

NORTH COUNTRY SUPERVISORY UNION
JOHN CASTLE, SUPERINTENDENT
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Mission - North Country Supervisory Union will educate students to become effective communicators, problem solvers, reflective thinkers, ethical productive citizens, and life-long learners while embracing their diversity. – November 2008

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. 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 against the highest performing countries in the world. I encourage you to contact your school principal if you are interested in more information regarding student assessment data at the school, supervisory union or state level.

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. But we don't 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 the enclosed copy of 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, our schools will continue to partner with the Agency of Education to implement a continuous improvement plan for our school that will support the needs of all 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. Your child may be eligible for supplemental services, such as tutoring outside of school hours. Please contact Kathy Nolan at the NCSU office at 334-5847, ext. 2024 if you are interested in more information about supplemental services. 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,

John A. Castle
Superintendent