

**Farrell Area School District
Farrell Area Elementary School
1600 Roemer Blvd.
Farrell, PA 16121**

**Notice of Adequate Yearly Progress
Please Read: Important Information Affecting Your Child**

August 9, 2010

Dear Farrell Area Elementary 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 the Farrell Area 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. **Overall, the Farrell Area School District made AYP!**

To make AYP, a school must meet the state goals for the student body as a whole as well as 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 2009-2010 school year, students at the Farrell Area Elementary School made remarkable progress in Reading and Mathematics proficiency on **20 of the 21 targets**.

Farrell Area Elementary School met 95 % of AYP targets in 2010. Below are highlights of reading and mathematics achievements:

Reading

- In Grades 3 – 6, the percentage of students scoring at proficient or advanced **increased** from 43.8% in 2009 to 46.5% in 2010.
- In Grades 3 – 6, the percentage of students scoring at proficient or advanced **stayed in the 70% although decreased** from 78.1% (GM) in 2009 to 73.9% (GM) in 2010.

Mathematics

- In Grades 3 – 6, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced **increased** from 51.2% in 2009 to 54.3% in 2010.
- In Grades 3 – 6, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced **increased** from 54.2% (SHCI) in 2009 to 73.9% (GM) in 2010.

However, based on the performance of one subgroup – IEP (Special Education) Students, the Farrell Area Elementary School has been identified in Corrective Action I by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Farrell Area Elementary School's PSSA results indicate that the school did not meet the state's academic achievement targets for the fourth year in a row, based on 2009-2010 PSSA results. Below is a list of the target goal areas and the performance of the Farrell Area Elementary School as compared to the state's target goals.

Overall Attendance	94.64%	Participation Goal	99.6%
State Target	90%	State Target	95%

Overall Reading 46.5 % Proficient/Advanced
 State Target 63%

Overall Mathematics 54.3% Proficient/Advanced
 State Target 56%

Reading

Subgroup: Black 42.7% Proficient/Advanced
 Subgroup: White 58.5 % Proficient/Advanced
 Subgroup: Economically Disadvantaged 46.6% Proficient/Advanced
 Subgroup: Special Education 18.8 % Proficient/Advanced
 State Target 63% Proficient/Advanced

Mathematics

Subgroup: Black 50.3% Proficient/Advanced
 Subgroup: White 67.9% Proficient/Advanced
 Subgroup: Economically Disadvantaged 53.4% Proficient/Advanced
 Subgroup: Special Education 29.2 % Proficient/Advanced
 State Target 56% Proficient/Advanced

Please review the attachment for an explanation of school improvement. More information on how the Farrell Area School District compares to other Pennsylvania schools will be mailed home when the data is released from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Action Plan for Improving Student Achievement

As a result of an in-depth needs assessment, the Farrell Area Elementary School has identified the following areas as key strategies for instructional improvement:

- Reading
- Mathematics
- Science
- Writing
- IEP - Special Education Student Population – Reading and Mathematics

As outlined in our school improvement plan, the school district and the Pennsylvania Department of Education will be offering the Farrell Area Elementary School assistance to implement these strategies by assigning a Distinguished Educator to the Farrell Area School District, providing services through the Midwestern Intermediate Unit, as well as services through PDE, IU IV and PaTTAN to address the needs of our special education population. In addition, the Farrell Area Elementary School will adhere to the standards-aligned system (SAS) outlined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE): clear standards, fair assessments, curriculum framework, instruction, materials and resources, and interventions leading to the goal of all students’ academic proficiency in core academic disciplines regardless of zip code, economic status, race, ethnicity or disability.

Explanation of School Choice Option

According to NCLB, the Farrell Area Elementary School must offer students the choice to transfer to another school in the district not in School Improvement; however, the Farrell Area School District does not have another school building available to offer the choice to transfer. For example, in the 2009-2010 school year, 490 students were eligible for school choice in the FAES, but zero (0) students were able to opt for school choice.

However, the Farrell Area Elementary School will offer Supplemental Education Services (SES) and Educational Assistance Program (EAP) Tutoring services.

How Parents and Families Can Help Improve Student Achievement

Parent support is essential to the success of the Farrell Area Elementary 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 Carole Borkowski at 724-509-1114. In addition, the Farrell Area Elementary 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 September 17, 2010 at 9:00 A.M. in the school cafeteria. In addition, specific parent involvement opportunities include, but are not limited to the following: Title I Parent Advisory Council, Title I Parent Nights and Family Fun Nights, Kindergarten Orientation, Meet the Teachers Night, Open House, Parent Conferences, Scholastic Book Fairs, Farrell Early Childhood Council, Kids Fest, Spring Fling, "Lights on after School Event", Story hours at the Stey-Nevant Library, Parent Trainings provided through the Intermediate Unit, Field Trips, and Classroom Events.

The many successes at the Farrell Area Elementary School cannot be measured in one test and we appreciate your continued support. Such successes include, but are not limited to the following:

- The use of SAS (Standards-Aligned System) from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)
- An articulated rigorous, standards-based curriculum K-6 in Reading, Mathematics and Science.
- Mapping of the state anchors to ensure the curriculum is aligned with the state standards.
- The use of Eligible Content to clearly focus on essential learnings.
- Support from the Distinguished Educator Initiative sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
- Participation in the Johns Hopkins 4-Sight Testing Program for students in grades 3-6 that will establish students at benchmark levels throughout the year in reading and math.
- Ongoing training for instructional staff so that they continually enhance the engagement of students and teach the curriculum at a high level.
- Professional development and on-site consultation with Jan Jacob who previously worked for the Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education (CDDRE) at Johns Hopkins University.
- A professional development focus on Universal Design Instructional Principles.
- The integration of the Principles of Learning from the Institute for Learning and the research of Dr. Lauren Resnick.
- A school-wide assessment program in grades K-6 in Reading and Mathematics. Data analysis grade level meetings held after each round of assessment.
- The use of formative assessment to improve student learning.
- Staff analysis of student work within and across grade levels.
- A school wide Title I Program that provides supplemental Reading and Mathematics services for students K – 6.
- A focus on the five key elements in Reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.
- A focus on inquiry-based Mathematics and Power Teaching strategies.
- A K-6 writing focus across the curriculum.
- An Accountability Block Grant that provides for Mathematics and Literacy Coaches to assist in improving instruction and professional development.
- An Accountability Block Grant that provides a Social Worker to work with families and students.
- A collaborative program with the Behavioral Health Commission to provide assistance with Student Interpersonal Skills programs.
- A Title I Mathematics Program that will focus on K – 6 Mathematics. The math coach will assist in improving Mathematics instruction and professional development for the staff.
- Title I Parent Nights for parents/guardians to learn math and reading strategies to use at home.
- A free after school program through the Twenty-First Century Learning Grant (C.O.O.L.) that provides tutoring, homework assistance, and enrichment for students in grades 3 - 12.
- Kindergarten uses a supplemental Reading Instruction computer program called Waterford.
- Students in grades 3 – 6 participate in a computer program for Reading and Mathematics called Study Island which is aligned to the PSSA eligible content.

- A free after school and summer tutoring program for students in K – 6 through the Educational Assistance Grant (EAP).
- A free tutoring program for students in K-6 offered through SES.
- Linkage with the John Hetra Early Childhood Center and the Farrell Early Childhood Council so a child's school experience gets off to a better start when transitioning to kindergarten.
- A free summer program "Success by Six" for students entering kindergarten in collaboration with the United Way.
- An intensive professional development program for teachers and administrators.
- A Positive Behavior Support Program to establish common expectations for behavior.
- An inclusionary based-model for elementary students in special education will be provided according to the child's I.E.P.
- Professional development for the staff on best practices for special education students.
- Reduced class sizes.
- Fewer suspensions of students.

We must admit, however, that 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. **Failure Is Not an Option!**

Sincerely,

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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 FARRELL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT with other schools in Pennsylvania:

The Farrell Area Elementary School has been identified as in Corrective Action I by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). More information on how the Farrell Area School District compares to other Pennsylvania schools will be mailed home when the data is released from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

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 FAES 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.