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September 7, 2012

Dear Families:

In May 2012, North Carolina was granted flexibility waivers from several of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) provisions. This flexibility, granted by the US Department of Education, makes significant changes to North Carolina's implementation of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requirements. Most noted changes occur in the areas of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), parent notifications, school choice and Supplemental Services (SES). These waivers will allow North Carolina's public school system to move forward with strengthened College and Career Ready expectations for all students, allow new ways to hold Title 1 schools accountable for students' academic proficiency, and permit additional initiatives to support effective instruction and leadership.

Many of the former federal requirements regarding AYP and sanctions for schools are no longer required statewide and are now local school district decisions. Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, Union County Public Schools is no longer required to identify Title 1 schools for improvement, corrective action, and restructuring. In place of the "all or nothing" measures of AYP, the state has established Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) for all student subgroups that more fairly report school and student progress. These targets require subgroups of students that are further behind to improve at a faster rate to close achievement gaps in performance. Ultimately the state will be able to provide parents with a more complete picture of where a school or district is with regards to meeting AMO performance expectations.

The waiver removes the requirements that districts must use federal Title 1 funds to offer public school choice and supplemental education services (SES). Union County Public Schools will not offer Supplemental Services or School Choice. Instead the district will use Title 1 funds to improve student learning and achievement by reducing class size and increasing the quality of instruction in all Title 1 schools. Each school in the district will continue to offer in-school and/or afterschool tutoring and interventions for students needing additional support.

Parents who have requested participation in School Choice in previous years may opt for their child to remain at his/her current school through 5th grade, however, parents must provide transportation. The district will not provide transportation for any student attending a school out of the attendance area in which they live. Parents have the option to provide transportation and remain in the current school or re-enroll their child at the school in their attendance area.

Union County Public Schools remains committed to each student and their family. For additional information or questions, please contact your school principal or Bill Cook, Director of Federal Programs.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Cook".

Bill Cook
Director of Academically and Intellectually Gifted and Federal Programs

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