

WHARTON BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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"In partnership with the community, the Wharton School district is committed to educational excellence and guarantees challenging learning opportunities for all students to become life-long learners and productive and responsible members of society. It is the expectation of this school district that all pupils achieve the New Jersey core curriculum content standards at all grade levels."

Marie V. Duffy Elementary School

"Governor's School of Excellence"
Pamela S. Blalock, Principal

Alfred C. MacKinnon Middle School

Christopher J. Herdman, Principal

Dennis Mack
Interim Superintendent

Pamela Hinman
Business Administrator

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Supervisor
Curriculum/Instruction

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Consultant to Special
Education & Child Study
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137 East Central Avenue
Wharton, NJ 07885

September 15, 2011

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We are 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 New Jersey.

AYP is based primarily on the results of the New Jersey state assessments given to students in grades 3 through 8 and grade 11. Schools must meet the state's academic proficiency benchmarks, as well as other indicators such as test participation and attendance/dropout rate, to make AYP. These benchmarks increase on an incremental basis every three years.

Schools that do not make AYP for one year (Year 1) receive an Early Warning designation to alert them that 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 literacy and mathematics) it is identified a school in need of improvement.

Alfred C. MacKinnon School did not make AYP in math for two years in a row.

The school improvement requirements that apply to the Alfred C. MacKinnon School are checked off below. For more information about these sanctions, please see the attached information sheet.

- Year 1 – Early Warning:** There are no school improvements requirements. Notification to parents of the SINI status is optional.
- Year 2 – School Choice:** Your child may transfer to a high-performing school in the district. Our district is unable to provide the choice option; supplemental educational services (SES) is available to income-eligible students.
- Years 2 & 3 – Supplemental Educational Services:** These services, such as tutoring, are offered to students who meet certain income criteria. These services, such as tutoring, are offered over and above those ordinarily provided in the regular classroom during the normal school day and after-school program. *Students must be income eligible to receive SES.* Parents will be notified separately if their child is eligible. SES providers must be state-approved and posted on the New Jersey Department of Education Web site at www.nj.gov/cgi-bin/education/title1/ssp.pl?string=r&maxhits=10000. If you exercise this option and *your child is eligible*, the school must pay for these services, up to a threshold, using Title I funds. Upon request, your child's teacher or principal will assist you in selecting an appropriate provider. (School choice must also be offered in Year 3.) In Year 3, your school may receive a Collaborative Assessment for Planning and Achievement (CAPA) scholastic audit from a team of school improvement experts. CAPA is part of a statewide system of support.
- Year 4 – Corrective Action:** In addition to school choice and SES, corrective action schools must take additional steps to improve students' academic performance. In Year 4, your school will receive a Collaborative Assessment for Planning and Achievement (CAPA) scholastic audit from a team of school improvement experts if the visit was not conducted in Year 3. Your child's school was identified for corrective action for the following reasons:

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- ❑ **Year 5 – Planning for Restructuring:** Because the school has not made AYP for five consecutive years, the district must restructure it, developing an alternate governance plan during Year 5. You will receive additional information regarding parent input into the restructuring plan as it is developed.
- ❑ **Year 6 – Restructuring - 1:** The school has not made AYP for six consecutive years and is now in restructuring. The CAPA team, part of the statewide system of support, conducts a three-day visit to the school to review implementation of the restructuring plan and offer recommendations for district support.
- ❑ **Year 7 and up – Restructuring - 2:** The school has not made AYP for seven or more consecutive years. The CAPA team meets with school and district administrators to continually review implementation of the restructuring plan.

All schools in need of improvement 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 help increase student achievement. All schools in Year 5, planning for restructuring, must involve parents and the community for input as the restructuring plan is developed. As a parent, you are encouraged to contact your child's school principal to provide input to the school improvement plan and see how you can become involved in helping the school address its achievement issues.

Some of the steps we have already taken or plan to implement this year to address the problem(s) that placed your child's school in improvement status include the following:

- *Continued movement to an inclusion model on each grade level instead of the pull-out resource program*
- *Providing professional development in the targeted area of mathematics*
- *Using Response to Intervention to quickly provide support where it is needed*
- *Implementing Positive Behavior Supports*
- *Identifying and implementing best practices for instruction*
- *Increasing use of assessment data to identify strengths and weaknesses and to inform instruction*
- *Identifying and remediating at risk students*

The state is also active in helping the school and district achieve its academic goals by sponsoring trainings, school support teams (CAPA), and guidance.

We want to continue serving your child, and we'll use all the resources available to us to help our students achieve. An important part of this effort involves parental involvement and support. The district and school must develop and implement a parental involvement policy. We encourage you to become involved in this and other initiatives at your child's school by contacting Christopher Herdman, the MacKinnon School principal. Building and maintaining a high-quality school, is a job for the entire community.

We will continue to communicate with you throughout the year regarding the school improvement efforts underway and hope you will join us in supporting our students and teachers as we work toward reaching our goals for next year.

Sincerely,

Mr. Dennis Mack