



Salt Lake City School District

Public Information Office

NEWS RELEASE

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No Child Left Behind Won't Change Focus for Salt Lake City Schools

(Salt Lake City) - Salt Lake City School District today announced that upcoming announcements on Adequate Yearly Progress will not change the way it handles school improvement. For several years, the district has been focused on strategic planning and school improvement, and the process fits well with the standards set by the No Child Left Behind Act.

“It seems as if state and federal lawmakers are just catching up to what we have been doing for years,” said Dr. McKell Withers, Superintendent, Salt Lake City School District. “Our efforts to improve all schools are driven by our desire to help each child reach his or her full potential and will continue regardless of state or federal designations.”

“Some districts around the state and nation are only starting to learn the process of creating effective school improvement plans for their schools.” said Maria Farrington, Executive Director, Eccles Salt Lake School Improvement Challenge. “Preliminary evaluations of the data show our profile and improvement process, with an emphasis on teacher development, is making a difference.”

An independent evaluation of test scores in Salt Lake City School District shows good things are happening. During the past six years, traditional educational challenges, such as poverty, mobility, and the number of students whose primary language is not English, have increased dramatically, but the district has been able to adjust and keep national test scores steady. A closer look at the SAT9 scores shows Salt Lake City School District is slowly closing the achievement gap between different racial groups. It also shows students who stay in the district are, on average, learning at a faster pace than their peers across the nation.

“Unfortunately, some will use the upcoming AYP designations and increased accountability standards to bash public education and forward their own political agendas,” continued Withers. “In Salt Lake City we see data as a tool, not a club. We welcome the chance to use the data to identify areas where we need improvement and where we are doing well.”

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The district is prepared to and will comply with provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act and upcoming state legislation. However, the district wants lawmakers, parents, students, and the community to understand that despite changing state and federal regulations and testing schedules, school improvement has been and will continue to be a primary focus in Salt Lake City School District.

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