

Sample Letter to Parents: Adequate Yearly Progress

[Date]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The goal of the [name of district] Public Schools is to educate all students to help them become productive citizens. We strive to prepare our children for tomorrow's world—whether it's to pursue a career or to further their education. We are also committed to keeping our parents and community informed of important issues affecting their schools.

That's why I am contacting you about a major development in the reporting of our schools' academic progress.

Recently, the New Jersey State Department of Education began releasing information about the status of the [name of district] Public Schools and other school districts in relation to the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The information reflects student performance in language arts literacy and mathematics on the three state proficiency tests administered in the spring of 2003—the High School Proficiency Assessment (11th grade), the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment, and the NJ ASK 4 (4th grade).

NCLB requires that all students be proficient in mathematics and language arts by 2014. To reach this “100% goal,” New Jersey and other states developed benchmarks—Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets. In New Jersey, the AYP targets represent the percentage of students in each school who must score at “proficient” or “advanced proficient” levels on our state exams for their school to make Adequate Yearly Progress.

If the general school population—or any one of a number of “subgroups” of students within the school—does not meet the AYP targets, then the school is considered not to have made Adequate Yearly Progress. Examples of subgroups include Students with Disabilities, Limited English Proficient Students, and Economically Disadvantaged Students. Data from any one of the subgroups can result in the entire school being designated as not making Adequate Yearly Progress.

Schools not making AYP are required to address areas in need of improvement. You will receive more information about the performance of your child's school this fall.

The [name of district] Board of Education believes that, with the dedication of staff, the support of families and adequate resources, all children can succeed. The board remains committed to the goal of closing gaps in achievement among our students. And that's why our school district has undertaken a number of initiatives to help all children attain proficiency. [cite programs]

For information about these programs, log onto the [name of district] Public Schools Web site at [Web site address]. Information on No Child Left Behind is available from the New Jersey State Department of Education, www.nj.gov/njded/grants/nclb/, and the New Jersey School Boards Association, www.njsba.org.

Sincerely,

[Suggested signatures: superintendent, principal or other administrator]

