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November 5, 2015

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Cardinal Elementary is dedicated to providing all students with a sound education that prepares them to succeed in school and in life. We set high learning expectations for every child. In fact, last year the overall reading, math and science achievement at Cardinal Elementary increased. However, the state and federal governments judge schools based on the results of State NeSA tests for many student sub-groups. Examples of student groups include English language learners and special education students.

As a part of a federal law known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, public schools, through NeSA test scores, are judged against multiple goals established by NCLB. Last year, Cardinal Elementary was required to meet reading and math goals in multiple subgroups in order to be judged as meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). If one of these subgroup goals is not met, the school is labeled as not meeting AYP. In 2014-2015, Cardinal Elementary did not meet AYP. This is due to NCLB goals being at 100% for all subgroups. Overall, Cardinal Elementary met many of the AYP criteria but not all. However, for the last six years some of the student groups did not meet the goals in the areas of reading and mathematics. As a result, Cardinal Elementary School has been labeled as a school in need of improvement, Year 4. This places the building in restructuring planning status.

Names of the Title I schools that did and did not meet the AYP standards for 2014-2015 were released by the Nebraska Department of Education in the *State of the Schools* Report. You can compare and contrast the proficiencies of all Nebraska schools, including all schools in South Sioux City Community School District, at the following website: <http://www.education.ne.gov/documents/SOSR.html>. The link to follow is "2014-2015 Report".

As a Needs Improvement School for four years, Cardinal Elementary is entering a period know as "Restructuring." Therefore, by law, Cardinal Elementary is required to develop a restructuring plan to be implemented next school year if it does not meet AYP this year. The plan that is developed must re-do how the governance of the school is structured. The law also requires that parents have opportunities to comment about the plan. As a Cardinal Elementary parent, you will be receiving information about upcoming meetings to comment about the school's restructuring plan.

Because of our current status, we are using an Action Plan to improve learning for every student. As a part of our school's plan we:

- Use classroom reading and math test results to focus instruction on specific student needs during PLUS Time;
- Implement identified Marzano's Art and Science of Teaching strategies throughout lessons to improve teaching and learning;
- Differentiate instruction with small groups of learners to re-teach for mastery or extend learning for rigor; and
- Provide many literacy strategies throughout all subject areas.

It takes two years to prove that our students are making adequate yearly progress and be removed from the School Improvement classification; therefore, our school will be designated as School Improvement for at least two years. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires each school identified for Title I School Improvement to offer Public School Choice to all students who attend the identified school. As all of our elementary schools are identified as in school improvement status, our district has no schools available for public school choice. Therefore, there is no transfer option available to our students.

As a Needs Improvement School for at least two years, Cardinal Elementary is required to offer Supplemental Educational Services (SES) to any student who is eligible for free and reduced lunch. If more eligible students sign up for SES than can be funded, priority will be given to students with the greatest academic need. A list of groups providing supplemental educational services in the South Sioux City Community School District area is included with this letter.

Your support matters and we encourage you to attend school events such as parent/teacher conferences and curriculum nights. Please contact us or check our website for information about our parent events. We would also be eager to provide you any "at home" strategies to support reading and math learning.

We invite you to contact the school if you have additional questions about any details. We will continue to celebrate our school's many successes as we continuously work to provide a quality education for all students.

Sincerely,

Dan Swatek
Cardinal Elementary School Principal

Enclosure