

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

June 20, 2005

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jerry D. Weast, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Preliminary 2005 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Determinations

We have received preliminary determinations of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for elementary and middle schools, based on the 2005 Maryland School Assessment (MSA) performance and attendance rates. However, many of the determinations are subject to appeal, especially appeals based on changes in federal regulations involving students with disabilities. Those federal changes were not incorporated in the determinations released today by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and, consequently, the figures are considered preliminary. Sixteen schools appear eligible to appeal on the special education rules alone, and other schools may qualify based on additional criteria. Appeals are due in July and subsequent AYP determinations will be available later this summer. Preliminary AYP determinations for high schools and the school district are not due until this fall, following the scoring and the establishment of passing standards for the new end-of-course English assessment in Grade 10.

The preliminary AYP determinations indicate continued strong achievement by elementary schools across the school district and reflect the results of targeted improvements achieved as part of the reform initiatives of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Indeed, all of the Title I elementary schools in School Improvement in 2004-2005 met AYP. Broad Acres Elementary School, in particular, achieved AYP for the third consecutive year, a tremendous achievement in addressing the intense challenges of poverty and limited English proficiency that only a few years had placed the school in serious academic peril. At the middle school level, however, continued problems in achieving AYP reflect issues identified in the recent middle school audit and underscore the importance of moving ahead with targeted improvements in these grades.

Based on the preliminary AYP determinations, 85 percent of the 161 elementary and middle schools made AYP, up from 79 percent in 2003 but a decline from 91 percent last year (a decline that will change as a result of the appeal process). The preliminary AYP determinations include 117 of 125 elementary schools (94 percent) and 19 of 36 middle schools (53 percent).

For an elementary or middle school to make AYP it must achieve *all* of the school's targets in three reported areas: reading, mathematics, and attendance rate. These targets are called Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO). Schools are expected to achieve the AMOs in the categories of "All Students" and the five racial/ethnic groups and for students receiving special education, limited English proficiency, and Free and Reduced-price Meals System services.

Six elementary schools—Gaithersburg, Harmony Hills, Kemp Mill, Rosemont, Weller Road, and Wheaton Woods—met AYP for the second year and exited the state's School Improvement list. All six schools have highly diverse student populations, including substantial numbers of students impacted by poverty and English language limitations. An additional six schools met AYP for the first year and could potentially exit School Improvement next year. Highland Elementary School, which had entered the corrective action stage of School Improvement in 2004, is among these schools.

Table 1
Preliminary Data on of Elementary and Middle Schools Meeting AYP*
2003 through 2005

	Total Number Schools	2003		2004		2005		2003–2005 Change
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
Elementary	125	103	82	119	95	117	94	+12
Middle	36	25	69	27	75	19	53	-16
Total	161	128	79	146	91	136	85	+6

* Note: Totals subject to change based on expected appeals, especially those involving improvements in federal requirements for calculations involving students with disabilities that were not included in the MSDE release of AYP data.

Beginning with the 2004–2005 school year, it is harder for a school to enter School Improvement or move to the next level of School Improvement. Now, a school not meeting AYP in the same content area (reading, mathematics, or attendance) for two years moves to the next level of School Improvement. For example, a school that misses AYP for the first time is identified as *requiring local attention*, but it is not identified for School Improvement. If that school fails to meet AYP for the second year in the same content area, it then enters School Improvement. The levels for School Improvement are as follows:

- School Improvement Year 1—after not achieving an AMO in the same content area (reading, math, or attendance) for two consecutive years, the school writes a detailed plan to solve problems in student achievement. If the school participates in the federal Title I program, it must offer parents the option of transferring their child to a higher achieving school in the school system.
- School Improvement Year 2—after not achieving an AMO in the same content area for a third year, the school continues to follow its improvement plan. If the school is a Title I

school, it continues offering parents the option to transfer their child to a higher performing school and also provides extra services, such as tutoring, to economically disadvantaged students.

- Corrective Action—after not achieving an AMO in the same content area for a fourth year, the school and the school system take specific actions to improve the school. These actions could include replacing school staff, adopting a new curriculum, or extending the school year. Title I schools continue offering the transfer option and extra services.
- Restructuring—after not achieving an AMO in the same reported area for a fifth year, restructuring is implemented, which might include local school system or state takeover of school operations or other actions. Title I schools continue offering the transfer option and extra services.

If a school does not meet AYP, but does meet the AMO in the content area not achieved in for the previous year, the school remains in the same level in School Improvement for the following school year. A school exits School Improvement when it meets AYP for two consecutive years.

Schools identified preliminarily as in need of improvement for the 2005–2006 school year are listed on Attachment Table 1. In addition, a second attachment provides a preliminary AYP Analysis for Elementary and Middle Schools from MSDE on school system's 125 elementary schools, 36 middle schools, and one special school (Carl Sandburg Center).

MSDE has established a process to guide school systems wishing to appeal 2005 AYP designations; and unlike last year, school systems can now file appeals for two additional reasons in accordance with rules that the MSDE coordinated with the federal government. An appeal can now be made for

- A student who was unable to take the Maryland School Assessment and the make-up exams due to a serious medical emergency; and
- A school that did not achieve AYP for special education only. (This reflects newly approved federal rules that allow 2 percent of students in special education who have *persistent academic disabilities* to be tested using modified assessments. Under these new rules, Maryland school systems can appeal to have the scores of these students adjusted from basic to proficient on the Maryland School Assessment.)

Based on the above criteria, 16 of our 25 schools (80 percent) are eligible to appeal based on the new special education rules. Staff in the Department of Shared Accountability will assist these schools and MCPS staff in gathering and submitting all appropriate documentation by the July 14, 2005, deadline.

While MCPS demonstrated significant academic achievement in this third year of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* accountability guidelines, many challenges remain. Of the 32

schools that are in need of local attention or that are designated in some stage of School Improvement, 19 (59 percent) are middle schools. The 2005 AYP targets sharply increased compared to 2004, particularly for reading and mathematics. For example, the percentage of middle school students required to make AYP in mathematics increased by 11.1 percentage points (from 22.7 percent to 35.8 percent) and by 13.1 percentage points (from 45.6 percent to 56.7 percent) in reading. However, while the combined effect of these AYP calculation adjustments may explain some of the 2005 performance of middle schools, we also are examining other instructional and curriculum issues that may require revision. These curriculum and instructional improvements are being incorporated into the middle school reform efforts that are designed to increase the rigor of middle school courses and strengthen the focus on reading should have a positive impact on AYP results over the next few years.

I will keep you informed of the results of our appeals and any additional developments regarding this topic.

JDW:kmy

Attachments

Copy to:

Executive Staff

Principals

Attachment Table 1
MCPS Schools Requiring Local Attention and
Schools Identified for Improvement for the 2005–2006 School Year*

	School	Student Group(s) Not Making AYP	Area(s) in which the Student Group Did Not Make AYP	
Requiring Local Attention (on alert)	Brooke Grove ES	Special Education	Math	
	Cresthaven ES	Special Education	Math	
	Capt. James E. Daly ES	Special Education	Math	
	East Silver Spring ES	Special Education	Math	
	Georgian Forest ES	Special Education	Math	
	Highland View ES	LEP	Reading	
	Strathmore ES	Special Education	Reading, Math	
	Watkins Mill ES	Special Education	Math	
	Argyle MS	Special Education, LEP	Reading	
			Special Education	Math
		John T. Baker MS	Special Education	Reading
		Briggs Chaney MS	Special Education	Reading
		Forest Oak MS	Hispanic, FARMS, Special Education, LEP	Reading
			Special Education	Math
		Martin Luther King MS	Special Education	Reading, Math
		Kingsview MS	Special Education	Reading
		Redland MS	LEP	Reading
			Special Education	Math
		Ridgeview MS	Special Education	Reading
		Sligo MS	Special Education	Reading
		Takoma Park MS	LEP	Reading
		Tilden MS	Special Education	Reading
		Julius West MS	Special Education	Reading
	Earl B. Wood MS	Special Education	Reading	
	Carl Sandburg	All Students, Special Education	Reading	
Year 1	E. Brooke Lee MS	Hispanic	Reading	
	Eastern MS	FARMS	Math	
	Shady Grove MS	FARMS	Reading	
Year 2	Silver Spring International MS	African American, Hispanic, FARMS Hispanic, Special Education	Reading Math	

Notes:

Information subject to change based on expected appeals, especially those involving improvements in federal requirements for calculations involving students with disabilities that were not included in the MSDE release of AYP data.

The following schools are maintaining their Year 1 School Improvement status although they made AYP in 2005, and can exit if they make AYP in 2006: Clopper Mill and Piney Branch elementary schools,

Eastern, Parkland, and White Oak middle schools, and Mark Twain School. Additionally, Highland Elementary School remains in Corrective Action but can exit in 2006 if it meets AYP as it did in 2005.