



NICE Community Schools

300 Westwood Drive

Ishpeming, MI 49849

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August 8, 2012

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2011-2012 educational progress for the NICE Community School District and our schools. The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and some requirements of state laws; however, our staff is available to help you understand this information. Please contact me, Bryan DeAugustine, or your building principal for help if you need assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following web site <http://www.nice.k12.mi.us/> or you may review a copy in the principal's office at your child's school.

On behalf of NICE Community Schools, I would like to congratulate our students, parents, guardians, faculty, and staff who make up our school community. While there is always work to be done, 2011-2012 was a good school year. I look forward to continuing to work together with you to make NICE Community Schools a great place to learn.

Sincerely,

Bryan DeAugustine

Bryan DeAugustine

Superintendent

The *Annual Education Report* contains the following federally-required information:

Student Assessment Data

Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), Michigan Merit Exam (MME), and Michigan's Alternative Assessment Program (MI-Access)

Data presents achievement data for English language arts and mathematics for grades 3 to 8 (MEAP), for grade 11 (MME) and science for grades 5 and 8 compared to targets for all students as well as subgroups of students; Provides achievement data for English language arts, mathematics and science for students with significant disabilities (MI-Access) compared to targets for all students with disabilities as well as subgroups of students; Helps readers understand achievement progress within schools and compare these to district and state achievement.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Provides information from assessments, graduation and attendance rates and AYP status in relation to four criteria: (1) the district must test 95% of students in total and in each required subgroup, (2) the district must attain achievement goals in English language arts and mathematics or reduce the percentage of students in the non-proficient category of achievement significantly ("safe harbor") annually, (3) the district must attain achievement goals for each subgroup that has at least 30 students in the group, and (4) the district must meet or exceed the other academic indicators set by the state: graduation rate for high schools and attendance rate for elementary and middle schools.

*For 2011-2012,
ARS and WHS
made Adequate
Yearly Progress
(AYP) in
English
language arts
and
mathematics.*

Westwood High School and Aspen Ridge School both successfully made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the 2011-2012 school year.

For the 2011-2012 school year, the Michigan Department of Education decided to increase the cutoff scores to achieve passing grades on its state standardized tests. As a result, achievement percentages for students declined in many school districts across the state. Additionally, for years now, the State of Michigan has required alternative education students to take the same battery of standardized tests that their peers in standard schools take. This provides innumerable challenges for alternative education programs.

For 2011-2012, NICE Community School District did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) because Ishpeming-Negaunee-NICE Community Education Division (our regional alternative high school) did not make AYP for the second year in a row. This ceased to be an issue as of July 1, 2012, because fiscal responsibility for the INN alternative high school has been transferred to Negaunee Public Schools. NICE Community School District will continue to work together with Ishpeming and Negaunee to make the INN alternative high school as academically successful as possible.

Below you will find INN listed, the reason INN did not make AYP and a summary of the actions underway to improve NICE Community School District's participation in INN Community Education Division. The principal has a letter and school specific AER that will help answer your questions. These are also posted on the district and school web sites.

School Name

Ishpeming-Negaunee-NICE Community Education Division

Reason(s) for not making AYP

Poor performance on the state standardized tests and low graduation rate. Students who have already chosen an alternative path to a standard high school diploma are required by the State of Michigan Department of Education to take standardized high school achievement tests. The AYP status for the INN program was also affected when the school did not meet the expected state graduation rate of 80%. The school's administration and staff are aware of the issues and are working with the intermediate school district to establish strategies to increase their graduation rate and standardized test scores.

Key actions underway to address the Issues

NICE Community School District suffered for INN's lack of achievement regarding AYP due to our role as INN's fiscal agent. Fiscal responsibility has been transferred to Negaunee Public Schools for the 2012/2013 school year. NICE Community School District will continue to work together with Ishpeming and Negaunee to make INN as academically successful as possible.

Teacher Quality Data

Report identifies teacher qualifications at district and school levels and the percentage of core academic classes taught by teachers not considered highly qualified to teach such classes.

For 2011-2012, 100% of the teachers were highly qualified according to No Child Left Behind requirements.

NAEP Data (National Assessment of Educational Progress)

Report provides state results of the national assessment in mathematics and reading every other year in grades 4 and 8. This cannot be compared with MEAP results for grades 4 and 8 because there are no national standards.

Below is additional state-required information:

Pupil Assignment

In 2011-12 the NICE Community School District was comprised of two schools: The Aspen Ridge School – a K-8 building, and Westwood High School – a 9-12 building.

The district is also in consortium with Ishpeming and Negaunee to provide an alternative high school program via the Ishpeming-Negaunee-NICE Community Education Program. Additional programs available to students of the NICE Community School District are the Westwood Early College program and the Patriot Online Academy.

Status of the 3-5 Year School Improvement Plan

The District 3-5 year plan for continuing school improvement is reviewed and revised on a yearly basis by the district school improvement team. The district's priority is to maintain and strengthen our tradition of excellence in academic programming and instruction.

The NICE Community School District shall continue to deliver high quality educational programming and services while being ever-mindful of uncertain financial times. In addition, building level teams meet on a regular basis to devise and implement plans that result in optimum learning for all students in their charge.

Specialized Schools

As per the state definition, the NICE Community School District has *no* specialized schools. It does, however, offer shared-time programming with neighboring school districts in the area of Career and Technical Education as well as the following specialized programs:

- The Ishpeming-Negaunee-NICE Community Schools Program (alternative high school)
- Westwood Early College
- Patriot Online Academy

Core Curriculum

The core curriculum is the basic learning program in curricular areas for all students. The core curriculum for each content area is based upon the Michigan Curriculum Framework. The core curriculum defines expected student outcomes based on the goals and objectives developed by the school district. These also reflect the State of Michigan's core curriculum goals and objectives. In order to facilitate ongoing alignment with the Michigan Curriculum Framework, individual buildings evaluate and review each curricular area on a rotating basis.

Aggregate Student Achievement of Local/Nationally-Normed Test

The data located at www.mischooldata.org/ and on the district website represents the aggregate performance for students in the district. The NICE Community School District uses a variety of measures to determine student success and mastery of the curriculum that is taught. The assessment map on the following page outlines the manner in which student achievement data is collected and turned into information that is used at all levels.

Assessments

Kindergarten <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LDCAA • DIBELS 1st Grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LDCAA • MLPP • DIBELS 2nd Grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LDCAA • MLPP • DIBELS 3rd Grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEAP Reading, Writing and Math • LDCAA • MLPP • DIBELS 4th Grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEAP Reading, Writing and Math • LDCAA • Scholastic Reading Inventory • STAR 	5th Grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEAP Reading, Writing and Math • LDCAA • Scholastic Reading Inventory • STAR 6th Grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEAP Reading, Writing, Math and Social Studies • LDCAA • STAR 7th Grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEAP Reading, Writing and Math • LDCAA • STAR 8th Grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEAP Reading, Writing, Math and Science • Gates-MacGinitie Reading Comprehension • LDCAA • STAR 	9th Grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEAP Social Studies • LDCAA 10th Grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LDCAA 11th Grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michigan Merit Exam Reading, Writing, Math, Social Studies and Science • ACT • LDCAA • ASVAB Military Aptitude Test 12th Grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LDCAA
<p><u>KEY</u> <i>Locally-Developed Content Area Assessments: LDCAA</i> <i>Standardized Test for Achievement in Reading: STAR</i> <i>Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills: DIBELS</i> <i>Michigan Education Assessment Program: MEAP</i> <i>Michigan Literacy Progress Profile: MLPP</i></p>		

Parent/Teacher Conference Participation

Building	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Aspen Ridge (K-5)	93%	94%	95%	94%	78%	74%
Aspen Ridge (6-8)	51%	60%	56%	46%		
Westwood High School	39%	37%	33%	26%	26%	29%

Parent Involvement Policy, Parent Right-to-Know Regarding Teacher Quality

Parents are integral partners in the education of children. The NICE Community School District welcomes the presence and participation of parents and volunteers through its award-winning Family Resource Institute and through its many volunteer and committee opportunities. A parent involvement policy exists as a part of the district's Title I Plan and may be reviewed at any time by contacting the school.

High School Data

- Four (4) students enrolled in four (4) postsecondary courses in 2011-12.
- No students (0) enrolled in a college equivalent course (AP/IB) in 2011-12.
- Four (4) students received a score leading to college credit in 2011-12.

Education YES Report Card Grades and/or NCA Status

Building	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Aspen Ridge Elementary School	A	A	A	A	C
Aspen Ridge Middle School	A	A	A		
Westwood High School	B	TBD	A	A	C

The district is accredited through the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) and AdvancED.

Pupil Retention Rates

Pupil dropout rate refers to the percentage of high school students who leave school in any one year with no records forwarded to another learning institution. In 2011-12, no students (0) left Westwood High School without enrolling in another school.

Additional “Points of Pride” in 2011-12:

In 2011, the NICE Community School District continued several new initiatives in order to meet the needs of all students:

Project-Based Learning/New Tech High School

In 2011, Westwood High School utilized integrated project-based learning (PBL) in the 9th Grade in order to bring relevance to curriculum standards. Integrated, project-based courses were established following the instructional framework provided by the New Tech Network model. New Tech schools support a systemic response to advance the national economic imperative and increase the number of graduates in the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). NICE, along with five (5) other schools in Michigan, will participate in a statewide system, utilizing the New Tech Network approach as a catalyst for a state to transform teaching and learning.

Patriot Online Academy

In 2011-12, the district continued to enhance the Patriot Online Academy (POA). The POA enables educational programs to be tailored to meet the needs of all students, whether by providing flexible scheduling and acceleration and/or remediation options or enabling students not currently enrolled to access district programs. The district utilized a seat time waiver provided by the Department of Education to enable students to take up to 100% of their courses online. Over 30 students enrolled in online classes through the POA in 2011.



Postsecondary Opportunities

In 2011, the district was approved by the Department of Education to provide an early college option for students. Through a partnership with Bay de Noc Community College the district has established a program of study that leads to significant college credit attainment—up to an associate's degree—while in high school. In addition, NICE established an articulation agreement with Finlandia University to provide Westwood High School students earning an 'A' in the school's Algebra III/Trigonometry with 4 credits for MAT 145 College Algebra—at no cost to the student.

NICE Start Preschool

In 2011, the NICE Community School District continued the NICE Start preschool program in partnership with the Alger-Marquette Community Action Board. The NICE Start preschool program provides 3- and 4-year old children the opportunity to develop skills necessary for Kindergarten and beyond. Children enrolled in NICE Start have opportunities to demonstrate problem-solving skills, the capacity to make good choices and will exhibit positive social behaviors. In 2011-12, the program served approximately twenty five (25) children.

The NICE Community School District is a member of a five-district consortium (NICE, Oxford, Berrien Springs, Manistee, Suttons Bay) named the Michigan Co-Op. The Michigan Co-Op is collaborating to implement online learning state-wide and enable any student (traditional, home-school, schools-of-choice, or drop-outs) to enroll in courses from each of the partner districts.

For more information about the NICE Community School District, please visit www.nice.k12.mi.us or contact the Central Office at 906-485-1021.