



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

ROCHELLE R. HENDRICKS
Acting Commissioner

ATTENTION!
Districts in Need of Improvement
2010-2011 Designation

September 10, 2010

To: Chief School Administrator or Lead Person

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 an accountability system that measures schools and districts for academic achievement. Schools and districts not meeting the standards are identified for improvement. Districts and schools 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 to identify *districts in need of improvement* (DINI). This designation is based on the 2010 preliminary adequate yearly progress (AYP) calculations determined for your schools and posted on the NJDOE web site at: <http://www.nj.gov/education/title1/accountability/ayp/1011/>.

The updated document *Understanding Accountability in New Jersey for 2010 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.

An analysis of district-wide 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 **October 12, 2010**. The attached *Addendum* provides more detailed information about the criterion used to identify districts. It also summarizes actions for Title I DINI districts to take. This document, along with others, is also posted on the NJDOE web site at: <http://www.nj.gov/education/title1/accountability/ayp/1011/>.

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 no later than October 12, 2010. 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.

Attached is a copy of the District Improvement Continuum Chart to help you understand the steps the district must take. Most immediately, all parents must be notified of the district's improvement designation. Also attached is a sample parent letter that you may use. These documents are also posted on the NJDOE website at:

<http://www.nj.gov/education/title1/accountability/ayp/1011/>.

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: Acting Commissioner Rochelle Hendricks
 Andrew Smarick
 Senior Staff
 Anne Corwell
 Suzanne Ochse
 Executive County Superintendent