

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Before we leave for the traditional holiday break, I wanted to update our parents and community members on the status of our School District both academically and financially.

Four of our schools did not make adequate yearly progress as determined by the annual ISAT tests. Each year the bar for our students to make adequate yearly progress is raised, making it more of a challenge to have students meeting or exceeding state standards. One good indicator is that our Heritage Middle School did make adequate yearly progress. We are pleased that our older students are progressing to meet and exceed state standards and that we are bringing our students along in the elementary schools to meet standards. All of our faculty and staff have met to seek out ways of improving instructional delivery to our students to ensure that the students are progressing throughout the year to not only score well on the state mandated tests, but also receive a comprehensive educational experience that prepares them for their future studies in high school and to make them productive members of society.

To better meet our English Language Learners as well as our mono lingual speaking students, School District 104 will pilot the Dual Language Academy in the fall of 2012. Starting December 15, 2011, we will be providing informational meetings to inform parents and community members of the benefits of the dual language program. The meetings on December 15th will be at 1:00 and 6:00 p.m. More informational meetings will be held next year.

The School District 104 free and reduced lunch membership continues to rise. We realize that many of our parents and community members are greatly impacted by the economic downturn that has occurred in the United States. School District 104 will continue to provide outstanding educational opportunities for its students with dwindling funds from the state. We realize that a quality education is the key to our students' futures and we will ensure that our students receive great educational opportunities.

As many of you may know, I will be retiring from education next June. The board of education has completed an extensive interview process of highly qualified candidates for the superintendent's position at School District 104. The board of education will officially welcome our new superintendent after the first of the year.

On behalf of our teachers, staff and board of education, I would like to wish all of our students, parents, and residents to have a safe and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Dixey
Superintendent