



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PO Box 500
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

JON S. CORZINE
Governor

LUCILLE E. DAVY
Commissioner

ATTENTION!
Districts in Need of Improvement
Final Designation 2008-2009

January 9, 2009

To: Superintendent
School District

From: Barbara Gantwerk, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services

Subject: Districts in Need of Improvement

The federal *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) has mandated extensive education requirements as part of a single accountability system that measures schools and districts for academic achievement and identifies schools and districts for improvement status. Schools and districts identified for improvement that receive Title I funds must comply with a complex set of sanctions defined by the United States Department of Education (USDE).

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is required to follow the NCLB regulations and identify *districts in need of improvement* (DINI). This designation is based on the 2008 final adequate yearly progress (AYP) calculations determined for your schools and posted on the NJDOE web site at www.nj.gov/education/title1/accountability/ayp/0809. The updated document *Understanding Accountability in New Jersey for 2008 State Assessments*, also available on the web site, explains the steps involved in calculating AYP for schools and includes the new conditions that were applied this year.

A review of districtwide AYP calculations indicates that your district is designated a "district in need of improvement." The profile for your district is attached.

To allow your district time to study the district AYP data, notify staff and parents of the designation, and prepare your response to the press in case of inquiries, the NJDOE will post the list of districts in need of improvement to the NJDOE web site on or about **February 9, 2009**. The attached *Addendum* provides more detailed information about

the criterion used to identify districts. It also summarizes actions for DINI districts to take. This document along with others is also posted on the NJDOE web site at www.nj.gov/education/title1/accountability/ayp/0809.

If you believe the district's improvement designation is in error for statistical or other substantive reasons, you may submit an appeal using the attached Appeal Form. All appeals must be submitted to the NJDOE by **February 9, 2009**. Along with the Appeal Form, include a detailed explanation of why you believe the status is in error, and provide corrected data/information with the source to refute the designation.

We are attaching a copy of the District Improvement Continuum Chart to help you understand the steps the district must take. All parents must be notified of the district's improvement designation. We are attaching a sample parent letter that you may use.

The provisions of NCLB are intricate and complex. We appreciate your continued dedication to meeting the requirements of this federal legislation. If you need any additional information about NCLB or Title I, or assistance in complying with the provisions for designated districts, please contact the Office of Student Achievement and Accountability via the helpline at titleone@doe.state.nj.us.

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Attachments

c: Lucille E. Davy
Willa Spicer
John Hart
Senior Staff
Anne Corwell
Kathryn Forsyth
James McBee
Suzanne Ochse
Executive County Superintendent