



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 gains in many areas, Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary 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 Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary students scored on the tests given in the spring of 2008:

Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary										
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: 95% (20 of 21 rated areas)										
School rating: AYP Not Met			School improvement status: School Improvement I (SI-1)					Years in school improvement: 1		
Subgroup	All students	Caucasian	African-American	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific	American Indian	English-language learners	Students with disabilities	Economically disadvantaged	Additional indicator: Attendance
Mathematics proficiency	66.8 Meets AYP	74.5 Meets AYP	**	56.7 Meets AYP	**	**	**	34.7 Meets AYP	50.9 Meets AYP	Meets AYP
Reading Proficiency	73.0 Meets AYP	79.8 Meets AYP	**	68.0 Meets AYP	**	**	**	20.4 AYP Not Met	60.9 Meets AYP	
Mathematics Participation	Meets AYP	Meets AYP	**	Meets AYP	**	**	**	Meets AYP	Meets AYP	
Reading Participation	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.										

Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School								
Subgroup	Reading				Math			
	Proficient & Above 2007	Proficient & Above 2008	Difference	% difference	Proficient & Above 2007	Proficient & Above 2008	Difference	% difference
All Students	79.7%	73.0%	-6.7%	-8.4%	69.2%	66.8%	-2.4%	-3.5%
Caucasian	83.7%	79.8%	-3.9%	-4.6%	74.0%	74.5%	0.5%	0.7%
African-American	78.6%	52.6%	-26.0%	-33.1%	71.4%	63.2%	-8.2%	-11.5%
Hispanic	74.4%	68.0%	-6.4%	-8.6%	63.2%	56.7%	-6.5%	-10.3%
Asian*	85.7%	75.0%	-10.7%	-12.5%	100.0%	83.3%	-16.7%	-16.7%
American Indian*	66.7%	61.5%	-5.2%	-7.8%	33.3%	61.5%	28.2%	84.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	64.3%	60.9%	-3.4%	-5.3%	50.9%	50.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Students w/ Disabilities	25.0%	20.4%	-4.6%	-18.4%	22.2%	34.7%	12.5%	56.2%
English Language Learners	68.4%	66.7%	-1.7%	-2.5%	57.9%	66.7%	8.8%	15.2%

What we are doing about it:

The chart above shows the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency last year and this year in the tested core subjects of reading and math.

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 two specific steps this year to evaluate and improve learning for students with disabilities at MLK 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 Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary with other elementary schools in Rio Rancho and with the state averages:

Elementary School	Percentage of all students scoring at the "proficient" level or above	
	Reading	Math
Cielo Azul (new school)	Not rated	Not rated
Colinas del Norte	65.1%	55.6%
Enchanted Hills	79.1%	74.4%
Ernest Stapleton	65.8%	60.4%
Maggie Cordova	79.4%	81.1%
Martin Luther King, Jr.	73.0%	66.8%
Puesta del Sol	52.3%	46.1%
Rio Rancho ES	66.7%	53.3%
Sandia Vista (new school)	Not rated	Not rated
Vista Grande	78.9%	67.8%
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. 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. If there is not sufficient space in a school to allow all students to who wish to transfer to do so, priority is given to low-achieving, low-income students.

As a parent of a student at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary, the following options are available to you:

- Your child may remain enrolled at MLK.
- Your child may transfer to Rio Rancho Elementary School or to Enchanted Hills Elementary School. Both schools have similar educational programs to those at MLK. 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 MLK 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 Thursday, September 18, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM at the Stapleton Elementary School Cafeteria, 3100 8th Ave. NE.** 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 **Thursday, September 18, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM at the Stapleton Elementary School Cafeteria, 3100 8th Ave. NE**
- 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)
- Read to your child nightly
- 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 MLK. If you have any questions or need additional information about your school choice options, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Marilee Bryant
Principal
Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School