

## Bessie Weller Elementary School

600 Greenville Avenue  
Staunton, Virginia 24401  
540-332-3920

Dear families,

As you have likely heard either by reading the newspaper or through social media, the Virginia Board of Education voted yesterday to give Bessie Weller the designation *Accreditation Denied*. As parents and guardians of students at the school, I would like to provide you with some information to help you understand what this means.

### **Why was Bessie Weller denied state Accreditation?**

The decision was based on student SOL test scores over the last four years. It was not based on anything that is currently happening at the school. Since the SOLs became more difficult in 2010, Bessie has been unable to reach the score required to be considered *Accredited*. We applied for Bessie Weller to be *Reconstituted* in July. While progress has been made, it has not been enough to meet the expectations of the Virginia Department of Education.

### **What is happening now?**

We knew last June that Bessie Weller had not made the achievement benchmarks. Because of this, our superintendent put an intensive plan in place to help our school meet accreditation, and we have been following that plan since the start of this school year.

### **What does *Accreditation Denied* mean for my student?**

The changes that have been put in place this year will continue and the Virginia Department of Education will seek ways to support learning at the school. Bessie Weller will continue to value each student and to provide resources so that every child can learn. Many students will continue to pass their Standards of Learning tests, and we will strive to increase that number every year -- to meet and exceed the state benchmarks!

### **How can parents help?**

Certainly, positive comments from you about Bessie Weller in the public and to staff will help foster the positive climate so important for your child's success. The biggest support you can provide is in valuing education for your student. You can do this by:

- Making sure your child has regular and on-time attendance
- Attending parent conferences and school events
- Reading school communications
- Supporting positive and appropriate school behavior
- Making sure your student reads, reads, reads ... every day!
- Helping your child to learn basic math facts as they are introduced
- Making sure your child does his/her homework and comes to school with a positive attitude

I am extremely proud to be serving as the principal at Bessie Weller Elementary School. Just today we honored well over half of our students for their attendance, academics, and/or behavior.

Bessie is a great school, with so many wonderful students, families, and teachers. A label based on the number of students passing an SOL test does not totally define our school. We will strive to change that label to *Fully Accredited*, as we continue to provide all the many positive opportunities for your children every day. As always, if you have questions, please feel free to give me a call at 332-3940.

Sincerely,



Dori B. Walk, Principal