

A MESSAGE FROM DR. ADRAIN JOHNSON, NFISD SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS



August 23, 2010

Dear Key Communicator:

Welcome to the 2010-2011 school year. Many of you may know that when the Texas Education Agency released its 2010 Academic Accountability ratings on July 30, 2010, we were thrilled to learn that North Forest ISD has six “Recognized” campuses. These highly rated campuses include A. G. Hilliard Elementary, Lakewood Elementary, Shadydale Elementary, Fonwood Elementary, W. E. Rogers Elementary, and B. C. Elmore Middle School. Forest Brook Middle School is academically “Acceptable.”

That means seven of the district’s eight rated campuses meet the basic academic performance standards set by the state, with the vast majority of NFISD schools actually exceeding those standards to earn the distinguished rating of “Recognized.” In fact, the district made gains in every content area of the TAKS test, which includes exams in Science, Writing, Math, Social Studies and Reading/English Language Arts.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the hard work of our students, staff and administrators. North Forest ISD took key steps to help ensure that our students performed their best. From after-school and additional support programs to retaining quality teachers and focusing on a core academic program needed to prepare students for TAKS, the district’s commitment to our students remains steadfast.

Additionally, support from you—members of the community—has been keenly important. You are a valued member of North Forest ISD, and these gains are a reflection on us all.

Still, North Forest High School and the district, as a whole, are rated “Unacceptable” as a result of a 2005-2006 completion rate that did not meet the 75 percent standard set by the state. If this completion rate standard had been met, the high school and district would have received an “Acceptable” rating. You might remember about the same time last year, I explained that completion rates are tabulated by tracking a cohort of students that began as freshmen in a given year until they are scheduled to graduate. In other words, of all of the students who started as freshmen in the 2005-2006 school year, the completion rate measures how many students graduated as anticipated or continued as students at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. As such, while the academic performance of the students at North Forest High School was worthy of an “Acceptable” rating, the completion rate, which the state also uses to determine accountability ratings, has kept North Forest High School and the district from achieving an “Acceptable” rating.

A year ago, I declared my commitment to addressing this dilemma, and it was included as a measure by which the North Forest ISD Board of Managers would evaluate my performance. While there is still work that must be done; we have made some progress in this area. With the diligence of our staff, we have been able to track several students from the 2005-2006 cohort and locate records that indicate that some transferred to other districts and private schools. We have also made inquiries to the Louisiana Department of Education to locate any students that became a part of the 2005-2006 cohort by enrolling in NFISD as evacuees from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. NFISD administrators and staff continue to work on improving the district’s completion rate and tracking students who started their freshman year in North Forest ISD in 2005-2006. However, our focus is on strengthening our dropout prevent program and tracking students who must be measured for the 2006-2007 completion rate to ensure that we do not face the same issue next year. If you would like to assist in this effort, please volunteer for the 2010 Reach Out to Dropouts Walk, where we will go door-to-door in the community in search of “no-show” and former students for which we must account. For more information or to volunteer, call 713-636-4653.

Finally, I want to be clear that while the completion rate is an important factor that we are addressing, I am extremely proud of the academic performance exhibited by all of our students at all levels; and as a member of this great community, you can also share in that sense of pride.