



POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

www.pottstownschoools.com

MIDDLE SCHOOL • 540 N. Franklin Street • Pottstown PA 19464 • (610)970-6665 • FAX(610)970-8738

Pottstown Schools – Building a Better Tomorrow

Notice of Adequate Yearly Progress

Please Read: Important Information Affecting Your Child

July 30, 2009

Dear Pottstown Middle School Parent or Guardian,

We would like to make you aware of the choices and resources available to you based on the progress of your child's school under the guidelines of No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

What are the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)?

The PSSA is an annual exam given to Pennsylvania students at various grade levels to measure their academic progress. The state uses the PSSA to determine whether Pottstown School District and each of our schools are making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP is determined by how successful districts and schools are in meeting state goals for attendance, graduation rates, test participation and academic progress.

To make AYP, a school must meet the state goals for the student body as a whole as well for each subgroup of students. A subgroup consists of 40 or more students in a school in the following categories: ethnicity, socio-economic status, Individual Education Plan (IEP) – Special Education, and English Language Learner (ELL) status. The number of subgroups that a school has determines the number of “targets” that it must meet to make AYP. For the prior 2008-2009 school year, students at the Pottstown School District made remarkable progress in Reading and Mathematics proficiency and met 25 of the 25 targets.

Pottstown Middle School met 100% of AYP targets in 2008-2009. Below are highlights of Reading and Mathematics achievements:

Reading

- In Grade 8 the percentage of students scoring at proficient or advanced increased from 68.5% in 2008 to 80.3% in 2009.

Mathematics

- In Grade 8 the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced increased from 56.1% in 2008 to 68.9% in 2009.

However, even though Pottstown Middle School made AYP this year we are currently identified as being in School Improvement II, Making Progress by the Pennsylvania Department of Education because schools in School Improvement II need to make AYP for two consecutive years to exit the School Improvement II category.

Please review the attachment for an explanation of school improvement and more information on how the Pottstown School District compares to other Pennsylvania schools.

Action Plan for Improving Student Achievement

As a result of an in depth needs assessment, Pottstown Middle School has identified the following areas as key strategies for instructional improvement:

- Implement 'Response to Intervention' to continue improving the academic achievement in 6th grade.
- Scheduled 'Book Study and Writer's Workshop' for 6th and 7th graders.
- Mathematics scheduled in a manner that will allow more flexible grouping of students for targeted instruction and provide smaller class sizes for all mathematics instruction.
- The use of computer assisted instruction in mathematics (Acsellus) for 7th and 8th graders.

As outlined in our school improvement plan, the school district and the Pennsylvania Department of Education will be offering Pottstown Middle School assistance to implement these strategies by helping us fund our School Improvement Plan.

Explanation of School Choice Option

According to NCLB, Pottstown Middle School must offer students the choice to transfer to another school in the district not in School Improvement however Pottstown School District does not have another school building available to offer the choice to transfer. Pottstown Middle School will offer an after school tutoring program for students who have not scored proficient in reading or math. Additionally, Supplemental Educational Services will be offered to students who qualify for free or reduced lunch regardless of their PSSA achievement level.

How parents and Families Can Help Improve Student Achievement

Parent support is essential to the success of Pottstown Middle School. Communicating with your child's teachers, making sure your child attends school regularly, helping your child with homework, monitoring your child's television time, volunteering in the classroom, and participating in school decision-making are important.

The district-wide parent involvement policy will be updated this fall. If you are interested in providing input for this policy, please call Mr. Robert Giering at 610-970-6676. In addition, Pottstown Middle School will have its annual meeting to revise our school parent involvement policy and parent compact and to review parent rights under Title I. This meeting is currently scheduled for our first PTO meeting and parents will be reminded of this date and time by phone.

Although we did make AYP this year, if ALL of our students are not doing well, we are not as good as we can be. That is our challenge, our goal and our commitment. Please continue to work with us to make sure that we achieve success for every student.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Gail M. Cooper
Pottstown Middle School Principal

Enclosures: Additional NCLB Information



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ADDITIONAL NCLB INFORMATION

Explanation of School Improvement

Any school that fails to meet state targets or Adequate yearly Progress (AYP) for one year is considered in Warning and is not identified for School Improvement. However, when the school fails to meet targets for two years in a row the school must be identified as a school in need of improvement and given the designation of School Improvement I. For each successive year that a school does not make AYP, the school advances to another level of school improvement. For example, a school that is in School Improvement I that fails to make AYP will be identified as School Improvement II. A school that fails to make AYP for the fourth year is listed in Corrective Action I and for the fifth year, Corrective Action II.

If a school makes AYP at any point after being identified in School Improvement, the school will not advance to the next level. The status is defined as Making Progress and still considered in School Improvement at the same level as the previous year. If the school makes AYP for the second consecutive year the building is no longer in school improvement. On the other hand if the school misses AYP after a year of Making Progress the school proceeds to the next designated level of School Improvement.

Comparison of SCHOOL DISTRICT NAME with other schools in Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Department of Education tracked statewide gains in student achievement between 2002 and 2008 in reading and mathematics for the following subjects and grades:

Reading

- At Grade 5 the District had a gain of 3.4 percentage points compared to a statewide gain of 3.1percentage points.
- At Grade 8 the District had a gain of 11.8 percentage points compared to a statewide gain of 2.6 percentage points.
- At Grade 11 the District had a gain of 9.9 percentage points compared to a statewide gain of 0.9 percentage points.

Mathematics

- At Grade 5 the District had a gain of 0 percentage points compared to a statewide gain of 0.4 percentage points.
- At Grade 8 the District had a gain of 11.8 percentage points compared to a statewide gain of 1.2 percentage points.
- At Grade 11 the District had a gain of 5.2 percentage points compared to a statewide gain of 0.1 percentage points.

What are Supplemental Educational Services?

Supplemental Educational Services (SES) are extra academic services available in schools identified for School Improvement II or Corrective Action. Free tutoring is offered after school or on Saturday to help eligible students to improve in reading, mathematics and science.

How Parents and Families Can Help Improve Student Achievement

Your support is not only essential to your child's success, but to the success of the school as well. Under NCLB, parents are to be involved in the school improvement process and to help write the school's School Plan. This is the plan to help raise the student achievement of all children in the school. Parents also have the right to help create or update the school's parent involvement policy and the home-school compact. You can contribute to your child's academic success by ensuring that your child attends school regularly, comes prepared to learn and completes all homework. Please plan to attend the Title I and Parent School Community Council meetings to obtain more information about school improvement activities and parent engagement opportunities at your child's school.



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Dear Pottstown Middle School Parent/Guardian,

Help your child succeed in school – sign up for free tutoring! As a result of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*, your child can receive extra help in the areas of math, reading, science and language arts. You can receive this free tutoring because your child's school is in School Improvement II, Making Progress and your family meets the income limits under the law.

Your child's school has been identified for improvement because it has not made adequate yearly progress on state measures of academic achievement for at least two consecutive years. Our district's report card (enclosed with this letter) shows how your child's school compares to other schools in our district and state.

You may choose a free tutoring program that is best for your child. A list of approved tutoring providers is enclosed and will be posted on our website. These programs have been approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and will provide your child with tutoring that is coordinated with the curriculum taught in your child's school.

This free tutoring program is called Supplemental Educational Services (SES) and is a federal program defined by NCLB. To find out more about SES access the following website:
<http://www.pde.state.pa.us/nclb/cwp/view.asp?a=3&Q=82596>.

Questions for Families to Ask Providers:

When and where will the tutoring take place (i.e. at school or a community center)?

How often and for how many hours in total will your child be tutored?

What programs, by grade levels and subject areas, are available for your child?

What type of instruction will the tutor use (small group, one-on-one, or the computer)?

What are the tutors' qualifications?

Can the tutor help if your child has disabilities or is learning English?

Is transportation available to and from where the tutoring will take place?

What evidence do you have of the program's effectiveness?

How will progress be reported to parents and to the school?

How do I apply?

Please call Mr. Robert Giering, 610-970-6676 if you have any questions about these services.

Thank you.

Pottstown Middle School Principal
Mrs. Gail M. Cooper,

Enclosures: Approved Provider List