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November 6, 2013

Dear Parents/ Guardians of students in the Rowland Unified School District:

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you several important facts related to our schools' achievement and instructional programs. Recently, the California Department of Education released the District's Academic Performance Index (API) results which indicate that we have reached the 800 statewide goal. Several of our schools received API scores above 800 and three, above 900. Our district continues to demonstrate academic gains. Meanwhile, we continue to face many challenges with funding of public schools. There are also many exciting changes occurring in our District as a means of improving our instructional programs and student achievement. We are currently implementing new assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards to help teachers monitor student academic progress. Principals and teachers have been trained on a data analysis process designed to use student achievement results to improve instruction. In addition, we are training our staff on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) assessments to prepare our students for the administration of these assessments in the 2014-2015 school year. Teachers continue to implement innovative teaching methods connected to our Framework for Efficacious Instruction and each school is defining their Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) Model. All these initiatives are designed to improve student achievement and ensure that Rowland Unified continues to provide our community with the quality education that has earned us the "Best Schools" recognition by Bloomberg's Business Week Magazine.

It is also important to share with you information regarding the current status of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)/ The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, which requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to annually review student academic performance in English-Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics of each district that receives funds under Title 1, Part A and Title III. As many of you have heard in the news, many districts across the nation are being identified as Program Improvement districts based on the requirement set forth by the NCLB law, which requires that 100 percent of students reach proficiency by 2014. This has become a difficult challenge for many districts and most educators agree that the US Congress needs to reauthorize and address needed changes to this law.

A district is identified as Program Improvement (PI) if it fails to meet yearly student performance goals, known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives (AMAO), for two consecutive years. At its November 2011 meeting, the California State Board of Education identified PI Local Educational Agencies (LEA) in Year 3. Rowland Unified School District was identified as one of those PI LEA Year 3 districts. Based on our most recent CST results, our district continues to be in program improvement and has moved into Title III Year 4 status.

Board Vision: The Rowland Unified School District promotes, expects, and accepts nothing short of excellence.
We have a collective commitment to be the best school district in California.

Mission: The mission of the Rowland Unified School District, the progressive international community united in learning, is to empower students so that each actualizes his or her unique potential and responsibly contributes to a global society, through a system distinguished by rigorous academics, innovative use of technology, creative exploration, and nurturing learning experiences.

Therefore, the district must:

- Continue to work with a District Assistance and Intervention Team (DAIT), composed of county office of education or other educational leaders, to receive targeted help and support in improving student performance;
- Implement the LEA Plan; and
- Institute and fully implement SBE-adopted/ standards-aligned curriculum in English Language Arts and mathematics

Like many other exceptional districts, we are working diligently in addressing instructional needs and are implementing many new initiatives that will yield better outcomes. As part of our team, we encourage you to support these improvements by:

- 1) Learning more about the ESEA/NCLB requirements and become aware of strategies to improve student academic achievement. Additional information and resources are available at:
 - The California Department of Education Title 1, Part A web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/sw/t1/titleparta.asp>
 - Program Improvement Status Determinations web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ay/tidetermine.asp>
 - The U.S. Department of Education's webpage at <http://www.ed.gov> (Outside Source) and <http://www.ed.gov/parents/landing.jhtml> (Outside Source)
- 2) Taking the time to talk with district staff about the LEA Plan and the actions that are being implemented to help students meet the state standards in ELA and mathematics.
- 3) Visit your child's school and participate in voluntary activities to assist your school or LEA.
- 4) If you are a parent of a student who attends a Title 1 PI school, you have already received information about school choice options.
- 5) If you are a parent of a student who attends a Title 1 school that has been in PI for two years or more, ask about supplemental educational services, or free tutoring, that may be available for your child.

I encourage you to contact Dr. Jeanette Chien, Executive Director of Educational Services, at (626) 854-8370 for further information about any of these requirements and to find out how you can become involved in our efforts to improve our district. Finally, I want to assure you that we are committed to providing students with a quality education that will earn our distinction as the best district in the state of California.

Sincerely,



Ruben Frutos
Superintendent

C: Board of Education