School Officials Tout Progress Despite AYP Results

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Casey Kelly/KMXT

As we first reported Friday, fewer Kodiak schools met adequate yearly progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act last school year. But as KMXT’s Casey Kelly reports, that doesn’t necessarily mean students aren’t progressing and doing better in just about every aspect of their education.

Adequate yearly progress is the cornerstone of No Child Left Behind, and like the act itself is a controversial way to measure educational goals and objectives. Progress is measured through standardized tests for language arts and math, as well as graduation and attendance rates. Every three years the number of students expected to be proficient goes up. When that happened this year, the Kodiak Island Borough School District went from having all of its schools except one meet A-Y-P, to having seven schools miss their progress goals. Superintendent Stewart McDonald says of those seven, five missed by just one category of students.

(McDonald 1 :15s “…the artificial jump in the target.”)

The two schools that missed A-Y-P in more than one category were Kodiak High School and Old Harbor School. But McDonald says in the case of Old Harbor--a small village school with less than 40 students--some kids are counted in multiple categories, skewing the results.

(McDonald 2 :10s “…three sometimes four times.”)

Kodiak High School on the other hand is the largest and most diverse school in the district, and faces its own unique challenges. The school made A-Y-P under No Child Left Behind for the first time in the 2006-2007 school year. It missed making it last year because of factors that hurt every Kodiak school that

missed A-Y-P. Namely, students with disabilities, low-income students, and English as a second language students are not meeting the progress goals outlined in N-C-L-B. McDonald says the district will continue to target those students.

(McDonald 3 :10s “…result in that school next year.”)

He says the district has several strategies for reaching students that aren’t meeting progress goals, some of which can be accomplished fairly easily.

(McDonald 4 :15s “…with them about their learning.”)

Robyn Cassidy is the outgoing president of the Kodiak High School Parents Teachers and Students Association. Her third daughter is about to be a senior at the school and she says she’s never been concerned about the education any of her children have received.

(Cassidy 1 :21s “…education at Kodiak High School.”)

Cassidy says the way adequate yearly progress is calculated will always make it difficult for schools like Kodiak High School to meet the goals of No Child Left Behind.

(Cassidy 2 :14s “…way it’s currently being done.”)

McDonald says the act isn’t all bad. For one thing, at least people are actually discussing educational goals. But that hardly makes up for some of the programs more obvious flaws.

(McDonald

5 :10s “…that doesn’t first consider the child.”)

No Child
Left Behind currently calls for all students, nationwide, to be 100 percent proficient by the 2013-2014 school year. McDonald says most Kodiak schools are on target to do that. However, Congress is in the process of reauthorizing the act, and is expected to make changes to it.

I’m Casey
Kelly.

HOST
TAG: Stewart McDonald will present the district’s adequate yearly progress results to the school board at a work session tonight (Monday). The meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. in the school district conference room, downstairs at the borough building.

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