

# LITTLE EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Joanne C. Burd Administration Building  
307 Frog Pond Road ♦ Little Egg Harbor, NJ 08087

FRANK KASYAN, Ed.D.  
*Superintendent of Schools*  
Office of the Superintendent  
(609) 296-1719  
Fax (609) 296-3225

LYNN COATES  
*Business Administrator*  
Office of the Superintendent  
(609) 296-1719  
Fax (609) 296-2570

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

The Little Egg Harbor Township 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. The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) requires that adequate yearly progress (AYP) in Language Arts literacy and Mathematics be measured annually for each school in the state of New Jersey.

AYP is based primarily on the results of the NJASK state assessments given to students in grades three through six each spring. Schools must meet the state's academic proficiency benchmarks, as well as other indicators (test participation and attendance benchmarks), to make AYP. The benchmarks increase incrementally every three years until 2014 when all students must meet proficiency.

2011 Benchmarks for students in each school:

Grades 3 – 5: Language Arts Literacy 79% proficiency, Mathematics – 83% proficiency  
Grade 6: Language Arts Literacy 86% proficiency, Mathematics – 80% proficiency  
Grades 3 – 6: 95% participation and 90% attendance during the school year

AYP is calculated for the total school population grades 3-6 and for the subgroups below for all students who have been enrolled for the full academic year.

- Students with Disabilities
- Limited English Proficient
- Economically Disadvantaged
- White
- African American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian/Native American
- Hispanic
- Other

NCLB also allows for a *Safe Harbor* provision so that schools will not be penalized for a particular student group's performance being below the goal, providing sufficient progress is made. For example, if the student group improved its performance by decreasing the number of students not proficient by 10% over the previous year, the student group would make AYP by qualifying for the *Safe Harbor* provision.

Schools that do not make AYP for one year receive an *Early Warning* designation to alert them that the students did not meet at least one of the AYP indicators. If a school does not make AYP for two or more consecutive years in the same content area (Language Arts or Mathematics), it is designated as a *School in Need of Improvement (SINI)*.

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*"In order to prepare our children to be productive and responsible citizens, the Mission of the Little Egg Harbor Township School District is to develop and maintain a collaborative and nurturing learning environment fostering individual abilities and encouraging all children to achieve their highest potential. We expect all children to meet or exceed the grade level benchmarks set forth in the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS)".*

The George J. Elementary School has been designated as an SINI for the 2011-2012 school year in the area of Language Arts Literacy for the subgroups *Total Students* and *White Students*, in the elementary grade span (grades 3 – 5).

All SINI that receive federal Title I funds must assemble a school improvement committee to develop a school improvement plan that identifies areas of need and programs and activities to increase student achievement. Our committee has already started the process to create our plan. As a parent, you are encouraged to contact Mrs. Deborah Giannuzzi, your child's principal, at 609-296-7131, to join the committee and provide input to the school improvement plan.

The district has already taken steps to help us achieve higher scores in these subgroups. As you know, last year we implemented a new reading program by the American Reading Company, and our individual student performance greatly improved in student growth from one grade level to the next. However, AYP compares the same grade levels from year to year (for example, grades 3 – 5 2010 to grades 3 – 5 2011), and doesn't compare individual student growth. Additionally, the AYP benchmarks moved from 59% to 79% proficient in one year. We are also implementing new strategies to improve student writing skills this year. We believe the American Reading Company's Action 100 program and these new writing strategies will help us continue to improve student performance and there will be continuous progress in achievement on the NJASK.

In addition to the above strategies, Title I SINIs must implement certain interventions for each consecutive year that AYP is not met in the same subject area. The school improvement requirement that normally applies to your child's school is for *Year 2 – School Choice*. Under NCLB, the district must offer students the opportunity to transfer to another school within the district that is meeting AYP. However this year, with the new benchmarks, the Frog Pond Elementary School has also been designated as a school in need of improvement. Because we are unable to offer the school choice option, the district will instead offer *Supplemental Education Services* for students. You will soon receive further information about how you can receive free tutoring for your child under this provision.

Attached there is an information sheet that shows the performance of both schools on the NJASK. Additional information may also be found on our website [www.lehsd.k12.nj.us](http://www.lehsd.k12.nj.us) under the *Resources* tab, *Parents*, *NCLB Parent Info*. If you have any questions about AYP or the interventions we will be pursuing, please contact the school principal, Mrs. Deborah Giannuzzi, 296-7131, and he will be happy to assist you.

It is important for parents to understand that meeting the requirements of NCLB based on a single snapshot of testing, doesn't truly paint a picture of the education our students are receiving. In our county alone, only seven out of twenty-six districts had all schools meeting the AYP benchmarks, and those districts that met the benchmarks were all small districts that did not have enough students to be accountable in most of the subgroups. Please be assured that we are providing a quality education for our students and will continue serving all of the children in our district by utilizing all of the resources available to help them achieve. An important part of this effort includes parent involvement and support. We encourage you to become involved in this and other initiatives at your child's school. The building and maintaining of a high-quality school is a job for the entire community. We will continue to communicate with you throughout the year on our improvement efforts.

Sincerely,

Frank Kasyan, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
FK/pb