



David Howard  
Superintendent

Mike Boyd  
Assistant Superintendent

Mike Boyd  
Assistant Superintendent  
Basehor-Linwood USD 458  
2008 N 155<sup>th</sup> St  
Basehor, KS 66007

### An Open Letter to USD 458 Parents

Dear USD 458 Parent:

Nothing is as important to us at USD 458 as ensuring that your child receives a quality education. In doing so, one of the many measures we use to determine individual and group student achievement, as well as our effectiveness as a school district, includes the annual Kansas State Assessments.

This important time of year is quickly approaching, and we have created some materials to share with you, which we hope will explain the types, purpose, importance, and impact of these assessments.

For examples of what we are doing to help your child perform at his or her best on the Kansas State Assessments, please go to the individual school's website.

We know that you want to be informed and involved as much as possible. As such, we hope that you will find this information helpful. Additionally, we greatly appreciate your role and assistance in your child's learning and in how he or she prepares at home for these assessments. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's school or the USD 458 Central Office if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Mike Boyd  
Assistant Superintendent



David Howard  
Superintendent

Mike Boyd  
Assistant Superintendent

## **STATE ASSESSMENTS 101:**

A Parents' Guide to Kansas State Assessments for the 2010-2011 School Year

### **Introduction**

The No Child Left Behind Act was passed in 2001 with the aim of helping students increase their skills in math and reading. This law set performance goals that rise each year until 2014, when all students will be expected to perform at their grade levels in math and reading. Student performance is measured using standardized achievement tests. The following information explains how Kansas tests its students, and how the test results affect schools.

### **Kansas State Assessments for 2010-2011**

Students across Kansas will be tested in the following subjects:

- Reading\* - Grades 3-8 and once in high school
- Math\* - Grades 3-8 and once in high school
- Science - Grades 4 and 7, and once in high school
- Social Studies – Grades 9 and 11

\*No Child Left Behind focuses on math and reading. Kansas also tests students in science and social studies, but these results are not considered when deciding whether or not a school has met its goals according to No Child Left Behind.

These tests, which are the same in every Kansas school, are usually administered on computers. Students often have the chance to practice with the computer system before taking the real tests.

### **Student Performance**

Individual student performance is based on how many questions they answer correctly on the tests. The performance categories are as follows, listed from lowest to highest performance:

- Academic Warning
- Approaches Standard
- Meets Standard
- Exceeds Standard
- Exemplary

## Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

No Child Left Behind requires that a certain portion of students score at least “Meets Standard” each year to make Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP. This performance target rises each year. The following table shows a year-by-year breakdown of performance targets:

### **AYP ANNUAL TARGETS**

Year	K-8 Schools		9-12 Schools	
	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics
2009	79.7%	77.8%	76.7%	70.5%
2010	83.7%	82.3%	81.3%	76.4%
2011	87.8%	86.7%	86.0%	82.3%
2012	91.9%	91.1%	90.7%	88.2%
2013	95.9%	95.6%	95.3%	94.1%
2014	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

- Targets are the percentage of students scoring at Meets Standard and above.

### **Subgroups**

The AYP targets are not just for individual schools. They also apply to the school district as a whole, and to subgroups of students. A subgroup exists when 30 or more students who share certain traits are enrolled in a school or district. Each subgroup must also make AYP. The following is a list of subgroups that might exist within a school or district:

- All students
- Free and reduced lunch
- Students with disabilities
- ELL – English Language Learners
- African Americans
- Hispanics
- Whites
- Asians / Pacific Islanders
- American Indians
- Other

## **Kansas State Assessment Results**

The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation (CETE) at the University of Kansas work together to calculate individual school and district achievement results. These results are released to the public the next fall. The following is a list of designations schools and districts might receive:

- **Standard of Excellence**
  - Minimum and maximum percentages in each performance category determine this designation. Standard of Excellence is a state award and is not part of the No Child Left Behind legislation.
  
- **Made AYP**
  - The school and/or district met or exceeded the Adequate Yearly Progress targets for that year.
  
- **Did Not Make AYP – “On Watch”**
  - The school and/or district did not meet the Adequate Yearly Progress targets in reading and/or math.
  
- **Did Not Make AYP – “On Improvement”**
  - The school and/or district did not meet the Adequate Yearly Progress Targets in reading and/or math for the second year in a row.
    - First year on improvement: The school and/or district must develop and implement an improvement plan and allow students to go to other schools in the district, if there is more than one option.
    - Second year on improvement: The school and/or district must offer “Supplemental Education Services” (SES), which could include paying for tutors and other services.
    - Third year on improvement: The school and/or district must begin corrective action, which could include changes in staffing and/or the school’s curriculum.
    - Fourth year on improvement: The school and/or district must begin restructuring, which could include changes in school leadership and/or changes to school schedules.

To come off of improvement, the school and/or district must meet AYP targets for two years in a



David Howard  
Superintendent

Mike Boyd  
Assistant Superintendent

## **READY TO TEST:**

### What Kansas Schools Are Doing to Prepare Students for the 2010-2011 State Assessments

An overwhelming majority of Kansas's public schools and school districts met the 2009-2010 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets as defined by No Child Left Behind. However, the targets will rise another 4 to 6 percent for the 2010-2011 school year. That means, schools are working hard to ensure that students will perform to the best of their abilities when the testing season begins. To learn how schools in the Basehor-Linwood School District prepare, visit the school's website for preparation practices.

#### **Curriculum, Instruction and Technology Integration**

Education in Kansas is always moving forward. What is taught and how it is taught has changed dramatically in recent years, as teachers and school administrators have worked together to implement research-based strategies in all classrooms.

#### **Test Preparation Tools**

The Center for Educational Testing & Evaluation (CETE), located at The University of Kansas, Designs and administers the Kansas State Assessments. To help students and teachers prepare, CETE offers practice tests and formative tests.

#### **Professional Development**

Teachers and administrators in Kansas's schools receive continuous training throughout the school year. Topics generally include curriculum and instruction improvements that lead to increased student achievement. Additionally, professional development sessions may involve technology integration, assessment updates and other activities aimed at helping teachers and administrators better prepare our kids for their futures.

#### **Parent and Community Involvement**

Many schools offer "Parent Nights" inviting families and the community to participate in the teaching and learning process.



David Howard  
Superintendent

Mike Boyd  
Assistant Superintendent

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

Answers to Common Questions about Kansas State Assessments and No Child Left Behind

### **What is Basehor-Linwood School District doing to help my student on the tests?**

At all USD 458 schools, no matter the level, we are delivering to all students a standards based curriculum. That curriculum is based on the State of Kansas benchmarks and standards as designated for assessment through the Kansas Assessment program. This program is under the direction of the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation (CETE) at the University of Kansas.

### **What is No Child Left Behind, and how does it relate to Kansas State Assessments?**

No Child Left Behind is a federal law that applies to all states. It requires students in each school and school district to reach certain standards in math and reading. These standards rise each year until 2014, when all students will be expected to perform at their grade level. Kansas state assessments are the tool used to determine whether or not students are reaching the goals set by states under No Child Left Behind.

### **What is AYP?**

AYP, or Adequate Yearly Progress, is what every school must reach in order to comply with No Child Left Behind. Each year, a certain percentage of students must score at least “Meets Standard” on the state assessments in math and reading in order to make AYP.

### **What happens when a school doesn’t make AYP?**

The first year a school does not meet AYP, it is “on watch” and must improve its scores the next year.

The second year a school does not meet AYP, it is placed “on improvement.”

- First year on improvement: The school and/or district must develop and implement an improvement plan and allow students to go to other schools within the district, if there is more than one option.
- Second year on improvement: The school and/or district must offer “Supplemental Education Services” (SES), which could include paying for tutors and other services.
- Third year on improvement: The school and/or district must begin corrective action, which could include changes in staffing and/or the school’s curriculum.
- Fourth year on improvement: The school and/or district must begin restructuring, which could include changes in school leadership and/or changes to school schedules.

To come off of improvement, the school and/or district, must meet AYP targets for two years in a row.

**Can a school or district make AYP if it does not meet the annual targets?**

Yes. A calculation called a Confidence Interval can be applied in certain situations. Another way for a school to make AYP without hitting its performance goals is through Safe Harbor. A subgroup, school or district makes Safe Harbor if the percent of students who are not proficient (meaning they score lower than “Meets Standard”) decreases by at least 10 percent between consecutive years.

**How can all the schools in a district make AYP, but the district is on improvement?**

AYP applies to not only schools and districts, but also to subgroups. A subgroup exists when 30 or more students who share a common demographic are enrolled in the same school or district. Every subgroup within a school or district must also meet AYP. For example, one subgroup within a district might be Pacific Islanders. There could be 18 Pacific Islanders in one school and 12 Pacific Islanders in another. Since there are fewer than 30 in each school, neither school would have to count the Pacific Islanders as a subgroup. However, since there would be 30 Pacific Islanders in the district, the district must count them as a subgroup. If that subgroup fails to make AYP, then the district would fail to meet AYP. The goal is to ensure that the performance of each subgroup is just as important as the performance of the other student groups in the school and the district as a whole.

**My child has special needs. Is he/she tested differently?**

The State of Kansas allows for a variety of accommodations for children with special needs, which could include a read-aloud of the assessment by trained staff or even the use of a different test format known as the Kansas Assessment of Modified Measures (KAMM). A guide to these accommodations is available at the following website:

**<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=2365>**

**How do participation, graduation and attendance rates affect AYP?**

All three of these are factored in along with the test scores when determining whether or not a school or district has made AYP. At least 95 percent of students must participate in the reading and math assessments. The attendance rates for schools, districts, and even the state must be above 90 percent or show improvement over the previous year. Finally, high school graduation rates must be above 75 percent or show improvement over the previous year.

**Will my child’s school be shut down if it keeps failing to meet AYP?**

The goal of No Child Left Behind is not to shut down underperforming schools. Rather, the goal is to help schools succeed. To that end, schools that have not made AYP for two years in a row are placed on improvement.

**Where can I see how specific schools have performed in recent years?**

Public access to previous assessment performance can be found on the following website:

**<http://online.ksde.org/rcard/>**

**What can I do to help my child excel on state assessments?**

There are a number of ways to help your child do their best on state assessments. Parents can help their kids focus by giving them healthy foods, ensuring they get plenty of rest, and by monitoring their time watching TV as opposed to doing homework. Parents can also take a more proactive role by visiting with teachers to find out more about what their child is learning.