

Benson - Castleton - Fair Haven - Fair Haven Union High - Hubbardton - Orwell - West Haven

Addison-Rutland Supervisory Union

49 Main Street

Fair Haven, Vermont 05743-1094

Phone (802) 265-4905

Fax (802) 265-2158

Ronald C. Ryan, Superintendent

Kristin H. Benway, Director of Special Services

Laura Z. Jakubowski, Director of Finance

Sherri Nichols, Curriculum & Staff Development Coordinator

Chris Cole, Information Technology Coordinator

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Dear Parents and Families:

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which was passed by the federal government in 2001, requires that all schools' efficacy be measured annually based on their performance on standardized tests in English and Math. The state of Vermont has set the bar for what adequate student performance on these tests should be, and schools that don't meet that bar are identified under NCLB as being in need of "improvement" or "restructuring".

As a part of complying with NCLB, expectations for school performance on standardized tests have increased every three years. At this point, the standard for school achievement has reached the maximum level. In order for a school to be considered effective by the federal government, every student in tested grades in that school must test as "proficient" on both standardized English and Math tests. This is an incredibly high bar to meet annually. We did not meet this goal, and neither did any other school in Vermont, a state whose schools rank highly when compared against the highest performing countries in the world.

In the past, adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations were based on the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) assessments and the Vermont Alternate Assessment Portfolio (VTAAP) given to Vermont public school students in grades three through eight and grade 11. Last year, instead of administering the NECAP, Vermont schools administered the new Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium test (SBAC), which is designed to assess student progress against the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Since last year was the SBAC's first implementation year, the Vermont Agency of Education conducted a waiver and this first year's data will not count towards AYP determinations for this year, ALL ARSU schools remain at their 2014-2015 status: Benson Village School is in Year 1 Corrective Action in both Reading and Mathematics. Castleton Hubbardton US #42 is in Year 1 Corrective Action in both Reading and Mathematics. Fair Haven Grade School Did not make is in Year 4 Corrective Action for both Reading and Mathematics. Orwell Village School Did not make AYP for the first time in both Reading and Mathematics. Fair Haven UHS #16 is in Year 2 School Improvement in both Reading and Mathematics.

One consequence of not making adequate yearly progress in these areas is that ARSU is required to set aside an amount of our Title 1 grant funds to provide *outside tutoring services for all students who qualify for free or reduced lunch* (students don't have to actually accept free or reduced lunch, they need only be eligible). These services are called Supplemental Educational Services (SES) and provide additional instruction for students who are eligible and would benefit from further support in meeting their academic goals. These services are skill based and are not designed to help with homework or with organization, but rather to develop and reinforce identified academic skills. Tutoring can only be obtained through providers approved by the Vermont Agency of Education (VTAOE). The cost of these services will be paid for by the Addison-Rutland Supervisory Union.

How Does My Child Qualify?

All children *who are eligible for free or reduced lunch* qualify for supplemental tutoring services, regardless of whether they belong to a subgroup that performed poorly. *There is no obligation to enroll your child.* Should demand for tutoring exceed the monies we were required to set aside, priority will be given to the lowest performing students.

How Do I Access These Services?

Below you will find a downloadable form entitled *Notification of Intent to Access Supplemental Tutoring Services*. *If you intend to get supplemental tutoring services for your child*, please fill out the form and return it to the school. The school must receive this form **no later than February 1, 2016** for you to access funds to pay for tutoring. Notices received after February 1st cannot be honored.

A list of providers on the Vermont Agency of Education approved list who would serve our students can be obtained by contacting Kim Cloutier at 438-2288 ext. 207 or by visiting the Vermont Agency of Education website at: http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-SES_Vermont_Approved_Providers.pdf. You may select from any providers on the list, although some do not provide services in our area so keep that in mind. You must record the provider contact information on the attached *Notification of Intent to Access Supplemental Tutoring Services* form. The school will contact the provider to draft a contract and arrange for billing and payment.

What Else Do I Need to Know

Tutoring services must be provided by a person or entity listed on the *Vermont's Approved Providers of Supplemental Educational Services For School Year 2015-2016* document. The district is not allowed to pay for the services of tutors who do not appear on the list. We are also not allowed to recommend a provider. Once you notify us of your choice of provider, we will do the work required to enroll your child with that provider. Tutoring services must be provided after or before school hours, during vacations, or on weekends. This tutoring cannot happen during the school day, and may not be able to occur at the school. Parents are responsible for providing transportation.

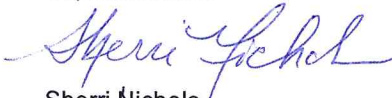
We are committed to continuous school improvement, and to supporting all of our students in their effort to succeed. This is what we strive to achieve every day. We are continuously working to improve the quality of our programs and student supports. This year, our schools will continue to partner with the Agency of Education to implement a continuous improvement plan for our schools that will support the needs of all students. Our 2015-2016 Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) continues outlines implementation of a student-centered approach to learning. This will involve instruction in Common Core State Standards, an on-going cycle of embedded formative assessment and student performance data analysis, and our transition to a proficiency based model.

As we identify opportunities for parent and family participation in the development and implementation of our improvement plans, we'll let you know. We hope that you will continue to support our school in these efforts, and we value your involvement.

Sincerely,



Ron Ryan
Superintendent



Sherri Nichols
Curriculum & Staff Development Coordinator