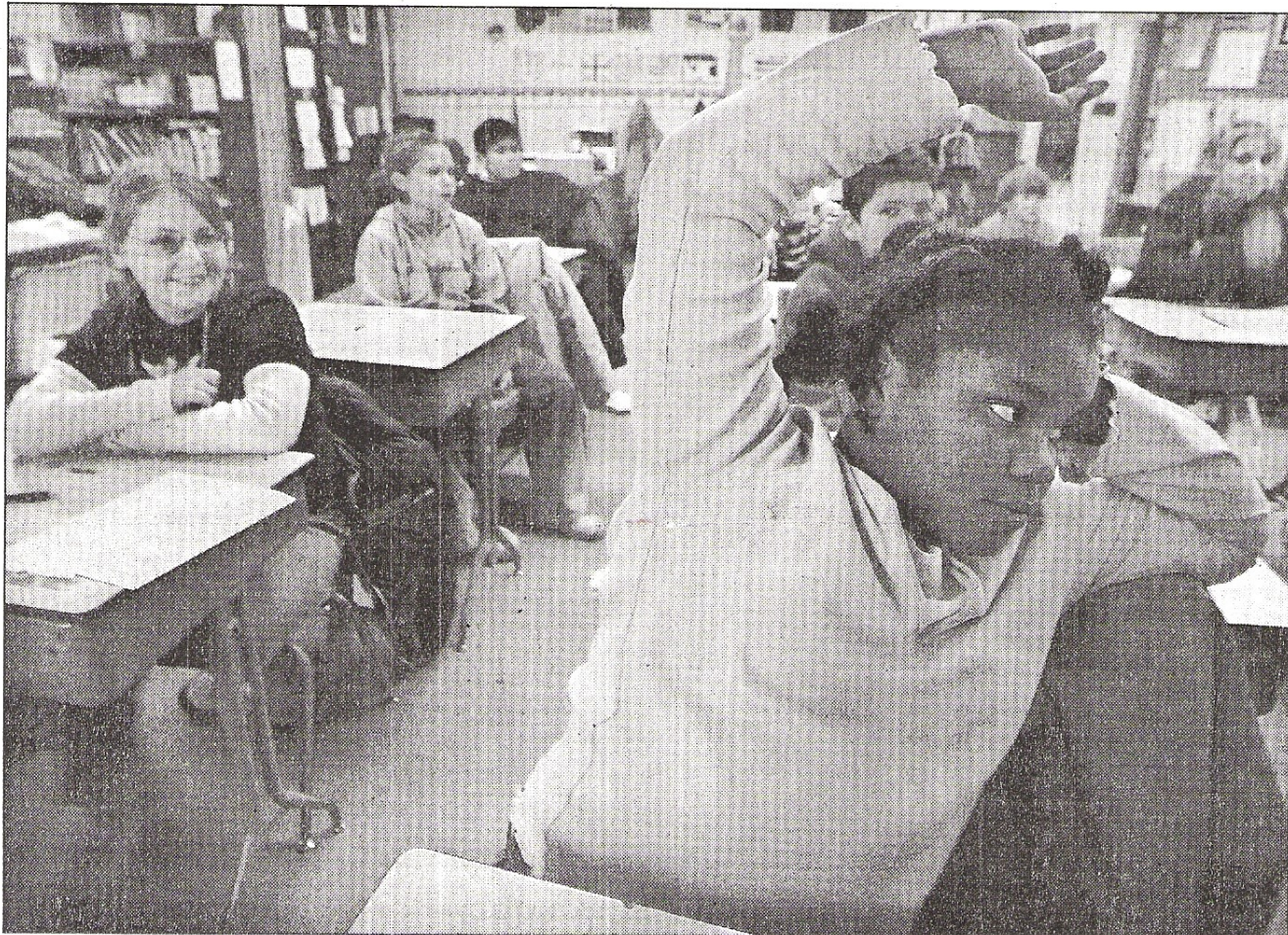


NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND: SANCTIONS FOR LOW TEST SCORE RESULTS



Photos by Alan León/Rockford Register Star

Jackson Elementary fifth-grade student Tamaira Hawthorne, 10, raises her hand Friday during an extended response lesson to help students with reading and writing. Jackson Elementary has extended its school day to help meet yearly progress goals.

3 Rockford schools face restructuring

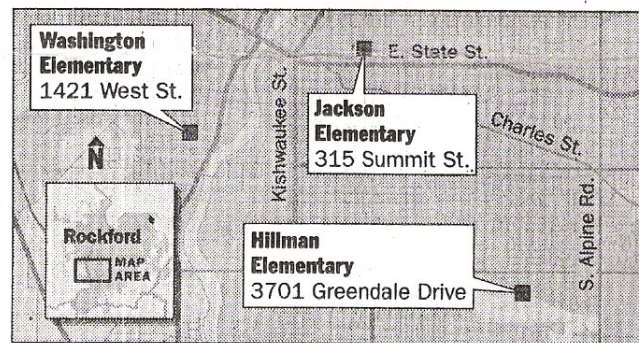
By JEFF KOLKEY
Rockford Register Star

ROCKFORD — The hardwood floors and the orderly children of Jackson Elementary give no hint that it's one of three Rockford schools about to face the toughest sanctions available under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Children walk in neat rows through the 102-year-old school, hands behind their backs because that is how an "excellent student from Jackson School" walks the hallways — with respect. You can sense the children are learning to take pride in their school and, maybe, pride in themselves.

But Jackson, Swan Hillman and Washington schools have not met the state's target for adequate yearly progress on standardized tests for five years — predating the official 2002 start of the act. These schools have high numbers of students from low-income families (about 90 percent at each) and they are the first in Winnebago and Boone counties to face restructuring, the most stringent school status under No Child Left Behind.

Jackson missed last year



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numbers," Francis said. "We need to get these kids up: Kid pride, staff pride."

By late February, the district must turn over to state officials improvement plans that could involve hiring an education consultant. They are among 220 schools in the state facing restructuring this year, said Gail Lieberman, special assistant for NCLB to the Illinois State Board of Education.

Lieberman said there are four options in federal law for restructuring:

- Reopen as a public charter school.
- Replace all or most of the school staff.
- Hire a consultant to

jobs during restructuring.

She said state officials will be willing to consider steps the district has already taken to improve student performance in approving the plans. Those have included an extra half-hour school day, curriculum help for staff, reading coaches for students, and the implementation last year of a new reading instructional strategy.

Hayes said officials are negotiating a contract with the Center for Performance Enhancement, an organization dedicated to improving instruction and student performance. Working with the consultant is likely to be

What the law requires

The federal school accountability law called the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires all states to measure each public school's achievement and establish annual achievement targets.

The overarching goal is for all students to meet or exceed standards in reading and math by 2014.

Each year, the state calculates adequate yearly progress to determine if students are improving their performance based on the annual targets. Last year's target was for 47.5 percent of students to meet standards for reading and math.

Schools can face sanctions when they do not meet the targets for five consecutive years. These measures escalate and could include offering some parents the option to transfer students to better-performing schools, offering after-school tutoring, and submitting school-improvement plans while in corrective action.

Restructuring is the most severe status a school can face under the law and requires districts to reopen the schools as