

Brocton Central School

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March 17, 2016

Notice to Parents and Community Members of Brocton Central School

Brocton Central School is one of 84 school districts statewide that has been identified as a Focus District by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). This identification action is in accordance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver that New York State (NYS) received from the United States Department of Education in June 2015. New York State is required to identify new Priority Schools, Focus Districts and Focus Schools no later than March 1, 2016. The 84 Focus Districts were identified because of low performance and lack of progress in ELA and Math, combined, or graduation rates for one of more accountability groups (racial/ethnic groups, low-income students, English language learners, and students with disabilities).

Decisions regarding the identification of Focus Districts are premised on the performance of students in grades 3-8 on (NYS) ELA and Math assessments; and identifications are made specific to subgroups of students within the total student population. Brocton Central School has been identified because NYS data indicates inadequate growth among students who are economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities and graduation rates. Economically disadvantaged students are those who participate in, or whose family participates in economic assistance programs, such as: the free or reduced-price lunch programs, Social Security Insurance, Food Stamps, Foster Care, Refugee Assistance (cash or medical assistance), Earned Income Tax Credit, Home Energy Assistance Program, Safety Net Assistance, Bureau of Indian Affairs, or Family Assistance: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

On February 5, 2016, Brocton Central School submitted an appeal to the Commissioner, based on insufficient data, demonstrating that the refusal (opt-out) movement has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of students taking NYS 3-8 assessments, thereby calling into serious question the accuracy of data from those assessments as well as decisions based on

that data. Student performance data for the 2014 and 2015 administration of the NYS 3-8 assessments were used to determine our identification as a Focus District, despite the fact that about 70% of eligible students actually took the assessments.

According to NYSED, the Commissioner reviewed the appeal information and determined that the Brocton Central School District shall retain its preliminary identification for the remainder of the 2015-16 school year and for the 2016-17 school year.

As a result of this Focus District identification, Brocton Central School must participate in a Diagnostic Tool for School Effectiveness (DTSDE) Review. The DTSDE review evaluates school and district performance in six areas: district leadership and capacity, school leader practices and decisions, curriculum development and support, teacher practices and decisions, student social and emotional developmental health, and family and community engagement. Prior to this notification from the State Education Department, the Board of Education set expectations for the District to address assessment scores and special education. My roll- out plan in October 2015 as the new Superintendent of Brocton Central School involved changes in special education and curriculum. The Board of Education supported the hiring of a Director of Special Education / Curriculum and Assessment to help guide and support staff as we move forward. In November of 2015 we hired Mrs. Christine Barth to help us begin this process. Mrs. Barth has been working very hard in these two areas and we had already been using the DTSDE standards to plan and set goals for the District even before being identified. Mrs. Barth will be working closely with outside evaluators and support from Erie 2 BOCES to help administration, staff and the Board of Education through this process. We will focus our collective energy to study programs and identify ways to continually improve our PK-12 program. As more information becomes available, and as the review process progresses, updates will be provided.

For more information, questions or concerns, please contact me via the District Office at 716-792-2173.

Sincerely,

Jason Delcamp

Superintendent