



October 25, 2013

Dear Belleaire Elementary School Parents:

I am writing to inform you that Belleaire Elementary School has been identified as a *"School in Need of Improvement"* based on requirements of The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). This letter is intended to explain what that means and to provide you additional information concerning the options available for your child.

What does "School in Need of Improvement" mean?

Each year students throughout the United States are required to take state/federal tests. The tests in Nebraska are called NeSA. There are "Proficiency" levels that schools must meet at all grade levels and in all subgroups (gender, race/ethnicity, free/reduced price meals, migrant, special education, and English Language Learners). If the school does not meet the "Proficiency" level determined by the state for two consecutive years in the same area/subgroup, the school is listed as *"School in Need of Improvement"*.

Under federal guidelines, a school must make "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP) two consecutive years to be removed from the *"Needs Improvement"* list.

Although Belleaire scores on NeSA Reading and Math Assessments continue to improve, Belleaire was listed as not making adequate yearly progress during the 2010-2011, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years in the subgroup of special education.

Detailed information about how Belleaire Elementary compares to other schools in our District, as well as the State, can be found on the Nebraska Department of Education website in the State of the Schools Report: <http://reportcard.education.ne.gov/Main/Home.aspx>

What are Belleaire's strategies for improvement?

While we are proud of the progress that our students have made, we are continuing to work on our plan for improvement that will focus on academic achievement. We have identified the following key strategies for improvement:

- Professional Development at Belleaire Elementary will focus on: the implementation of the new math curriculum, improving guided reading inclusionary practices, the implementation of the Daily 5 and Cafe' at all grade levels, the implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) at grades K-3 in the area of reading, and classroom management strategies. In addition, the Belleaire teaching staff is supported through classroom visits known as "coaching" where expert staff visit classrooms and provide teachers with feedback about their strategic teaching skills.
- Belleaire will strengthen core academics for all students in reading by reviewing and implementing Guided Reading as the expected instructional methodology to teach all components of reading comprehension. Staff at Belleaire will work to deepen their understanding of how students best learn math concepts and work to increase their instructional skills to ensure that learning.
- Progress will be monitored through the evaluation of student achievement on the following: MAP, NeSA, AYP status, and District Essential Objectives. Data and instructional practices will be monitored and evaluated during teacher collaboration on a weekly basis. Instructional strategies will be developed and implemented to meet the individual needs of the students.

How can parents get involved?

Here are some suggestions to help you work with your school and District to support improvements:

- Support and reinforce your child's good study habits. Review their homework and test results. Contact your child's teacher when you have questions.
- Visit your child's school and volunteer
- Participate in parent, teacher, and student conferences.
- Encourage your child to put forth his/her best effort each day.
- Learn more about the new NCLB requirements. Become aware of strategies to improve student academic achievement. Additional information and resources are available from our State Department of Education and the US Department of Education (www.ed.gov) websites.

What are parent's options?

Belleaire Elementary School is an excellent school and will continue to provide excellent educational opportunities for your students. However, because Belleaire receives Federal Title I funds and has been listed as "*Needs Improvement*", parents also have the option of participating in the Public School Choice Program. Under this program, you are eligible to transfer your child to another school in Bellevue Public Schools that has not been designated as *Needs Improvement*. Additional information about these schools can be found at the District or State websites listed earlier in this letter. Those elementary schools include:

Bertha Barber Betz Central Twin Ridge

Bellevue Public Schools is required to provide transportation for students to transfer to another school during the time that Belleaire is on the *Needs Improvement* list. Persons interested in participating in the Public School Choice Program must make the decision to transfer, between December 9, 2013 thru December 20, 2013. Transfers will occur immediately. Please contact Michelle Shankland at (402) 293-4020 for more information or to participate in the Public School Choice Program.

Supplemental Educational Services

(Only available to students who qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch)

As a result of Belleaire Elementary's school improvement status we are able to provide tutoring services to children who are eligible for free and reduced lunch. These tutoring services will be provided before school, after school, and/or during the summer. The services will be in addition to the instruction that students receive during the school day. The goal is to help students increase academic achievement in reading, language arts, and/or mathematics.

In the weeks to come, if your child qualifies for free or reduced lunch, you will be given the opportunity to choose a tutoring program from the list of Nebraska's approved Supplemental Educational Services (SES) Providers, who have agreed to provide services that are consistent with the instructional program of the district/state. They have agreed to provide you and your child's teachers information on the progress of your child.

For more information on Belleaire and all of our schools in Bellevue, visit the District website at www.bellevuepublicschools.org.

Thank you for all that you do to support your child's education. If you have questions, please call me at (402) 293-4510.

Sincerely,



Dr. Dwayne Chism
Principal