



# RIO RANCHO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

500 Laser Road NE  
Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87124

"Student Excellence"

(505) 896-0667  
Fax (505) 896-0662  
www.rrps.net

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 gains in many areas, Lincoln Middle School falls into this category and has been designated by the state as a school "in need of improvement." State law, in accordance with the mandates of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), establishes steps that schools found to be in need of improvement 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 Lincoln Middle School students scored on the tests given in the spring of 2008:

Lincoln Middle School										
<b>Proficiency:</b> 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. <b>Participation:</b> Indicates whether at least 95% of students in the subgroup completed the test.										
Percentage of indicators meeting AYP: <b>93% (27 of 29 rated areas)</b>										
School rating: <b>AYP Not Met</b>			School improvement status: <b>School Improvement I (SI-1)</b>					Years in school improvement: <b>1</b>		
Subgroup	All students	Caucasian	African-American	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific	American Indian	English-language learners	Students with disabilities	Economically disadvantaged	Additional indicator: Attendance
Mathematics proficiency	56.8 Meets AYP	62.9 Meets AYP	44.4 Meets AYP	51.1 Meets AYP	**	**	39.2 Meets AYP	11.0 AYP Not Met	44.3 Meets AYP	Meets AYP
Reading Proficiency	66.9 Meets AYP	69.3 Meets AYP	75.0 Meets AYP	63.1 Meets AYP	**	**	49.0 Meets AYP	9.6 AYP Not Met	57.0 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. Lincoln students demonstrated improvement this year in many areas and especially, overall, in math:

Lincoln Middle School								
Subgroup	Reading				Math			
	Proficient & Above 2007	Proficient & Above 2008	Difference	% difference	Proficient & Above 2007	Proficient & Above 2008	Difference	% difference
All Students	65.0%	66.9%	1.9%	2.9%	49.8%	56.8%	7.0%	14.0%
Caucasian	69.9%	69.3%	-0.6%	-0.8%	53.8%	62.9%	9.1%	17.0%
African-American	65.6%	75.0%	9.4%	14.3%	46.9%	44.4%	-2.5%	-5.3%
Hispanic	58.9%	63.1%	4.3%	7.2%	44.7%	51.1%	6.4%	14.3%
Asian*	75.0%	77.3%	2.3%	3.1%	66.7%	72.7%	6.0%	9.0%
American Indian*	55.6%	52.6%	-3.0%	-5.3%	44.4%	42.1%	-2.3%	-5.3%
Economically Disadvantaged	53.0%	57.0%	4.0%	7.5%	38.7%	44.3%	5.6%	14.6%
Students w Disabilities	18.8%	9.6%	-9.2%	-49.0%	16.5%	11.0%	-5.5%	-33.2%
English Language Learners	53.0%	49.0%	-4.0%	-7.6%	35.3%	39.2%	3.9%	11.1%

However, we are very concerned about the decline in the already unacceptably low scores for students with disabilities. 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. Our school and the school district are taking specific steps this year to evaluate and improve learning for students with disabilities at Lincoln 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 Lincoln 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		Data on all of our schools may be accessed through the RRPS Web site: <a href="http://www.rrps.net/Achievement/Instruction/08SchoolAYPReports.htm">http://www.rrps.net/Achievement/Instruction/08SchoolAYPReports.htm</a> This site also includes links to the Public Education Department (PED) reports containing complete data for each school.
	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%	

## School Improvement and Your Options for School Choice:

Schools that do not make AYP for two consecutive years enter the school improvement cycle. The first year of "school improvement" is called "School Improvement I" (SI-1). When a school goes into SI - 1 status, parents must be offered 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 Lincoln Middle School, the following options are available to you:

- Your child may remain enrolled at Lincoln.
- Your child may transfer to Mountain View Middle School. Mountain View has a similar educational program to Lincoln 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 Lincoln or by transferring to another school.

In addition to offering parents the option to transfer, schools in the first year of 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 on **Tuesday, September 16, 6:30 PM, in the Eagle Ridge 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.

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 Lincoln. If you have any questions or need additional information about your school choice options, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Myra Roosevelt  
Principal  
Lincoln Middle School