

Sample News Release: Schools in Need of Improvement

(Local school boards can use this sample news release to explain schools' "In Need of Improvement" status under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[Name] Board of Education Addresses 'No Child Left Behind' Report

[NAME of Municipality], [Date], 2003—As the New Jersey State Department of Education begins releasing federally required academic progress reports on local public schools this month, the president of the [school district name] Board of Education noted that the district is initiating strategies to help students build upon their academic progress.

The school district's goal is that all students meet and exceed requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, [full name of board president], board president, said today.

Signed into law by President Bush in 2002, No Child Left Behind requires that all students meet proficiency levels on state tests by 2014. To reach 100-percent proficiency, states have set incremental benchmarks to determine Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). These targets establish the percentage of students in each school—and the percentage of students in each of a number of subgroups within that school—who must score "proficient" or higher on state exams.

If the entire student population—or any one of the subgroups—does not meet the targets, the school is deemed not to have made Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind Act.

"No Child Left Behind is based on an admirable principle: Closing achievement gaps and ensuring quality education for all children," said [last name of board president]. "That's a goal we support. And we are confident that the commitment and support of our staff and parents will continue to have a positive impact for our children's education."

During the past two years, more than ____ percent of [name of district] students in grades 4, 8 and 11 demonstrated proficiency in language arts literacy and mathematics.

Schools that do not make AYP for two consecutive years are labeled "in need of improvement." Last year, the state Department of Education identified 250 New Jersey schools as being "in need of



Schools ‘In Need of Improvement’/add 1

improvement”—including [*number*] of schools in [*name of district*]—based on previous years’ fourth- and eighth-grade test results for all students.

1. For districts where schools In Need of Improvement made AYP for the first time in 2003:

[*number of / All*] schools in [*name of district*] made adequate yearly progress in 2003, according to [*last name of board president*]. However, No Child Left Behind requires that schools reach AYP targets for two consecutive years to be removed from the list.

“One of our goals for the coming year will be to continue our progress, so that our students continue to meet proficiency levels and their schools meet AYP standards,” [*last name of board president*] said.

2. For districts where schools remained on “In Need of Improvement” list due to subgroup results:

[*last name of board president*] noted that the new reporting requirements for subgroups within schools kept some [*name of district*] schools on the “In Need of Improvement” List.

“Proficiency levels have increased for the student body as a whole, but not sufficiently for some of the subgroups who must meet AYP targets,” [*last name of board president*] noted. “We intend to focus our improvement efforts strongly on the needs of these students.”

3. For districts where schools remained on “In Need of Improvement” list because of proficiency levels of total student population:

“Proficiency levels increased for all of our students, but not rapidly enough to make AYP targets and result in the schools’ removal from the ‘needs improvement’ list,” said [*last name of board president*].

“The board is seriously concerned that [*number*] of our schools remain on the ‘in need of improvement’ list. The Board of Education intends to apply any additional resources it has available to help our children meet the state proficiency levels.”

[*Here or on a separate list, cite schools, their AYP status.*]

[*Last name of board president*] noted that the [*name of district*] school district has designed several programs to help all students achieve state and local academic standards. [*List brief descriptions of programs.*]

“The [*name of school district*] Public Schools remain firmly committed to meeting the needs of every student and to helping them achieve to their fullest,” said [*last name of board president*]. “The [*name of school district*] Board of Education believes that, with the dedication of staff, the support of families and adequate resources, all children can succeed.”

For more information, visit the [*name of district*]’s Web site at [*Web address*].

