

August 27, 2007

Dear Parents:

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 academic standards for all students.

Recently, the New Jersey Department of Education released its preliminary report on the “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) that all schools in New Jersey have made toward achieving the requirements of NCLB. Under NCLB, by the year 2014 all schools must demonstrate that 100 percent of the students in specific grade levels have achieved proficiency in language arts and mathematics.

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 (NJASK) and Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA). Under *No Child Left Behind*, achieving “adequate yearly progress” is an all-or-nothing proposition. As schools across the nation strive to meet the rigorous standards of NCLB, many quality schools have not made AYP, both in our state and nationwide. That does not mean that these schools are unsuccessful.

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

Sincerely,

James Barnes
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 2006-2007 performance targets in language arts, 66% of students must achieve scores that are “proficient” or better in language arts on our statewide assessments
- To meet the 2006-2007 mathematics performance targets, 49% 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?

We are very happy to inform you that, based on the New Jersey Department of Education’s preliminary report, Chestnut Ridge Middle School achieved 41 of the 41 required targets during the 2006-2007 school year and therefore we have met AYP. As you may recall our school did not make AYP previously during the 2005-2006 school year; consequently, our school is considered to be in “Year 1 HOLD Status.” It is commendable that our school has met AYP benchmarks for 2006-2007.

3. WHAT IS OUR SCHOOL DOING TO CONTINUE TO PROMOTE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT?

The Chestnut Ridge 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 NJ ASK and GEPA Prep strategies and activities into daily instruction
- Offering before-school, after-school and Saturday morning NJ ASK and GEPA Academies
- Offering a summer NJ ASK and GEPA program
- Revising assessments to align them with the NJ ASK and GEPA to familiarize students with the test’s format
- Incorporating supplemental materials to reinforce Core Content Standards

4. WHAT IS OUR DISTRICT DOING TO HELP OUR SCHOOL PROMOTE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT?

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*

5. HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED IN HELPING OUR SCHOOL PROMOTE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT?

As a parent or guardian, you can help our school promote students' achievement 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 name of school Parent Advisory Committee, School Health and Safety Committee, and/or School Improvement Plan Committee
- Keeping open communication with Chestnut Ridge Middle School administrators, teachers, and counselors when questions arise and/or to provide feedback and suggestions