



RIO RANCHO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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"Student Excellence"

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September 3, 2008

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The New Mexico Department of Public Education has released its annual school ratings for 2008. The ratings are based on the results of the New Mexico Standards-Based Assessments (NMSBA), achievement tests given to students in grades 3-9 and grade 11 in the spring of 2008.

Schools may achieve a rating of "Meets AYP" or "AYP Not Met". AYP stands for "adequate yearly progress", and refers to the federally-mandated goal that all students demonstrate proficiency in reading and math by the year 2014. The academic data is reported in terms of the percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency targets.

Schools that do not make AYP for two consecutive years enter the school improvement cycle. Despite making strong gains in many areas, Eagle Ridge Middle School did not make AYP again this year and has been designated by the state as a "corrective action" school. State law, in accordance with the mandates of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), establishes steps that corrective action schools must take to inform parents of this designation and to provide parents with the opportunity to transfer their child to a school that has not been found "in need of improvement" (referred to as "school choice").

As NM Education Secretary Veronica Garcia noted in announcing this year's statewide test results, the fact that a school has been found to be "in need of improvement," does not make it a bad school. The state's school accountability system includes as many as 37 separate measures for each school. If a school does not reach targets in any one of these measures, the school does not make AYP.

How Did Our School Do?

The chart below shows how Eagle Ridge Middle School students scored on the tests given in the spring of 2008:

| Eagle Ridge Middle School | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|---|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Proficiency: Expressed in terms of the percentage of students in a subgroup demonstrating proficiency in the subject area. A school meets AYP if the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency meets or exceeds state targets. Participation: Indicates whether at least 95% of students in the subgroup completed the test. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Percentage of indicators meeting AYP: 93% (27 of 29 rated areas) | | | | | | | | | | |
| School rating: AYP Not Met | | | School improvement status: Corrective Action (CA) | | | | | Years in school improvement: 3 | | |
| Subgroup | All students | Caucasian | African-American | Hispanic | Asian/Pacific | American Indian | English-language learners | Students with disabilities | Economically disadvantaged | Additional indicator: Attendance |
| Mathematics proficiency | 38.9 Meets AYP | 43.8 Meets AYP | ** | 36.2 Meets AYP | ** | 34.3 Meets AYP | 23.9 Meets AYP | 10.9 AYP Not Met | 29.7 Meets AYP | Meets AYP |
| Reading Proficiency | 63.9 Meets AYP | 70.5 Meets AYP | ** | 59.0 Meets AYP | ** | 50.0 Meets AYP | 49.3 Meets AYP | 26.6 AYP Not Met | 55.3 Meets AYP | |
| Mathematics Participation | Meets AYP | Meets AYP | ** | Meets AYP | ** | Meets AYP | Meets AYP | Meets AYP | Meets AYP | |
| Reading Participation | Meets AYP | Meets AYP | ** | Meets AYP | ** | Meets AYP | Meets AYP | Meets AYP | Meets AYP | |
| **Subgroups with fewer than 25 students <u>do not</u> receive an AYP designation based on the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency. Subgroups with fewer than 40 students <u>do not</u> receive an AYP designation for participation. | | | | | | | | | | |

What we are doing about it:

The chart below compares last year’s results to this year’s. Eagle Ridge met the state targets for all groups of students except students with disabilities, and most subgroups showed strong improvement in reading.

| Eagle Ridge Middle School | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Subgroup | Reading | | | | Math | | | |
| | Proficient & Above 2007 | Proficient & Above 2008 | Difference | % difference | Proficient & Above 2007 | Proficient & Above 2008 | Difference | % difference |
| All Students | 58.2% | 63.9% | 5.7% | 9.7% | 42.0% | 38.9% | -3.1% | -7.3% |
| Caucasian | 62.7% | 70.5% | 7.8% | 12.4% | 50.0% | 43.8% | -6.2% | -12.4% |
| African-American | 61.9% | 63.2% | 1.3% | 2.1% | 38.1% | 31.6% | -6.5% | -17.1% |
| Hispanic | 51.4% | 59.0% | 7.6% | 14.8% | 33.7% | 36.2% | 2.5% | 7.3% |
| Asian* | 50.0% | 50.0% | | | 66.7% | 20.0% | | |
| American Indian* | 73.2% | 60.0% | -13.2% | -18.0% | 43.9% | 34.3% | -9.6% | -21.9% |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 48.8% | 55.3% | 6.5% | 13.4% | 34.8% | 29.7% | -5.1% | -14.8% |
| Students w Disabilities | 23.3% | 26.6% | 3.3% | 14.4% | 15.1% | 10.9% | -4.2% | -27.9% |
| English Language Learners | 35.0% | 49.3% | 14.3% | 40.9% | 10.0% | 23.9% | 13.9% | 139.0% |

Under NCLB all students, including students with limited proficiency in English and students with disabilities, are required to meet the same rigorous standards of proficiency in reading and math. Our special education teachers and students have worked very hard to bring the achievement levels of students with disabilities up to the same level as all other students. However, we have not had the results we had hoped for and are still struggling to find the answers to help that group of students. We are taking additional specific steps this year to evaluate and improve learning for students with disabilities at Eagle Ridge and throughout the district:

- The general education curriculum (subject areas such as math, science, reading, English, and social studies) must be taught consistently throughout the district, with instruction adapted to meet the needs of students with disabilities as needed.
- Students with disabilities who need extra help to become proficient will be provided with extra help using tried-and-true methods and materials approved by the district..
- We are in the process of bringing in an outside team of specialists to take a look at our special education programs and make recommendations for improvement
- We will bring together teachers from around the district who have been especially successful in teaching students with disabilities to share their best practices and develop strategies and programs they can share with other teachers.

Many factors contribute to making a school successful. Achievement tests like the NMSBA are just one measure: a snapshot of how our students performed at one particular point in time. The tests provide us with useful information about where our instruction is effective and where students need extra help. We use this and other data, including student performance on assignments throughout the year, to adjust our instructional strategies for your child and our children in general.

How We Compare:

The following chart compares the overall performance of Eagle Ridge Middle School with other middle schools in Rio Rancho and with the state averages:

| Middle School | Percentage of all students scoring at the "proficient" level or above | |
|-----------------------------|---|-------|
| | Reading | Math |
| Eagle Ridge | 63.9% | 38.9% |
| Lincoln | 66.9% | 56.8% |
| Mountain View | 73.5% | 63.4% |
| State average (all schools) | 53.3% | 36.0% |

Data on all of our schools may be accessed through the RRPS Web site: <http://www.rrps.net/Achievement/Instruction/08SchoolAYPReports.htm> This site also includes links to the Public Education Department (PED) reports containing complete data for each school.

School Improvement and Your Options for School Choice:

Schools that do not make AYP for two consecutive years enter the school improvement cycle. Once entering this cycle, schools must make AYP for two consecutive years in order to leave school improvement status. This is becoming increasingly difficult, because each year the targets schools must meet in terms of the percentage of the students who demonstrate proficiency are higher (this year, by 11%). Eagle Ridge made AYP last year. However, because the school did not make AYP this year, it moves further along in the school improvement cycle and ahs become a "Corrective Action" school.

Schools in any phase of "school improvement" must offer parents the option to transfer their child to another school within the school district that has not been identified for improvement. As a parent of a student at Eagle Ridge Middle School, the following options are available to you:

- Your child may remain enrolled at Eagle Ridge.
- Your child may transfer to Mountain View Middle School. Mountain View has a similar educational program to Eagle Ridge Middle School. Parents wishing to exercise this option are responsible for providing their child's transportation to and from school.

If the demands for transfers exceed the available space in the school in which students can be safely accommodated, the priority is to accommodate low-achieving low-income students.

If you would like to exercise the transfer option, please pick up a transfer form from the school office, fill it out, and return it to the school office within 30 days of the receipt of this letter.

Test scores are just one factor in determining if a given school is the best place for your child. If you have questions about your child's or our school's test results, please feel free to contact me. Along with your child's teacher, I will be glad to work with you and your child to help you understand the results and determine whether your child would be best served by remaining at Eagle Ridge or by transferring to another school.

In addition to offering parents the option to transfer, schools in school improvement must also schedule a public meeting to provide an explanation of what the identification means and why the school was identified as a school in need of improvement. **This meeting will be held Tuesday, September 16, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM at the Eagle Ridge Middle School Media Center.** At the meeting, the school must provide data for other schools in the district and statewide, and an explanation of how parents can become involved in addressing the issues. The law also requires the school to evaluate and revise its Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS), a process our school has always followed.

Schools in “Corrective Action” also must take one or more of the following measures (some of which Eagle Ridge has already undertaken):

- Provide for all relevant staff appropriate, scientifically research-based professional development that is likely to improve academic achievement of low-performing students.
- Institute a new curriculum grounded in scientifically based research and provide appropriate professional development to support its implementation.
- Extend the length of the school year or school day.
- Replace the school staff deemed relevant to the school not making adequate progress.
- Significantly decrease management authority at the school.
- Restructure the internal organization of the school; or
- Appoint one or more outside experts to advise the school;
 - How to revise and strengthen the improvement plan the school created while in school improvement status; and/or
 - How to address the specific issues underlying the school’s continued inability to make AYP.

Whether you decide to request a transfer for your child or not, we encourage you to take an active role in your child’s education. Parents are our partners in supporting school improvement and play a very important role in their child’s success in school. Here are some ways you can help.

- Attend the community forum on **Tuesday, September 16. 6:30 PM, in the Eagle Ridge Media Center**
- Become involved with your School Advisory Council and/or the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)
- Communicate regularly with your child’s teacher
- Help your child at home with reading and math (your child’s teacher can help you learn how)
- Encourage your child to become involved with extracurricular school clubs or activities such as athletics or music, or with community or church groups. Students who feel connected to school and are involved with their school and community tend to do better academically.
- Make sure your child comes to school well-rested, fed, and ready to learn

Please remember that if you do not complete and return the transfer application **within 30 days** or your child will remain at Eagle Ridge. If you have any questions or need additional information about your school choice options, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Debby Morrell
Principal
Eagle Ridge Middle School