

***No Child Left Behind***  
**and**  
***Adequate Yearly Progress:***

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**Communications Tools  
for School Boards**

September 2003



**New Jersey School Boards Association**  
413 West State Street, P.O. Box 909, Trenton, NJ 08605-0909  
TEL – 1-888-886-5722 • FAX – 1-609-695-0413  
WEB – [www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org)

**REVISED 10/20/2003**

# ***No Child Left Behind and Adequate Yearly Progress: Communications Tools for School Boards***

September 2003

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
Communicating about Adequate Yearly Progress .....	1
Tips for Talking to the News Media .....	4
Questions and Answers for School Board Presidents.....	5
Sample News Release: Adequate Yearly Progress .....	7
Sample News Release: Schools in Need of Improvement.....	9
Sample Letter to Parents: Adequate Yearly Progress.....	11
Sample Letter to Parents: Schools in Need of Improvement .....	12
Sample Letter to Staff: Adequate Yearly Progress.....	13



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## Communicating about...

### Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind—2003

The New Jersey State Department of Education began releasing information about schools' academic progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in September. The information released to date consists of listings of schools and reflects student performance in language arts literacy and mathematics on the High School Proficiency Assessment (11<sup>th</sup> grade) and the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment administered in the spring of 2003. State education officials expect to release information regarding student performance on the NJ ASK-4 (4<sup>th</sup> grade) in mid-November.

Eventually, the state education department will issue results for individual schools in the form of the new School Report Card (the "NCLB School Report Card"), which reflects reporting requirements under the federal law.

#### Adequate Yearly Progress in 2003

Signed by President Bush in 2002, NCLB requires that all students meet state-determined proficiency levels by 2014. For New Jersey that means every single student must score at "proficient" or "advanced proficient" levels on state assessments by 2014. To reach this "100% goal", New Jersey and other states developed incremental benchmarks—Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets. In New Jersey, the AYP targets determine the percentage of students in each school—and the percentage of students in each of a number of subgroups within the school—who must score at "proficient" or "advanced proficient" levels for their school to make Adequate Yearly Progress.

For 2003 and 2004, New Jersey has established the following AYP targets:

Test/ Grade Level	Subject	2003 and 2004 AYP Target <i>(Percentage of students scoring at proficient or advanced proficient levels)</i>
HSPA (Grade 11)	Language Arts Literacy	<b>73%</b>
	Mathematics	<b>55%</b>
GEPA (Grade 8)	Language Arts Literacy	<b>58%</b>
	Mathematics	<b>39%</b>
NJ ASK-4 (Grade 4)	Language Arts Literacy	<b>68%</b>
	Mathematics	<b>53%</b>

#### The Impact of Subgroup Results

If the entire school population—or any one of a number of subgroups—does not meet these targets, then the school has not made Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind. Subgroups include Students with Disabilities, Limited English Proficient Students, Economically Disadvantaged Students, as well as several racial/ethnic groups. (A subgroup's test results is reported separately toward a school's Adequate Yearly Progress status *only* if 20 or more students within a grade level belong to the subgroup.)



## Communicating about AYP-2003

Additionally, to meet AYP targets 95% of students at each tested grade level and within each subgroup must take the assessment. Two other factors determine whether or not a school or school district has achieved Adequate Yearly Progress. For 2003, these factors are average daily attendance for elementary and middle schools and drop-out rates for high schools.

### 40 AYP Indicators

The Department of Education has identified 40 indicators in which a school must meet Adequate Yearly Progress targets for 2002-03. (The number of indicators was arrived at by using the following factors: the assessments in mathematics and language arts literacy; the grade levels tested; total student population tested; student subgroups tested; test participation rates; drop-out rates and attendance rates.) In addition to indicating whether or not a school made Adequate Yearly Progress, the Department of Education has been reporting the number of factors in which it has reached AYP targets. For example—

“Smallville High School made adequate yearly progress in 38 of 40 indicators.”

If a school does not reach the AYP target for any one of the 40 indicators, it is identified as not making Adequate Yearly Progress.

### District-wide Adequate Yearly Progress

Adequate Yearly Progress status will also be reported for the entire school district, as well as for individual schools. If the total student population within a grade level tested district wide does not reach AYP targets—or if a subgroup of 20 or more students district wide does not reach AYP targets—then the district would be identified as not making Adequate Yearly Progress.

### Schools ‘In Need of Improvement’

Schools that do not make AYP for two consecutive years in the same content area (i.e., mathematics or language arts literacy) will be labeled “in need of improvement.” If they are schools that receive federal Title 1 funds, their students must be offered the opportunity to transfer to another school within the district that is not “in need of improvement.” In the future, Title 1 schools identified as being “in need of improvement” will be subject to a progressive series of requirements if they continue to miss AYP targets. These requirements would include providing “supplemental services,” such as after-school tutoring or summer programs, undergoing corrective action by the state, and restructuring of staff and programs.

Currently, there are 265 elementary and middle schools on the “in need of improvement” list, including 15 that were added as the result of 2003 GEPA and NJ ASK-4 test results and further analysis of 2002 test results. Since 2003 represented the first year under which Adequate Yearly Progress was recorded under the new High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), no New Jersey high schools are designated as being “in need of improvement.”

### Federal Law/State Differences

Although No Child Left Behind is a federal law, it leaves implementation of its provisions to the 50 states, resulting in wide variations in benchmarks.

- The federal law requires states to set academic standards. However, individual states determine exactly what those standards will be.
- The federal law requires testing students in mathematics, reading and, starting in 2007-08, science. However, the tests are developed or identified by the individual states.



## Communicating about AYP-2003

- The law requires measurement of test results for a number of student subgroups to determine a school's or a school district's Adequate Yearly Progress. However, individual states establish the minimum number of students needed for a subgroup's test scores to count toward AYP targets. Most states set this minimum at 30 students; New Jersey set the minimum at 20. The result: in New Jersey, subgroup test results can affect the AYP status of a greater number of schools and school districts.

These differences in academic standards, testing instruments and other policy decisions among the states should be kept in mind when communicating about your schools' Adequate Yearly Progress.

### Communications Challenges

Communicating to parents, school staff and the news media about No Child Left Behind should place Adequate Yearly Progress reports in proper context. While you should express concern about NCLB's flaws and the challenges the law poses to your schools, it is essential that you also stress your district's efforts to help students attain proficiency.

- Parents and other members of the community will want to know why a school did not make AYP—*but they should also know about the indicators in which a school attained Adequate Yearly Progress.*
- They will want to know the school district's plan of action to help students reach proficiency levels—*but they should also know the extent of progress made to date*, even if their school did not reach AYP targets on some indicators this year.

Moreover, there are many indicators of school progress in addition to those cited in the Adequate Yearly Progress reports. These include college attendance rates, progress of the overall student population toward education goals, progress made by special education students, school safety, and results of standardized assessments other than the state tests. These factors contribute to the complete picture of a school's academic program.

We have enclosed materials to help you address the NCLB Report Cards on behalf of your school board. The documents include—

- Responding to the News Media: Questions and Answers for School Board Presidents
- Tips for Talking to the News Media
- Sample news releases and sample letters to parents and staff.

### Information Sources

The following Web pages provide important information about No Child Left Behind and Adequate Yearly Progress:

- The New Jersey School Boards Association's NCLB Web page: [www.njsba.org/NCLB/index.htm](http://www.njsba.org/NCLB/index.htm)
- The New Jersey State Department of Education's "No Child Left Behind" section: [www.nj.gov/njded/grants/nclb/](http://www.nj.gov/njded/grants/nclb/)
- The prototype for the NCLB Report Cards. Using 2001-02 test data, these prototype report cards illustrate how the state Department of Education will report each school's Adequate Yearly Progress based on 2003 testing information: <http://education.state.nj.us/rc/nclb.html>

Additional information is available by calling the NJSBA Public Information Department toll free at 1- 888-886-5722, Ext. 5205.



## No Child Left Behind

### Responding to the News Media: Questions and Answers for School Board Presidents

Newspaper reporters will likely contact your school district following release of the new state NCLB School Report Cards and 2003 test data. Whether your district has a number of schools that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the federal No Child Left Behind Act—or whether all your schools made AYP—you should be prepared to address the issue.

The following questions-and-answers address a wide range of situations. Not every one would apply to every school or district. However, the Q&As should provide direction in responding to questions from the news media.

**REVISED 10/3/03**

*Q. A number of schools in your district have not made Adequate Yearly Progress. Can you explain why?*

**A.** Our superintendent has briefed me on our schools' status under No Child Left Behind. In fact, the general student population in each of our schools attained Adequate Yearly Progress this year.

However, the law also requires that we track the progress of a number of subgroups of students. These subgroups are held to the same standards as the general school population. If any one of them does not make AYP, then the entire school is deemed not to have made adequate progress.

That's what happened here. One or more of these subgroups [*identify subgroup(s)*] did not make adequate academic progress in some of our schools.

- or -

Our superintendent has briefed me on our schools' status under No Child Left Behind this year. The board is seriously concerned that [*number*] of our schools did not make adequate progress. New Jersey's current AYP targets will stay in effect for another year. The Board of Education is dedicated to applying any additional resources it has available to those efforts that will enable all of our schools to attain AYP by next year.

*Q. What steps will your board take to help schools that did not make Adequate Yearly progress?*

**A.** The 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 initiatives to help all children attain proficiency.

[*Your school administrators should be prepared to give an overview of current and planned initiatives.*]

*Q. A number of your district's schools were "in need of improvement" last year. The Department of Education indicates that they are still "in need of improvement." Why?*

**A.** To be removed from the "in need of improvement list," a school must make AYP for two consecutive years. We reached the adequate progress mark this year. Our goal for next year is to meet and exceed AYP standards, which will result in removal from the list.

- or -

Proficiency levels have increased for all of our students, but not rapidly enough to make AYP. Therefore, the state has kept these schools on the "in need of improvement" list.

-or-

Proficiency levels have increased for all of our students, but not sufficiently for some of the subgroups who must meet AYP targets. Therefore, the state has kept these schools on the "in need of improvement" list.

Our school district has been heavily involved with school improvement strategies. That focus will become even stronger in those schools that did not meet AYP targets. The board believes that the initiatives we have put in place will have a positive impact on student learning.

*Q. What are you telling parents whose children attend schools that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress?*

Our schools have taken initiatives to help our students make academic progress. This



means not only Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind, but also progress toward New Jersey's academic standards.

NCLB, in fact, bases academic progress solely on New Jersey state test scores in two areas: mathematics and language arts literacy. These are key areas, but they are not the only elements of our school programs. Nor are standardized tests the sole measure of school progress.

We assess our students' progress in a wide variety of academic subjects. To do this, we rely not only on state testing but also on other standardized tests and teacher evaluations of students.

*[School district administrators should be prepared to explain how the district identifies and provides remediation to students in need of assistance. To put the AYP data in context, provide positive information about the district, such as the percentage of graduates continuing their education, the high school graduation rate, the number of Advanced Placement courses, and innovative programs.]*

- Q.** *Will your district make any staff changes as a result of the schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress?*
- A.** Our efforts will focus on implementing and improving programs to help all of our children reach the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards. Along with budget data and other factors, these programming needs have always been a major consideration for our administration in developing its staffing recommendations. This process will continue.
- Q.** *Voters in your district just passed a large bond issue for new school facilities. What do you say to parents and taxpayers now that the state says that some district schools have not made Adequate Yearly Progress?*
- A.** Technology upgrades, health and safety improvements and modern science labs and classrooms can have a positive impact on achievement. The community's support for funding school facility improvements is critical to our school's success.

- Q.** *Every school in your district has made Adequate Yearly Progress. Why is your district doing better than many others?*
- A.** I only have first-hand knowledge of my own school district. By talking with school board members in other communities, I know that all schools face challenges academically, socially, or financially—whether they are located in an Abbott district, in a well-to-do suburb, or in between.
- Q.** *What does your board think of the process used to report Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind?*
- A.** Our Board of Education believes in accountability and in providing parents with clear and accurate information about their children's education progress.

No Child Left Behind, however, can label schools if just one of the student subgroups does not make the Adequate Yearly Progress targets. These subgroups include students with learning disabilities and students whose native language is not English. These students are placed in special programming because of the educational challenges they face.

Our schools have a large number of students of limited English proficiency. Yet, once these students make the cut score and are deemed proficient in language arts, they leave the subgroup. So, our school district cannot get credit for their success.

Our district has an excellent special education program. Families of students with disabilities have located to our school district because of the quality of our programming. However, these children traditionally do not do well on standardized tests. The very success we have with these students may be the basis for our schools being labeled as not making Adequate Yearly Progress.

If New Jersey's AYP results are like those of neighboring states, then about half of our schools will not have made Adequately Yearly Progress—most because of the test results for one of the student subgroups. We know our schools are better than that. This over-identification illustrates serious flaws in the NCLB reporting system.



## **Sample News Release: Adequate Yearly Progress**

*(Local school boards can use this sample news release to explain their schools' Adequate Yearly Progress status under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.)*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [Name of School District Spokesperson]  
[Office and home telephone numbers]

### **[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 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.”

- more -



## **Adequate Yearly Progress/add 1**

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.

### **1. For districts where schools did not make AYP due to subgroup results:**

“The general student population in each of our schools attained Adequate Yearly Progress this year,” [*last name of board president*] explained. “However, the law also requires that we track the progress of the subgroups of students. These subgroups are held to the same standards as the general school population. If any one of them does not make AYP, then the entire school is deemed not to have made adequate progress.

“That’s what happened here. One or more of these subgroups [*identify subgroup(s)*] did not make adequate academic progress in some of our schools.”

### **2. For districts where schools did not make AYP due to overall results:**

“Our school board is seriously concerned that [*number*] of our schools did not make adequate progress,” said [*last name of board president*]. “New Jersey’s current AYP targets will stay in effect for another year. We are committed to applying any additional resources we have available to programs and initiatives that will enable all of our schools to attain Adequate Yearly Progress by next year.”

[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 several programs in place designed to help all students achieve state and local academic standards. [List programs in place and others that will be implemented.]

“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*].

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## **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

CONTACT: [Name of School District Spokesperson]  
[Office and home telephone numbers]

### **[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*].



## No Child Left Behind

### Tips for Talking to the News Media

- When speaking with the news media—as well as with parents, community leaders and staff—remember that ***there are no “failing schools.”*** This is *not* the official terminology used by the state or federal governments. Unfortunately, it has seeped into media coverage of No Child Left Behind. Avoid its use. If you see or hear the term used by reporters, other educators, parents or community leaders, make every effort to point out the correct terminology under No Child Left Behind. Schools are considered “in need of improvement” and/or have not made “adequate yearly progress.”
- The federal No Child Left Behind Act does not use the term “failing,” according to Rod Paige, U.S. Secretary of Education. “In some cases, schools identified as ‘in need of improvement’ may, in fact, be succeeding in some measures,” he said. “What’s important is that we know these schools are capable of getting better results...”

#### Preparing to Address Adequate Yearly Progress in Your Schools:

- Prepare media packets and include facts, figures, and program information about your school(s). Have these materials on hand at all times.
- Once you know the results of your Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report, determine three key messages and make sure these messages are concisely and consistently presented to the media.
- Verify that all the information you plan to share is factual, straightforward and consistent.
- Share the information with all board members, administrators and other key staff, so everyone is communicating the same messages.
- Use language geared toward your target audience. (The way you would discuss state test results with faculty will differ from how you explain test information to parents.) If possible, use classroom-based and school-based examples to get your message across.

#### Responding to Reporters’ Questions:

- Address the situation in your school or district only. Refrain from speculating or offering opinions about the results of other districts.
- Answer each question directly. Keep to the facts. Refrain from embellishing your comments. Avoid speculation.
- Mention the flaws in No Child Left Behind—but don’t dwell on them. Give emphasis to what your school district is doing to improve learning.
- If the media uses negative language, do not repeat it in your response. (Be mindful of negative buzzwords such as “failing.”)
- If asked a negative question, “bridge” your response to the positive message you want to convey.
- Remain positive. This is an opportunity to provide a clear picture about what your district does and the students it serves.
- Try to hold media interviews in an “active” program location, rather than in the superintendent’s or principal’s office. Let reporters see, firsthand, the activities taking place in your schools.



## 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 (11<sup>th</sup> grade), the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment, and the NJ ASK 4 (4<sup>th</sup> 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/](http://www.nj.gov/njded/grants/nclb/), and the New Jersey School Boards Association, [www.njsba.org](http://www.njsba.org).

Sincerely,

[Suggested signatures: superintendent, principal or other administrator]



# Sample Letter to Parents: Schools in Need of Improvement

September 2003

Dear Parent:

As you know, our school district is dedicated to providing all students with the educational foundation necessary to succeed in school and in life. To ensure your child's success, we have set high standards that are reflected in what is taught in our classrooms. While holding high expectations for our students is not new, the way our school and student achievement is measured and reported will be different under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act.

No Child Left Behind was signed into law on January 8, 2002, by President George Bush. It represents the federal government's largest expansion and involvement in K-12 education. Two of the most prominent and highly publicized components of this new federal legislation include provisions of limited "school choice" and "supplemental education services" for students attending schools that have been identified as needing improvement for not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two or more years in a row. Adequate Yearly Progress is based on results of New Jersey standardized tests.

The following schools in our district have been identified as needing improvement: [list schools]

Under No Child Left Behind, students at the following schools, [list schools], may apply for transfer to designated schools within [name of school district] that have made AYP. If you exercise the option of transferring your child to schools making AYP within [name of district] and your child is eligible, the school district has certain obligations to provide or pay for transportation to the new school.

Students at schools identified as needing improvement for a third consecutive year may be eligible to receive tutoring or supplemental education services. Students at the following schools are eligible for these services: [list schools]. These services are over and above those ordinarily provided in the regular classroom during the regular school day. Parents interested in this provision must choose a state-approved provider; contact the New Jersey Department of Education for a list or visit its Web site at <http://www.nj.gov/cgi-bin/education/grants/ssp.pl?string=r&maxhits=10000>. If you exercise this option and your child is eligible, the school must pay for these services using Title I funds.

If you would like your child to be considered for [transfer/supplemental services] during the 2003-04 school year, please notify the school principal in writing as soon as possible so we can begin arrangements for the coming school year. You will be contacted to further discuss the specifics of your request. If you wish for your child to remain at his/her current school, no action on your part is required.

We want to continue serving your child, and we'll use all the resources available to us to help our students achieve. Building and maintaining a high-quality school is a goal for our entire community, job for the entire community, and we need your help to achieve it.

As we strive to help our students succeed, we encourage you to provide your support and input. To become involved with your school, contact [name] and [contact information].

Sincerely,

[Superintendent's signature]



## Sample Letter to Staff: Adequate Yearly Progress

[Date]

Dear [school/district] Employee:

The New Jersey State Department of Education recently began releasing information about our schools' academic progress under 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 (11<sup>th</sup> grade); the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (8<sup>th</sup> grade); and NJ ASK 4 (4<sup>th</sup> grade).

Signed by President Bush in 2002, NCLB requires that all students meet state-determined proficiency levels by 2014. For New Jersey this will mean every single student must score at "proficient" or "advanced proficient" levels on state assessments by 2014. To reach this "100% goal", New Jersey and other states developed incremental benchmarks—Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets. In New Jersey, the AYP targets determine the percentage of students in each school—and the percentage of students in each of a number of subgroups within the school—who must score at "proficient" and "advanced proficient" levels for their school to make Adequate Yearly Progress.

For 2003 and 2004, New Jersey has established the following AYP targets, based on the percentage of students scoring at proficient or advanced proficient levels on state tests:

**HSPA**—Language Arts Literacy, 73%; Mathematics, 55%.

**GEPA**—Language Arts Literacy, 58%; Mathematics, 39%.

**NJ ASK 4**—Language Arts Literacy, 68%; Mathematics, 53%.

If the entire school population—or any one of the subgroups within the school—does not meet these targets, then the school will be deemed as not making Adequate Yearly Progress. Subgroups will include Students with Disabilities, Limited English Proficient Students, Economically Disadvantaged Students, as well as several racial/ethnic groups. (A subgroup's test results will count toward a school's Adequate Yearly Progress status only if 20 or more students within a grade level belong to the subgroup.)

Like many other New Jersey school districts, we expect that a number of our schools may be identified as not making Adequate Yearly Progress. (Your principal will have further information about your school's AYP status.)

The [name of school district] Public Schools remain firmly committed to meeting the needs of each student. We have implemented programs and strategies aimed at improving student academic achievement and meeting our state's academic standards. [List programs]

We can expect that the NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress reports will receive much news media attention. Unfortunately, the reporting system that the federal government now requires may lead to inaccurate public perceptions about the progress we are making in our schools. I want to assure you that our district will make every effort to put the Adequate Yearly Progress information in proper context.

Nonetheless, No Child Left Behind is based on an admirable principle: ensuring quality education for all children. That's a goal we support. We are confident that your dedication to quality instruction will continue to have a positive impact on our children's ability to attain federal, state and local academic goals.

Details about the No Child Left Behind Act and New Jersey's plans to implement its provisions are available on the New Jersey State Department of Education's Web site at [www.nj.gov/njded/grants/nclb/](http://www.nj.gov/njded/grants/nclb/).

We also promise to update you in a timely manner as further information unfolds.

Sincerely,

[superintendent's signature]

REVISED 10/20/03

