HEALTH DISTRICT