



NJDOE News

For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:

Richard Vespucci
Jon Zlock
Ron Rice
609-292-1126

For Release: November 19, 2003

DOE Announces Nearly Two-Thirds of Elementary Schools Meet NCLB Criteria; Only 20 Percent of All Elementary Schools Placed on Early Warning Status This Year *Information Released Today Fulfills Federal Requirements for NCLB Act*

- ▶ [Media Packet - NJ Accountability System Summary Reports - NCLB](#)
- ▶ [McGreevey Demands Changes to No Child Left Behind - Strongly Criticizes Implementation of New Law in Letter to US Education Secretary](#)

Commissioner of Education William L. Librera today announced that nearly two-thirds of all public elementary schools in New Jersey this year have met the federally-mandated standards for fourth-grade for making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB).

The Commissioner additionally announced that only 20 percent of all elementary schools in New Jersey (275 out of 1,365) have received Early Warning notices as a result of not achieving (AYP) as defined by the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). The designation is based on preliminary 2003 fourth-grade assessment results for language arts literacy and math. The tests were administered in May 2003.

The Early Warning percentage released today is the lowest reported to date of high school, grade eight and elementary notices. The fact that the majority of public elementary schools in New Jersey met the criteria for AYP this year is not lost on the DOE or the McGreevey Administration, the Commissioner said.

"Through early literacy efforts and a continued emphasis on ensuring every child reads at grade level by the end of third grade, Gov. McGreevey has raised the bar for education in this state," Commissioner Librera. "We are confident that our students will continue to improve and succeed in the near future. We're already seeing results — today is another example. There is still work to be done, however."

In keeping with the federal requirement, Commissioner Librera also said eight (8) schools have been added to the "needs improvement" list, as required by NCLB. Additionally, 145 schools remain on the "needs improvement" list based on the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), the previous federal law for marking school progress supplanted by NCLB. All data released today are preliminary and based on the 2003 New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK4) test for fourth-graders.

All told, there are 442 elementary schools in the state of New Jersey that did not make AYP this year, as required by the federal NCLB Act (32 percent). Further information is found in the attached [media packet](#).

"Today's data show us that our youngest students are making great progress in grasping the basic tenets of learning," Commissioner Librera said. "We must not overlook the fact that only 20 percent of our elementary schools have been placed on Early Warning status this year. We believe our fourth-graders are demonstrating continued success and we are confident we will see greater accomplishments, and an increased number of schools making AYP, in the future."

Commissioner Librera again cautioned the public that the lists released today, as required by the federal government, do not mean that the schools are "failing." Rather, they have been identified as not achieving AYP, the federal benchmark in place to ensure schools are 100 percent proficient by the year 2014, as outlined by NCLB.

Up-to-Date Elementary Information

Of the 275 schools announced as in Early Warning status, 139, or 50 percent, did not meet AYP standards for two or fewer indicators. Additionally, 202 schools out of 275, or 73 percent, did not meet AYP standards based on four or fewer indicators.

For a school to be deemed in need of improvement or placed in Early Warning status, it need miss only one indicator out of 40.

"This again underscores the importance that these schools are not failing," Commissioner Librera said. "To have such a high percentage of schools missing the mark for four or fewer, or two or fewer, indicators shows us that these schools have a large majority of students who are doing good work."

Based on 2003 NJASK4 data, the eight (8) schools released today have been placed on the "in need of improvement" category. The schools have been placed in this category based on the 2003 NJASK4 preliminary data and the 2002 Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA) test.

The schools identified as "in need of improvement" based on 2003 NJASK4 data are as follows: Alexander Denbo Elementary School in the Pemberton Township District, Burlington County; F.X. McGraw Elementary School in the Camden School District, Camden County; Dr. William Mennies Elementary School in the Vineland School District, Cumberland County; and the Mildred B. Garvin MicroSociety School in the East Orange School District, Essex County.

Also identified were: Madison Elementary School in the Newark School District, Essex County; Kennedy Elementary School No. 9 in the Jersey City School District, Hudson County; N.M. Butler Elementary School No. 23 in the Elizabeth School District, Union County; and Evergreen Elementary School in the Plainfield School District, Union County.

Fourteen (14) schools made "safe harbor," which is attained if the proportion of students in the subgroup scoring partially proficient is reduced by 10 percent over the previous year.

All data released today are based on preliminary, Cycle I data and are New Jersey's most recent reports as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Due to coding problems on the part of the vendor, ETS, the release of the AYP data was delayed until today. Both ETS and the DOE maintained a commitment to finalizing the data as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Criteria for "Early Warning" and "Needs Improvement"

Schools are judged each year by 40 indicators. Should a school miss the mark in one content area for two consecutive years, it would be deemed "in need of improvement." The 40 indicators are as follows: 95 percent participation rate in language arts literacy and math tests, as well as meeting the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmark target in the same subject areas. Data are then examined by looking at 10 subgroups.

The 10 subgroups are: total school population, students with disabilities, limited English proficiency (LEP) students, white, African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Native American, Hispanic, other, and economically disadvantaged.

Attached is the list of "Early Warning" elementary schools, as well as the number of indicators they made out of 40. Also attached is the list of eight (8) schools identified as in "Need of Improvement," based on 2003 NJASK4 data.

More information about the DOE's reporting of AYP can be found online at the Department of Education's Web site: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/>. Please note that all data are preliminary and subject to change as the verification process continues.

NAEP Conclusion

Last week, Gov. James E. McGreevey and Commissioner Librera proudly announced the results of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) report, which placed New Jersey among the top states in the nation in fourth-grade reading and math results. The press release is found here:

http://www.state.nj.us/cgi-bin/governor/njnewslines/view_article.pl?id=1486

Today, Commissioner Librera again pointed out that the news announced last week is excellent for students and teachers across the state and in direct opposition to the misguided assumptions often associated with NCLB reporting. The NAEP results, he said, further emphasize that fourth-graders in the state are succeeding.

In discussing the differences between the NCLB process and the significance of the NAEP results, Commissioner Librera said there is a fundamental flaw in the implementation of NCLB since New Jersey has a high number of schools on the needs improvement list as required by the federal education act, yet the federal NAEP results indicate the state is doing very well.

"These results tell us what we've said all along about the implementation of NCLB," Commissioner Librera said. "We believe it is unfair to label many of the fine schools throughout this state as in need of improvement when

clearly, our students are showing progress. This is clearly evident in the NAEP report."

"Our NAEP results show us that with a continued commitment from the DOE and the McGreevey Administration, we are confident that this generation of fourth-graders has the foundation to be better learners for generations to come," Librera said.

For additional questions, please call the Department of Education Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.