



# ZILLAH SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 205

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<http://www.zillahschools.org/>

“Educational Excellence for Everyone”

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## Public School Choice Letter (Step 1 Schools)

August 4, 2015

Dear Hilton Elementary School Parents/Guardians:

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 started with a lofty goal: Every student was to pass every state test in reading and math by the year 2014, no matter what their school passing rate was in 2001. To make sure they were on track to meet that goal, schools reported annually whether or not they had made adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward meeting the 100 percent pass rate on time.

We've come a long way since 2001. The number of students passing their state tests has increased significantly.

But as our nation moved closer to 2014, it became apparent that a 100 percent pass rate was unrealistic. Although scores were improving, more and more schools were not meeting AYP because the percentage of students needing to pass the tests increased each year. Many people considered reporting AYP meaningless, because so few schools could meet it.

Most states, including Washington, applied for waivers from AYP. Our state was granted a waiver during school years 2012-13 and 2013-14. During those years, Washington was given the flexibility outside the AYP system to identify schools that needed the most help and target funding to schools with the highest need.

State test scores and graduation rates continued to rise.

Despite our continued success, the U.S. Department of Education did not renew our waiver for the 2014-15 school year. They denied the waiver because the Washington state Legislature did not pass a bill to require teacher/principal evaluations to include student growth on state tests, when appropriate. The use of student test scores as part of the teacher evaluation system is a federal requirement to keep an AYP waiver.

That means we're back to reporting AYP. Because Congress can't agree about how to fix this failed policy, our kids are once again caught in a system of requirements that fall short of supporting real learning.

One of those NCLB requirements is to let you know that, using data from 2010-11 and 2013-14, our school did not meet AYP this year because at least one of the following has happened:

- One or more of our students did not pass the state tests in reading and/or math.

This means we are considered to be in “Step 1 of Improvement.” You can see our school's AYP reports and compare them to the reports from every school in the district and state on the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) website: [www.k12.wa.us](http://www.k12.wa.us). Click on the “School Report Card” button.

Because our school receives federal Title I, Part A money, there are consequences for not meeting AYP this year.

We must inform you that:

- You may choose to transfer to nearby school that is not in a “step of improvement.”
- We are revising our school improvement plan.
- We are receiving extra support from OSPI.
- Parents are strongly encouraged to get involved at our school.

**School Choice**

You may choose to transfer to nearby school that is not in a “step of improvement.” The school district will pay for transportation to and from that school, until our school meets AYP for two years in a row.

There are currently no school in the Zillah School District or neighboring districts that have met AYP.

**School Improvement Plan**

We are revising our school improvement plan. Parents are invited and encouraged to take part in that process. We will continue to develop strategies, policies and practices that use scientifically based research. Our staff will continue to receive high-quality professional development. Please understand, however, that all this was going on even while we were not required to meet AYP requirements.

**State Support**

We receive support from OSPI to help us analyze data reports and improve curriculum, strengthen core academic instruction, and work with parents to improve student learning. Again, this was going on before we lost our AYP waiver.

**Parental Involvement**

Parents are strongly encouraged to get involved at our school. Research shows that when parents are a part of the school community, students are more successful. Please call Doug Burge at 829-5400 to learn about

- Parental involvement policies
- School-parent compact
- Ongoing parent/community meetings
- Advisory committee/school site council meetings
- Parent volunteer opportunities

Please keep in mind the only reason you are receiving this letter this year is because Washington state lost its waiver from NCLB requirements. Our school continues to make progress. Our teachers and students work hard every day in the classroom.

Sincerely,

Kevin McKay, Superintendent

Doug Burge, Principal