

The Orchard School

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South Burlington, VT
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Dear Orchard Families,

As you know, our South Burlington schools offer exceptional educational programs and have a number of instructional, and administrative opportunities this year that we believe will strengthen the level of relevance, rigor, and relationships in our district. *The No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), enacted 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; schools that do not 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 been raised every three years. **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 year, our school did not meet this goal, and neither did any other school in Vermont, a state whose schools rank highly when compared using other assessment measures, against other states, and against some the highest performing countries in the world.

We are committed to continuous school improvement and supporting all of our students in their efforts and do not believe that NCLB effectively measures the quality of our school—what our students know, or what our school and district are doing to support their learning and development. This stance regarding NCLB as a model for measuring school quality is something that the Vermont Agency of Education has also been vocal about, as evidenced by a recent public release from the Agency.

While we reject NCLB labeling of all Vermont schools as "low-performing", we are continuously working to improve the quality of our programs and student supports. This year, we will continue to partner with our District and the Agency of Education to implement a continuous improvement plan for our school that will support the needs of all of our school's students. We will be reviewing all of our programs as a part of a more comprehensive review of our school's academic experiences and student supports. As we identify opportunities for parent and family participation in the development and implementation of our improvement plans, we will keep you informed.

On the NECAP test of Reading, Orchard performed higher than the state average of 70%, with 84% of our students scoring at or above proficiency. In Math, Orchard students were 83% proficient compared to 62% state wide. These are also some of the highest scores in the district as well!

Please see the Vermont Department of Education's website for a complete disaggregation of Orchard Elementary School's data. It is open to the public and can be found on their web-site by using the following link: http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_accountability/ayp/lea_A_D.html.

If you have any questions or thoughts about AYP or our School Action Plans please reach out to us in person, by phone, or through e-mail.

Sincerely,

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