Local School Districts Fail to Meet AMAO Requirements for Non-English Speaking Students

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Report shows statewide improvement in teaching English to Non-English speaking students, but Bend-La Pine and Redmond School Districts failed to meet two-of-three achievement objectives

SALEM â€“ State Schools Superintendent Susan Castillo announced today the release of the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) report, required under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The report shows that Oregon school districts are making progress in meeting the targets to teach English to non-English speaking students. There were 52,946 students in English language learner (ELL) programs in Oregon during the 2005-06 school year, and 129 of the stateâ€™s 198 school districts (65%) reported that they had ELL students at some time during the 2005-06 school year.

â€œThousands of Oregon students arrive at school speaking a language other than English, most often Spanish,â€• Castillo said. â€œIn order for a student to be successful in our schools, they must learn to speak English. Our schools are working very hard to help students learn English as quickly as possible. Of course, English proficiency is the key to students doing well in reading and writing, but it is also essential if students are to do well in math, science, and other classes.â€•

School districts are measured on their progress in three areas, called Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives. School districts must meet all three goals in order to fully meet the AMAO requirement:

1) Did students make progress in learning English (85% or more must move up by one level of proficiency)

2) Did students reach English language proficiency by the end of the school year (20% or more of all students must reach full English proficiency)

3) Did the district make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the ELL population on required state math and English/language arts tests (student achievement and test participation)

Bend-Lapine and Redmond District Results:

Of the three objectives above, both Bend-La Pine and Redmond School districts failed on objectives #1 and #3.

For objective #1, at 51% Bend-La Pine fell well short of the 85% requirement, and Redmond Schools barely missed the mark at 83%.

For objective #2, both schools met the requirement, but Redmondâ€™s score was much better at 35% versus Bend-La Pine at 22%.

For objective #3, neither of the districts made adequate yearly progress for ELL population on required state math and English/language arts tests.

The statewide results for Oregonâ€™s 2005-06 AMAO are shown below:

Did 85% or more move up by one level of English proficiency? 55 school districts met (48%) 52 did not meet (46%) 7 Pending (6%)

Did 20% or more reach English proficiency and exit the program? 50 school districts met (52%) 40 did not meet (41%) 7 Pending (7%)

Did the school district make AYP for ELL students? 32 school districts met (38%) 45 did not meet (54%) 7 Pending (8%)

Did the school district meet all three AMAO targets? 51 school districts met (43%) 61 did not meet (51%) 7 Pending (6%)

Each year, the federal government provides slightly more that $6 million in supplemental funding to Oregon school districts for programs designed to help ELL students gain proficiency in English and meet Oregonâ€™s academic standards. The state of Oregon also gives districts an additional $2,659 per ELL student per year.

English proficiency is broken down into a five-point scale, with level 1 defined as speaking little or no English and level 5 defined as full English proficiency. Within this framework, Oregon school districts must meet each of three objectives. ELL students are tested on either a state-approved English language proficiency assessment or on Oregonâ€™s newly developed English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA). School districts reported the results of the assessment to the Oregon Department of Education toward the end of last year.

Note: This yearâ€™s AMAO report shows two distinct differences from last yearâ€™s report, and the two changes reflect the Departmentsâ€™ sensitivity to measure districtsâ€™ progress fairly and accurately:

1. The data used reflects the progress made by ELLs tested with the local assessments. Next year, the Department will use test data from the state English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA).2. A confidence interval has been added to each districtâ€™s percentages for AMAO 1 and AMAO2. This confidence interval is added to ensure a fair assessment of school districts with small numbers of English language learners. A confidence interval is essentially a "plus or minus" band around the target, similar to when public opinion polls say that a result is accurate to within plus or minus five percentage points. If a district score falls below the target, but within the confidence interval, the district is considered to have met the target for NCLB purposes. The confidence interval helps to ensure that a district does not fail to meet an AMAO due to random factors beyond the districtâ€™s control. For AMAO 1 and 2, if the denominator is 42 or above, the confidence interval is calculated using a standard formula similar to that used for AYP. This standard formula is not always accurate for small populations, and so a separate confidence interval table was developed for calculations with a denominator of 41 or fewer.