

By Jan Schultz

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Chase County Schools (CCS) showed up on a growing list of Nebraska schools that failed to make adequate yearly progress under the controversial No Child Left Behind law.

It's the second consecutive year the CCS elementary grades made the list, said Supt. Matt Fisher, and the third time overall since the federal law was adopted about 10 years ago.

CCS is on the list of 136 Nebraska schools in the report issued last month. That number is a sharp rise from 61 schools in the 2009-10 school year.

In order to make the "list," schools must not be making adequate progress two consecutive years in one or more of the "subgroups" of students.

In CCS's case, Supt. Fisher said the subgroup not meeting the requirements are the grade 3-6 students in the "low socio-economic" subgroup.

That group includes students (grade 3-6) who receive free or reduced-cost meals, Supt. Fisher said.

That includes an estimated 35 to 38 percent of the grade 3-6 students at CCS.

The CCS subgroup did not make adequate progress in reading only, he added.

The performance of less than 10 students in that subgroup can affect significantly how the subgroup performs overall, Supt. Fisher noted.

This year's No Child Left Behind report also looked at math progress, according to Supt. Fisher.

"CCS as a whole is fine, we have met all of the standards," Supt. Fisher said.

But, when the test scores are broken down into the subgroups, CCS's "low socio-economic" students were identified as not making "adequate progress."

The superintendent predicts the number of schools not meeting the requirements will only continue to grow statewide since the law has a goal of 100 percent math and reading proficiency by the 2013-14 school year.

"All of the schools will be on the list then," he said.

When asked how the school intends to deal with the issue, Supt. Fisher said the administration and staff are looking at the results and seeing what can be done to help that specific subgroup.

He also believes improvement in reading scores will be seen as CCS completes a third year of the Reading Mastery Program in grades K-6, citing the progress in other schools that have used Reading Mastery three or more years.

In the two other years CCS has made the No Child Left Behind list, the school received federal funds "to help make us better," he said.

Last year, the \$35,000 received were used for the Reading Mastery training component and for hiring additional aides.

Around \$60,000 was received after CCS made the list the first time.

There hasn't been any information out yet, Supt. Fisher said, if federal funds will be coming this time.