

Chalkboard

By

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Last week I promised to provide some statistics regarding our “School Improvement-Year 1” status for the Gentry Middle School. If you read last week’s article you are aware that our school district and each individual school campus had scores sufficient to reach the current year’s respective cut-off scores in both literacy and math. However there were three areas where individual schools were placed on “Alert” status and one area where the Middle School was placed on the improvement list.

At Gentry High School 33 of the 44 students in the “economically disadvantaged” sub-population did not reach the proficient level on the end-of-course math exams. The math exam is a composite score of students taking end-of-course exams in Algebra and Geometry regardless of the grade level of the student finishing the exam. Three of the 19 students in the “economically disadvantaged” sub-population did not reach the proficient level on the end-of-course literacy exam taken near the end of the eleventh grade. Also the high school’s graduation, or completion, rate of 83.8% fell below the cut-off score of 85.4%. The completion rate is computed by tracking ninth graders four years and determining how many that began in the ninth stayed to graduate. The percentage shown is not the percentage of students who made it to the end but rather a computed number using data from each of the four years.

The Intermediate School was placed on the Alert status for their attendance rate over a three-year period of 92.2%, falling short of the 93.6% boundary. As superintendent I have already appealed that status believing the data to be incorrect. The same Alert status was given to the middle school because its three-year score of 93.4 missed the 93.6 mark. I will also appeal that indicator for the same reason expressed above.

More crucial, at Gentry Middle School 59 of the 73 students in the “economically disadvantaged” sub-population did not reach the proficient level on the math exam. The math exam is a composite score of students taking the Sixth Grade and Eighth Grade Benchmark Exams. Fifty of the 73 students in the “economically disadvantaged” sub-population did not reach the proficient level on the literacy exam. This score too is a compilation of sixth and eighth grade scores.

So much for statistics. The bottom line is that we have worked for several years to improve all of our scores and are beginning to reap the rewards of a lot of hard work by our teaching staff and others. This subgroup problem is just one more obstacle to overcome for the benefit of all our students. Think of it as being a specific area of a portrait where more brush strokes must be applied so that the entire picture might be a masterpiece.