



BARROW COUNTY SCHOOLS

"World class education, hometown values"

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Barrow County School System 2010-2011 AYP Results

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The State Department of Education has released information concerning school systems across the state of Georgia and their designation as having met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or not. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) requires that information concerning public school performance be released to the public.

Will Dunn
District 4

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District 5

In Georgia, AYP information is released as an Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Report, a summary detailing how Georgia public schools have performed on state-developed accountability standards in accordance with federal requirements. ESEA requires the determination of AYP for both schools and districts as a way of ensuring that all children have an equal opportunity to receive a quality education. Furthermore, each category required by AYP must be met at the same rate for all students. In other words, the subgroups of Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged, English Language Learners, Hispanic, Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan, White, and Multi-Racial must meet the same academic standards as all students. ESEA requires annual increases in the percent of students meeting standards so that by 2013-2014 one-hundred percent of our students will meet proficiency standards.

Rickey Bailey
District 6

Daniel H. Cromer
District 7
At Large

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Mark Still
District 9
At Large

The Adequate Yearly Progress Report for Barrow County students reflects areas of strength as well as areas in need of improvement. The school district is extremely proud that all academic benchmarks were met at the system level. AYP goals are set by the state for each academic area and increase annually. The state requires that 75.7% of students meet or exceed standards in Math on the CRCT and that 80% of students meet or exceed standards in Reading/English Language Arts on the CRCT. In Barrow, 85.8% of students met or exceeded standards in Mathematics and 92.7% met or exceeded standards in Reading/English Language Arts. The state also requires that 76% of students meet or exceed standards on the Georgia High School Graduation Test in Mathematics and that 90.8% of students meet or exceed standards on the Georgia High School Graduation Test in English/Language Arts. In Barrow, students exceeded the goal for the Mathematics GHS GT and met the goal for the English Language Arts GHS GT.

Barrow County Elementary School AYP Results

The report indicated that seven of the eight elementary schools met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based on the academic performance, attendance, and the percent of students who participated in standardized testing. When the results of elementary school students who took the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) were analyzed by the state, the data indicated that the state standards were met in 176 of 177 areas.

Marisa Grant, Principal of Bethlehem Elementary School, says, “We are so proud of the academic gains of Bethlehem Elementary based on the Adequate Yearly Progress determination. We have capable data-driven teachers and leaders and a culture that values rigor and relevance. Teachers collaborated with lesson planning and walk-through data. We built learning communities and relationships in teaching and learning focusing on our academic weaknesses and the needs of our Balanced Scorecard. We have a cadre of well-trained teachers who work collaboratively toward increased student achievement. We also have a partnership with parents and community leaders that provide additional resources to mentor, tutor and support instruction. We “crushed” the CRCT as a team using differentiation, assessment and feedback from all stakeholders. BES is shining as a result of hard work and good practices.”

The elementary school in the system that did not meet AYP met the criteria in a large number of areas. Although Statham met the benchmarks for the “All” student population the school specifically did not meet AYP because 70.5% (or 39.5 out of 56 students) of the Students with Disabilities subgroup met or exceeded standards on the Reading/English Language Arts CRCT and the benchmark is 80%. The school will likely meet AYP once the CRCT retest scores are calculated and the new AYP results are released in the fall. Under ESEA, public schools and systems that do not meet AYP in the first year face no consequences. However, the school is already in the process of reviewing their school improvement plan to address this gap.

Barrow County Middle School AYP Results

For the system, middle school students participated in taking the CRCT at a rate that surpassed the state requirement of 95%. All Annual Measurable Objectives in Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics were met with the exception of two subpopulation groups in the area of math. In addition, the criteria were met for attendance. When the results of middle school students who took the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) were analyzed by the state, the data indicated that the state standards were met in 78 of 80 areas.

The middle schools in the system that did not meet AYP met the criteria in a large number of areas. Winder-Barrow Middle School specifically did not meet AYP because 63.1% (or 77 out of 122 students) of the Black subgroup met or exceeded standards on the Math CRCT and the benchmark is 75.7%. Winder-Barrow Middle School will likely see gains in this area once the CRCT retest scores are calculated and the new AYP results are released in the fall. Russell Middle School specifically did not meet AYP because 55.3% (or 52 out of 94 students) of the Students with Disabilities subgroup met or exceeded standards on the Math CRCT

and the benchmark is 75.7%. Russell Middle School will likely meet AYP once the CRCT retest scores are calculated and the new AYP results are released in the fall.

Although each of these schools met the benchmarks in the “All” student category, a small number of students not meeting standards within specific subgroups resulted in the schools not meeting AYP. Under ESEA, public schools and systems that do not meet AYP in the first year face no consequences. Each of the schools have been reviewing their data, meeting with their leadership teams, and developing plans to address identified concerns.

Barrow County High School AYP Results

All high schools in Georgia are required to meet the AYP benchmarks that are set by the state for each academic area. The school district is very pleased that this year Apalachee High School (AHS) met academic standards in all areas. The state requires that 76% of students meet standards on the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT) in Mathematics. At AHS, students met the goal for Mathematics in all four subgroups. The state requires that 90.8% of students meet standards on the GHS GT in English/Language Arts. At AHS, students met the goal in English/Language Arts in all four subgroups.

Winder-Barrow High School (WBHS) met academic standards in many areas for AYP, but did not meet the established academic benchmarks in two specific areas. At WBHS, 64% (or 32 out of 40 students) of the Black subgroup met or exceeded standards in Mathematics and the benchmark is 76%. Additionally, 79.5% (or 35 out of 44 students) of the Hispanic subgroup met or exceeded standards in English/Language Arts and the benchmark is 90.8%. Winder-Barrow High School will likely see gains in these areas once the GHS GT retest scores are calculated and the new AYP results are released in the fall.

The state also sets goals for high schools related to graduation rate, which is calculated using data from the previous four years. This year, the state graduation rate goal is 85% and both the AHS and WBHS graduation rates for 2011 are 75.4%. The graduation rates for both schools will most likely increase once the summer graduates are added in the early fall. We are working diligently to prepare students to graduate, and we have seen a 37.5% decrease in our drop-out rate over the last four years. In 2011, only 2.5% of AHS students and 2.1% of WBHS students chose to drop out of school.

Dr. Wanda Creel states, “It can be confusing to see a graduation rate at 76% and only see that 2.5% of students drop out of school. Not all students who finish high school in a given year count towards the graduation rate. For example, students who receive a special education diploma or meet all course requirements but only pass four out of five sections of the GHS GT do not count toward our graduation rate. Our school system is committed to reducing barriers and identifying strategies that will assist our students in being successful.”

In spite of the progress made by students at Winder-Barrow High School and at Apalachee High School during 2010-2011, the schools have been included on a list of schools in Georgia not meeting AYP. Both schools are now identified as Needs Improvement schools. Apalachee is designated as Needs Improvement because the school did not meet the graduation rate for two consecutive years. However, AHS met the AYP objectives in 16 of 17 areas this year. Winder-Barrow is designated as Needs Improvement because the school did not meet all of the academic objectives

and the graduation rate for two consecutive years. More specifically, WBHS met AYP objectives in 18 of 23 areas this year. Both schools are in the process of revising their school improvement plans that will focus on the academic achievement of all students.

David McGee, Principal of Apalachee High School, says, "We are very pleased that we met the requirements in every academic area and in each of our subgroups. The improvement shown by our economically disadvantaged students is encouraging. This is a reflection of the hard work and effort put forth by our students and teachers throughout the year. The disappointing piece in this process is that we did not make AYP because we fell short of the bar set for graduation rate which is a second indicator in the formula for AYP. Even though the bars continue to rise in the AYP process, our teachers and students will strive to meet the challenges."

Dr. Al Darby states, "At WBHS, we work tirelessly to prepare our students for success beyond the walls of our school. It is our goal for every student who enters our academic institution to meet all requirements for graduation. Our AYP results show improvement this year, and we will continue to work toward further improvement and ultimately success for "ALL" of our students."

In compliance with ESEA, all students enrolled at Apalachee High School and Winder-Barrow High School will have the opportunity to enroll in a school that is not designated as Needs Improvement. This transfer option is known as "public school choice." In Barrow County, the only public high school available for public school choice is the College and Career Preparatory Academy (CCPA). Parents who wish to apply for a transfer to the CCPA for school year 2011-2012 must do so no later than noon on August 4, 2011.

As part of our efforts to improve student achievement at Apalachee High School and Winder-Barrow High School we will also provide Supplemental Educational Services (SES), which is free tutoring provided by state-approved providers. If the school system does not have sufficient funds to provide services to all eligible children, priority will be given to those eligible children with the lowest test scores. The school system will pay tutors directly for their services, up to the maximum amount allowed by law.

Dr. Wanda Creel says, "I encourage everyone to consider that AYP is just one factor in determining a school's effectiveness. It is a fallacy that Needs Improvement schools are 'failing.' They are NOT. They are simply schools that have been identified as needing to improve in one or more very specific areas. I also want to encourage parents and community members to explore the AYP results of Barrow County as well as other districts at the State website www.gadoe.org. Without question, there is always need for further improvement and it continues to become increasingly difficult to meet AYP as the benchmarks increase. We accept the challenge and will move forward and take the next steps to reduce the gaps identified in these results. More specifically, we have already been working diligently with teachers and administrators this summer to establish new goals and put plans in place to ensure that we see positive gains in the 2011-2012 school year. We look forward to presenting the new targets in our Balanced Scorecard to the Board of Education on July 26, 2011. Student achievement is our number one goal as we continue to seek ways to provide a *World Class Education with Hometown Values* for all of our students. Thank you for all that you do to support your child's education."