September 1, 2016

Dear Parents:

During the 2016-17 school year, the United States Department of Education (USED) invited each state educational agency (SEA) to request flexibility on behalf of itself, its local educational agencies, and schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. Last month, the North Carolina Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request was approved by USED.

This opportunity will provide educators and state and local leaders with flexibility regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. Additionally, states are required to identify three specific categories of schools (Priority, Focus, and Reward) under methodologies approved within the Flexibility Request.

I am writing to let you know that Hunter GT / AIG Magnet Elementary School has been identified as a Focus School by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Focus Schools are identified as a result of the achievement level of “in-school gaps between the highest achieving and lowest achieving subgroups” in terms of proficiency (reading/math) over a number of years, or schools with subgroup proficiency scores less than 50% over a number of years.

Focus Schools must select interventions providing the following considerations:

* Aligned to the school needs assessment
* Supported through school processes (e.g., increased learning time)
* Effective instructional methods or practices appropriate for identified subgroups
* High quality job-embedded professional development
* Use of data
* School safety and discipline
* Family and community engagement

We continue to strive for improvements in student achievement. The vision of Hunter GT/AIG Basics Magnet Elementary School is to improve academic achievement in all students through clear objectives, high expectations, a wide variety of instructional strategies, and a sense of physical and emotional security. Student success as independent and responsible learners is contingent upon the collaborative efforts of staff, parents, and community volunteers

We have set the following goals for 2016 - 2017 this year:

* By 2016, Hunter Elementary GT/AIG Magnet Elementary will meet or exceed growth in reading and math for each subgroup and will increase reading proficiency at least 10% based on mClass data (K-3) and Reading EOG (3-5). •
* Hunter Elementary GT/AIG Magnet School will be at or above the county average in the Teacher Working Conditions Survey in the following four domains: Managing Student Conduct, Instructional Practices and Support, School Leadership, and Community Support and Involvement

Our students need to experience higher achievement levels, and it will require hard work on the part of staff, students and families. Here are some strategies *[School]* will be implementing:

* Increase reading comprehension in grades K-5 through small group, differentiated instruction • Improve math practices through higher level questioning and math talk.
* Establish and follow consistent school-wide expectations through PBIS.

Parent involvement is at the heart of our school improvement efforts. Here are some ways you can help:

* Make sure that both you and your student are aware of academic expectations set for your student this school year. A list of learning objectives in student-friendly language is available from your student’s teacher(s).
* Call Briana Pelton, Principal, 919-856-7676, if you have questions or concerns about your student or to set up an appointment to meet with a school staff member who will be working with your student.
* Make sure that your student is prepared and attends school each day.
* Monitor your student’s homework.
* Monitor and limit the amount of time your student spends watching television and playing video games.
* Monitor the progress your student is making and attend meetings with your student’s teacher(s).
* Volunteer.
* Join the *Hunter GT / AIG Parent Teacher Association (http://www.wcpss.net/domain/5042)*

Sounds like a lot, doesn’t it? Preparing our students so that they can succeed against 21st century demands isn’t easy. But it is essential. Here are some resources available to help:

* Graduation requirements: www.ncpublicschools.org/gradrequirements/
* K-12 standards in academic subjects: www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/
* State student achievement test results: www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/
* N.C.School Report Cards: www.ncreportcards.org/

We’re excited about this school year and are working to make it a success for your student. Here are some useful resources:

* School Website: http://www.wcpss.net/hunteres
* Graduation requirements: www.ncpublicschools.org/gradrequirements/
* K-12 standards in academic subjects: www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/ • State student achievement test results: www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/
* N.C. School Report Cards: www.ncreportcards.org/

Sincerely,

Briana Pelton

Principal