

NCLB Making a Difference in Nevada



- “Dan Phillips began his job as principal of Cortney Middle School two years ago under less than ideal conditions. Phillips took over a school on the watch list because its students did not meet...standards on the Iowa Basic Skills Test, an exam comparing Nevada students with students around the country. Seventh-graders taking the test in 2002 failed to meet proficiency by about 10 percent on average in English and less than 5 percent in math. None of the 375 students in the school who were identified by the district as having deficiencies learning English managed to pass the English or the math portion of the exam.... ‘It took me a good two or three months to assess what was going on in classrooms and formulate a plan of action,’ Phillips said. That plan included adopting a strategy called High Quality Sheltered Instruction to streamline objectives, bring consistency in teaching strategies and emphasize literacy and language development.... The same students who failed the Iowa test the year before faced another round of testing in the spring of 2003. But this time, the results were much different. When eighth-graders took the Criterion Reference Test, an exam administered by the state, the school met the proficiency rate in English by more than 10 percent and the math standard by nearly 9 percent. But Phillips said the most surprising statistics came from the students with English deficiencies. The group that didn’t have a single student pass either portion of the exam now passed both sections.” (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 2/11/05)
- “In 2002 Reno’s Anderson Elementary School was one of twelve state schools failing to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets twice in a row and one of just two schools to fail AYP in three consecutive years. Only 22% of the school’s 3rd graders were proficient on state reading exams, and a mere 9% of the 6th graders proficient on district reading tests. [Flash forward.] In 2003-2004, the implementation year of the comprehensive school-wide plan, the numbers demonstrated a remarkable turnaround. Anderson surpassed its AYP requirements, increasing the percentage of proficient students by 10%-51% in every subcategory. In fact, the achievement was so high, Anderson joined an elite group of just nine Washoe County elementary schools that earned ‘High Achieving’ status and Anderson was the only Title I school to earn this distinction.” (www.schoolsmovingup.net, 2004)
- “Bracken Elementary School became the first school in Clark County to remove itself from the Needs Improvement List. The primary language of more than two-thirds of Bracken’s students is not English. Principal Kathleen Decker said the school got off the list by focusing on the English Language Learning program.” (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 7/29/05)
- “The Agassi College Preparatory Academy’s middle school is the only school in Clark County labeled ‘exemplary’ by the state for exceeding federal standards. ... It achieved that status because students exceeded federal standards by at least four percent, while decreasing the percentage of students who didn’t meet federal standards the previous year by at least four percent.” (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, 8/3/05)