

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BELLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Barbara M. Travaline, Principal Frank DeFamio, Counselor Pam Schreiner, Reading Specialist

September 1, 2007

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The Washington Township Public School District is dedicated to ensuring the success of all of our students. While we have always held high expectations for our students, the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)* has set new standards of achievement for all students.

Recently, the New Jersey Department of Education released its preliminary report on the “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) that our schools are making toward achieving proficiency for 100 percent of our students under NCLB.

The report gives a simple yes or no grade, based solely on student performance on a single state standardized test, the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK). Under *No Child Left Behind*, achieving “adequate yearly progress” is an all-or-nothing proposition. I am happy to inform you that Bells School achieved the AYP benchmarks in both language arts literacy and mathematics for the 2006-07 school year.

We are firmly committed to achieving our goal of success for every student. For more information about AYP and what we’re doing to continue to enhance student performance, see the attached “Question and Answer” section.

Sincerely,

Barbara M. Travaline

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 2006-07 performance targets in language arts, 75 percent of students must achieve scores that are “proficient” or better in language arts on our statewide assessments
- To meet the 2006-07 mathematics performance targets, 62 percent of students must score proficient or better in the math portion of the statewide assessment.
- To meet the participation targets, 95% of students must take each portion of the assessment.
- In addition, schools must also meet a 90% target 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 state’s preliminary report, Thomas Jefferson School achieved 40 of the 41 required targets. However, because one subgroup missed one of the required targets, our school did not make AYP.

3. WHY DID OUR SCHOOL NOT MAKE AYP?

Although, Thomas Jefferson School met most of the AYP benchmarks, some of our special needs students with specific learning difficulties did not attain the language arts/literacy goal.

4. WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT MAKING AYP?

Because 2006-07 marked the first year in which at least one subgroup of students at Thomas Jefferson School did not achieve the AYP benchmark in Language Arts/Literacy, our school is considered to be “*in early warning status.*” Although NCLB does not impose sanctions on Title I-funded schools which failed to make AYP for one year, our school and district are strongly committed to ensuring the academic achievement of all students!

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

The Thomas Jefferson 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
- Offering before school and after-school programs to meet specific student needs.
- Revising assessments to align them with the NJASK to familiarize students with the test’s format
- Incorporating supplemental materials to reinforce Core Content Standards.
- Conducting Parent Book Clubs to provide parents strategies to assist their children at home.
- Incorporate a school wide writing program to motivate students to write in the NJASK format.

- Continue a Special Education Literacy Committee to raise expectations and create modifications for students in Special Education using the regular education program.

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-8.
- Offering parent-child workshops on literacy and math
- Providing parent sessions on *Everyday Math* and *Connected Math*

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
- Becoming an active participant in Thomas Jefferson School Parent Advisory Committee, Parent Book Club, Thomas Jefferson School PTO.
- Keeping open communication with Thomas Jefferson School administrators and teachers when questions arise and /or to provide feedback and suggestions