



RIO RANCHO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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"Student Excellence"

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September 3, 2008

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The New Mexico Department of Public Education has released its annual school ratings for 2008. The ratings are based on the results of the New Mexico Standards-Based Assessments (NMSBA), achievement tests given to students in grades 3-9 and grade 11 in the spring of 2008.

Schools may achieve a rating of "Meets AYP" or "AYP Not Met". AYP stands for "adequate yearly progress", and refers to the federally-mandated goal that all students demonstrate proficiency in reading and math by the year 2014. The academic data is reported in terms of the percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency targets.

Schools that do not make AYP for two consecutive years enter the school improvement cycle. Despite having strong scores in most areas, Rio Rancho Cyber Academy falls into this category and has been designated by the state as a school "in need of improvement." State law, in accordance with the mandates of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), establishes steps that schools found to be in need of improvement must take to inform parents of this designation and to provide parents with the opportunity to transfer their child to a school that has not been found "in need of improvement" (referred to as "school choice").

As NM Education Secretary Veronica Garcia noted in announcing this year's statewide test results, the fact that a school has been found to be "in need of improvement," does not make it a bad school. The state's school accountability system includes as many as 37 separate measures for each school. If a school does not reach targets in any one of these measures, the school does not make AYP.

How Did Our School Do?

Rio Rancho Cyber Academy										
<p>Proficiency: Expressed in terms of the percentage of students in a subgroup demonstrating proficiency in the subject area. A school meets AYP if the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency meets or exceeds state targets.</p> <p>Participation: Indicates whether at least 95% of students in the subgroup completed the test.</p>										
Percentage of indicators meeting AYP: 86% (6 of 7 rated areas)										
School rating: AYP Not Met		School improvement status: Progressing							Years in school improvement: None	
Subgroup	All students	Caucasian	African-American	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific	American Indian	English-language learners	Students with disabilities	Economically disadvantaged	Additional indicator: Graduation
Mathematics proficiency	17.4 AYP Not Met	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	Meets AYP
Reading Proficiency	69.6 Meets AYP	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	
Mathematics Participation	Meets AYP	Meets AYP	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	
Reading Participation	Meets AYP	Meets AYP	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	
<p>**Subgroups with fewer than 25 students <u>do not</u> receive an AYP designation based on the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency. Subgroups with fewer than 40 students <u>do not</u> receive an AYP designation for participation.</p>										

What we are doing about it:

There is good news and not-so-good news in the Cyber Academy's scores. The good news is that the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency in reading grew by more than seven percent. The bad news is that math scores showed a sharp decline over those of the previous year. The Cyber Academy is already taking several steps to address student needs:

- Cyber Academy teachers have evaluated each math course in depth and determined power standards in each course. Power standards define the knowledge and skills that are most essential for students to learn in order to succeed
- All students will be assessed through diagnostic tests at the beginning of the year and other tests ongoing throughout the year to ensure that students are learning the material and that students' needs are being met.
- Our staff has used the data from the NMSBA and other assessments, as well as student grades and progress, to determine the specific students who are in need of intervention
- Students will receive direct teaching from highly qualified teachers to address math needs.
- Version 4 of E2020 which will be opened for students on September 8th has new features that include a math virtual tutor in addition to the small group and one-on-one assistance from Cyber Academy teachers.
- Students will have weekly communication and intervention from teachers on site as well as through e-mail, phone calls, and by semester through web conferencing to address student needs.
- Parents will have consistent communication from Cyber Academy teachers.

Last year the Cyber Academy shared space with Independence HS, which made for a less-than-ideal class schedule for both schools. The Cyber Academy will be housed this year in a new facility customized to student and school needs. This should create a more stable environment for the school and help to improve student learning.

What is AYP, and how do you meet it?

In order for a school to meet AYP, ALL of the following criteria must be met. If a school fails to meet any one of the data points set down in the criteria, the school is rated "AYP Not Met."

- All students in the school, and students in each of eight "subgroups" (Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific, Native American, English-Language Learners (ELL), students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged, must meet the state's targets for percent testing proficient or above in reading and math
- A minimum of 95% of students in the school and 95% of students in each subgroup must take the tests. This is called "participation rate."
- Finally, elementary and middle schools must meet attendance targets, and high schools must meet graduation rate targets.

How Our Schools Compare:

The following chart compares the overall performance of the Cyber Academy with other high schools in Rio Rancho and with the state averages:

High School	Percentage of all students scoring at the "proficient" level or above	
	Reading	Math
Rio Rancho Cyber Academy	69.6%	17.4%
Rio Rancho High (grades 10-12)	58.4%	52.8%
Rio Rancho Mid-High (grades 8-9)	76.4%	62.2%
Independence HS	21.4%	2.0%
State average (all schools)	53.3%	36.0%

Data on all of our schools may be accessed through the RRPS Web site: <http://www.rrps.net/Achievement/Instruction/08SchoolAYPReports.htm> This site also includes links to the Public Education Department (PED) reports containing complete data for each Rio Rancho school. Data for all schools in New Mexico is available on the PED Web site, www.ped.state.nm.us.

School Improvement and Your Options for School Choice:

Schools that do not make AYP for two consecutive years enter the school improvement cycle. The first year of "school improvement" is called "School Improvement I" (SI-1). When a school goes into SI - 1 status, parents must be offered the option to transfer their child to another school within the school district that has not been identified for improvement. Currently, the Cyber Academy offers few alternatives for transfer, since the district has no high schools that are not in school improvement status. However, parents may consider transferring their child to Rio Rancho High School or the Rio Rancho Cyber Academy. Both schools are in school improvement but offer programs that may meet their child's needs:

- Rio Rancho High School offers a comprehensive high school program including a full program of electives, athletics, fine arts, and extracurricular activities. It should be noted that RRHS requires 28 credits for graduation.
- Independence HS offers career pathway programs in culinary arts, film, and healthcare (Certified Nurse Assistant), as well as flexible programs to accommodate working students and teen parents.

If the demands for transfers exceed the available space in the school in which students can be safely accommodated, the priority is to accommodate low-achieving low-income students. Students who elect to transfer to Rio Rancho HS and are eligible for bus transportation to RRHS may ride the bus to school. Bus transportation to Independence High will be accommodated if possible.

If you would like to exercise the transfer option, please pick up a transfer form from the school office, fill it out, and return it to the school office within 30 days of the receipt of this letter.

Test scores are just one factor in determining if a given school is the best place for your child. If you have questions about your child's or our school's test results, please feel free to contact me. We will be glad to work with you and your child to help you understand the results and determine whether your child would be best served by remaining at the Cyber Academy or by transferring to another school.

In addition to offering parents the option to transfer, schools in the school improvement cycle must also schedule a public meeting to provide an explanation of what the identification means and why the school was identified as a school in need of improvement. This meeting will be held **Tuesday, September 9, 6:30 PM** -

8:00 PM at the Rio Rancho Mid-High School Cafeteria, 1600 40th St. NE. At the meeting, the school must provide data for other schools in the district and statewide, and an explanation of how parents can become involved in addressing the issues. The law also requires the school to evaluate and revise its Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS), a process our school has always followed.

Whether you decide to request a transfer for your child or not, we encourage you to take an active role in your child's education. Parents are our partners in supporting school improvement and play a very important role in their child's success in school. Here are some ways you can help.

- Attend the public meeting on our school's academic status on **Tuesday, September 9, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM at the Rio Rancho Mid-High School Cafeteria, 1600 40th St. NE**
- **Become involved with your School Advisory Council and/or the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)**
- Communicate regularly with your child's teachers
- Encourage your child to become involved with extracurricular school clubs or with community or church groups. Students who feel connected to school and are involved with their school and community tend to do better academically.
- Help your child at home with reading and math
- Make sure your child attends class and comes to school well-rested, fed, and ready to learn

Please remember that if you do not complete and return the transfer application **within 30 days**, your child will remain at the Cyber Academy. As noted above, if you have any questions or need additional information about your school choice options, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Elaine Manicke
Principal, Rio Rancho Cyber Academy