

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION **NEWS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

Carson City, Nevada, July 31, 2009 – Nevada Schools Hold Steady on Meeting Achievement Goals for Adequate Yearly Progress

Dr. Keith Rheault, Superintendent of Public Instruction, has released Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results. The Nevada Department of Education and Nevada school districts have finalized the school and school district accountability findings for the 2008-2009 school year. A school may not make AYP if the whole school or if one of its student groups (e.g. ethnic groups or special populations) does not meet any single AYP requirement. The AYP requirements include achievement and participation on the English Language Arts assessments, achievement and participation on the math assessments, and the expected percentage of either the average daily attendance or graduation rate of pupils.

Nevada has 668 public school sites, an increase of 14 schools since 2008. For 2009, 395 schools or approximately 60% met the requirement to make AYP, a slight decrease from 62% last year. Among those 401 schools, fifty-two schools demonstrated performance significantly above the expected levels of achievement. These schools have exceeded State expectations for overall performance (status) and/or have significantly reduced the percentage of non-proficient students (growth). The Nevada Department of Education honors these outstanding schools as High Achieving or Exemplary Schools.

Along with the High Achieving and Exemplary distinctions, two new designations recognize schools which maintain high levels of student achievement from year to year and which have exhibited remarkable improvement. These designations are Continuing Exemplary, awarded to 7 Nevada high schools, and Exemplary Turnaround, awarded to 2 Nevada secondary schools. Continuing Exemplary schools are Exemplary schools, which have maintained high achievement for more than one year. Exemplary Turnaround schools are schools, which were In Need of Improvement (failed AYP) within the past three years, but have shown dramatic increases in achievement.

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Ninety-five schools that were previously designated In Need of Improvement in 2008 made AYP this year. The increase in achievement has been a result of careful planning and a systemic alignment of actions by State, district and school leaders. Success has been achieved through an ongoing focus on student needs and implementation of instructional strategies that address those needs.

Of the 273 schools not making AYP for 2008-2009, 93 are on the Watch List, which allows them a period of one year to improve before they are judged as In Need of Improvement (not making AYP for two consecutive years).

This year 64% of elementary schools made AYP, whereas in 2008 57% made AYP. Overall, results among elementary schools positively reflect long-term State and district improvement efforts; the Nevada Legislature, the Nevada Department of Education, and Nevada school districts have continuing commitment to providing support for schools in meeting the goals of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). A decline in achievement results for Nevada's middle and high schools underscores the need to continue the focus on preparing secondary school students for success as workers and citizens in an increasingly competitive global economy. The 2007 and the recent 2009 Legislature, as well as the State Board through the State Improvement Plan, have supported efforts to improve student achievement in middle and high schools.

Dr. Rheault comments that, "Although undergoing economic challenges, districts have clearly made great effort to maintain quality programs that support excellence in the classroom. The impact upon students when there is family loss of jobs is difficult to assess, but continued steady growth of student achievement at the elementary level reflects dedication and careful planning on the part of Nevada districts and schools. Expectations for achievement (Annual Measurable Objectives or targets) take a significant jump for 2009-2010 to meet the NCLB proficiency target of 100% by the 2013-2014 school year. In light of these increased challenges, and despite declining resources, improvement efforts will need to continue to be well focused and supported by careful and well-planned actions. Nevada educators are to be commended for their continued focus on what matters most: preparing our students for the future."

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THE LIST OF SCHOOL DESIGNATIONS FOLLOW