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June 10, 2016

Dear Horse Heaven Hills Middle School Parent/Guardian;

The Kennewick School District is committed to providing your children the best education possible. Our outstanding administrators, teachers and staff continually seek methods to improve our instructional strategies to meet the high academic standards established by the State of Washington and the Kennewick School District. We hope your child is enjoying the school year and is engaged in learning the content for his/her grade level.

School districts are required to notify parents/guardians when schools that their children attend have been identified as a “**Focused**” school. Recently, Horse Heaven Hills Middle School was identified as a “Focused” school based on an analysis of student achievement as compared with other schools in our state. This analysis specifically identified that our “English Language Learners” group has not met the goals or expectations over the past three years on state assessments in reading and math.

On December 10, 2015, President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA replaces the previous reauthorization of ESEA, known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, enacted in 2002. ESSA will be fully operational in school year 2017-18. The 2016-17 school year will be a transition year, and as such, schools identified as “**Focused**” and “**Priority**” in 2015-16, will remain “frozen” and will continue to implement their approved interventions through the 2016-2017 school year.

- A “**Reward**” school is a Title I school that has met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in both reading and math for three years for the school and for all subgroups.
- “**Priority**” schools represent the bottom scoring 5% of all schools in the state. For the 2015-16 school-year, schools were added to this list based on how their students scored on the 2012, 2013, and 2014 state assessments.
- “**Focused**” schools represent the next lowest scoring 10% of all Washington State schools.

Horse Heaven Hills Middle School has been identified as a “Focused” school based on their three-year average on the state assessment in reading and math for limited English speaking students. Because of this identification, the Kennewick School District and Horse Heaven Hills must adhere to a set of regulations and changes that include: providing strong leadership; reviewing test and assessment data; ensuring that all staff are highly qualified and effective; providing on-going job embedded professional development for teachers and staff; implementing a tiered intervention system that helps students who are most needy; and utilizing data to help guide instructional and professional development for staff. It also requires that Horse Heaven Hills implement college and career readiness programs.

The administration and staff at Horse Heaven Hills continues to work diligently preparing students to meet state and district academic standards. Most of the indicators of student progress show that the students are making good progress toward achieving the state goals.

To increase learning outcomes for all our students, we are taking the following action steps over the next few months:

1. Participate in a Needs Assessment to identify strengths and challenges in our school; the assessment will also include recommendations for improvement.
2. Identify the next steps we will take to improve learning outcomes for our students, by completing our “Student and School Success Action Plan”; which must be submitted to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction for review and approval by October 30, 2016.
3. Engage parents/guardians and our school community in our improvement efforts.

During the 2016-17 school year, we will implement our plan and continue to examine a variety of data to ensure that we are making progress.

Parent Involvement

As a parent/guardian, your input is valued and encouraged. There are many ways that you can be involved in helping us address the issues around school improvement. Some examples include:

1. Communicating with teaching staff through the Parent Portal and student planners.
2. Participating in school-parent activities.
3. Monitoring your child’s academic progress and reinforcing good study habit at home.

In closing, Horse Heaven Hills’ staff is committed to the success of your school and to serving all our students. Horse Heaven Hills is not alone in their efforts. The district is working very hard to assist the staff and students at Horse Heaven Hills by providing an instructional coach and staff training on instructional strategies and best practices for helping students learn.

If you have any questions, please contact Horse Heaven Hills Middle School at 222-6800. More details about the status of our state, district, and school, in pursuit of ongoing improvement for all our students can be found at <http://www.k12.wa.us/ESEA.default.aspx>.

We are excited and optimistic about the future and hope that you join us in this important effort.

Sincerely,



Dave Bond
Superintendent