

September 1, 2009

Dear Parents:

The Washington Township Public School District is committed to providing all students with the educational foundation necessary to succeed in school and in life. While our district has always held high expectations for our students, the federal law entitled the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) established very specific requirements for school districts and individual schools for the purpose of ensuring a quality educational program for all students. More specifically, NCLB requires that adequate yearly progress (AYP) in Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics be measured annually for each school in New Jersey.

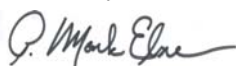
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is calculated on the basis of the percentage of students who demonstrate “proficiency” on the annually administered *New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge Test* (NJASK Grades 3-8) or on the *New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment* (HSPA Grade 11). In order to achieve AYP, schools must meet the State’s academic proficiency benchmarks, as well as other indicators such as test participation rates and student attendance rates. These student-achievement benchmarks increase on an incremental basis every three years with the intended expectation that by June 2014, 100% of students will demonstrate proficiency as measured by these state tests. The 2007-2008 school year represented one of these benchmarking years in which the benchmark again increased, thereby making achievement of AYP a more challenging responsibility for students and schools. As well, during the 2007-2008 school year, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) developed a new, more rigorous NJASK test for Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics for grades 5-8, which was administered for the first time in the Spring 2008.

Schools that do not make AYP for one year (Year 1) receive an Early Warning designation to alert them that students did not meet at least one of the AYP indicators. If a school does not make AYP for *two or more* consecutive years in the same content area (Language Arts Literacy or Mathematics), it is identified as a school “in need of improvement” and certain sanctions are applied to schools that receive Title I funding.

During the Spring 2009, the State-mandated NJASK test was administered to our students in grades 6, 7, & 8. The results of this test and other information necessary for calculating our preliminary AYP status for the current school year have recently been provided to school districts by the NJDOE. Based upon our students’ performance on the Spring 2009 NJASK tests, Bunker Hill Middle School’s Preliminary AYP status has been designated as Needs Improvement - Year 2. For more information about our school’s current AYP status and what we are doing to improve student performance, please see the attached “Question and Answer” section.

As we begin the 2009-2010 school year, the Bunker Hill Middle School staff and I look forward to the opportunities that this school year will bring. We are firmly committed to achieving our goal of success for every student.

Sincerely,



Mark Ebner, Ed.D.
Principal

AYP: Questions & Answers

1. WHAT IS AYP?

Under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* the United States Department of Education requires all districts and schools to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). To make AYP, each school must achieve 40 assessment targets plus an attendance rate target. The 40 assessment targets include 4 areas of test *performance* and *participation* (2 each in language arts and math), measured across 10 subgroups of students, divided into categories such as race, economic disadvantage, English language proficiency, and disability.

- To meet 2008-2009 performance targets in Language Arts Literacy, 72% of students had to achieve scores that were “proficient” or better in language arts literacy on our Spring 2009 statewide assessments.
- To meet the 2008-2009 mathematics performance targets, 61% of students had to score “proficient” or better in the math portion of the Spring 2009 statewide assessment.
- To meet the participation targets, 95% of students had to have taken each portion of the assessment.
- In addition, schools had to meet a 90% student attendance rate.

Each of the performance and participation standards must be met by all students, measured as a whole, and by each subgroup. If just one subgroup misses any one of the required targets, the entire school doesn’t make AYP.

2. DID OUR SCHOOL MAKE AYP?

Based on the NJDOE’s 2009-2010 Preliminary AYP Report, Bunker Hill Middle School achieved 39 of the 41 required targets. However, because one (1) subgroup of students missed one or more of the required targets, our school did not make AYP for the 2008-2009 school year and has been deemed to be in “Needs Improvement – Year 2” status for the current school year.

3. WHY DID OUR SCHOOL NOT MAKE AYP?

Although Bunker Hill Middle School met most of the AYP benchmarks, some of our special needs students with specific learning difficulties did not attain the language arts literacy and mathematics performance goals for the second consecutive year.

4. WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT MAKING AYP?

Because Bunker Hill Middle School failed to achieve the AYP benchmark in Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics, our school is considered to be in “*needs improvement*” status. Our school does not receive federal Title I funding; consequently, we are exempt from any sanctions associated with *No Child Left Behind* legislation. Nonetheless, our school is required and strongly committed to improving student achievement and fulfilling the academic standards set by the federal government and the State of New Jersey.

5. WHAT IS OUR SCHOOL DOING TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND MAKE AYP?

The Bunker Hill Middle School staff is committed to achieving the goals of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. Currently teachers and building administrators are developing and implementing a comprehensive plan that includes:

- Identifying and addressing the specific needs of our low performing students
- Expanding the knowledge base and skill set of teachers through in-district and out-of-district workshops and training opportunities
- Integrating NJASK Prep strategies and activities into daily instruction
- Working with teachers to review 2009 NJASK data and all samples of student work provided by the state.
- Offering before school, after-school, and Saturday morning NJASK Academies

- Revising assessments to align them with the NJASK to familiarize students with the test's format
- Incorporating supplemental materials to reinforce student acquisition of the New Jersey Core Content Standards.

6. WHAT IS OUR DISTRICT DOING TO HELP OUR SCHOOL MAKE AYP?

The district is helping our school by:

- Providing information on effective curriculum and instructional strategies
- Analyzing student performance data to guide decisions
- Increasing professional development for our teachers
- Utilizing available grant funds to provide increased training, materials, and technology for our teaching staff
- Maintaining memberships and formal affiliations with professional agencies and organizations to access current research, professional development opportunities, materials and technology
- Supporting advanced education for teachers and administrators
- Phasing-in the implementation of a new standards-based mathematics curriculum in grades K-12
- Offering parent-child workshops on literacy and math
- Providing standards-based, Connected Mathematics instructional interventions and support for students and mathematics staff through small group and collaborative instruction and professional development, with particular emphasis on providing support services for special education as well as at-risk students.
- Refining and revising the middle school language arts literacy curriculum to align with the pending 2009 New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, NJASK test specifications, and standards clarification project. Particular emphasis will be placed on professional development to support refinement of our middle level writing program.
-

7. HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED IN HELPING OUR SCHOOL IMPROVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE?

As a parent or guardian, you can help our school improve students' performance on state tests by:

- Attending school sponsored parent meetings relating to student achievement
- Supporting and reinforcing your child's good study habits
- Reviewing your child's homework and test results
- Setting goals with your child for continued academic improvement
- Visiting the school's website (www.wtps.org/BHMS) regularly to remain up to date with school events, policies, and to access supportive resources.
- Becoming an active participant in Bunker Hill Middle School Budget Committee, Media Committee, School Health and Safety Committee, PTO, and/or School Improvement Committee
- Keeping open communication with Bunker Hill Middle School administrators and teachers when questions arise and /or to provide feedback and suggestions