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Policy 2415.01 - ACADEMIC STANDARDS, ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), §1111, requires New Jersey to have an accountability system to include challenging academic content and academic achievement standards. New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards define those skills needed for children to be successful in the twenty-first century economy. These skills are measured by State assessments and New Jersey's accountability design determines a school's progress toward meeting established standards. This progress measure is referred to as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Testing Requirements

In accordance with NCLB, beginning in the 2002-2003 school year, schools must administer language arts/literacy and mathematics tests in three grade spans: grades 3 through 5, grades 6 through 8, and grades 10 through 12 in all schools. By the 2005-2006 tests must be administered every year in grades three through eight and one year in grades ten through twelve. Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, science achievement must also be tested. At least 95% of each pupil group must participate in the assessment process. Pupils who have been enrolled in the school for less than one academic year are not included in the accountability process. Pupils with disabilities who are moved from their neighborhood school to receive services at another school will be included in their home school's accountability process. Pupils with limited English proficiency must also be assessed, with accommodations. Pupil progress must also be assessed by pupil group (pupils from major racial and ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged pupils, pupils with disabilities, and pupils with limited English proficiency) in accordance with the requirements of NCLB.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) will establish starting points for AYP and incremental increases in expectations for all schools with the goal of all schools and pupil groups reaching 100 percent proficiency in language arts/literacy, math, and science by the 2013-2014 school year.

School Level Accountability

Each school's proficiency statistics in each area and pupil subgroup will be compared to the State-wide benchmarks. Results for subgroups with fewer than the number of pupils designated by the NJDOE will be suppressed or excluded from the analysis. Intervals of confidence of 90% will be applied to school results. If a subgroup is identified as not having met AYP, "safe harbor" may be reached if the percentage of pupils not meeting AYP has decreased by 10% from the previous school year.

NJDOE School Classification System

The NJDOE will classify schools into six categories of progress based on a school's progress toward meeting the established standards. These categories are:

1. Category I - Schools in Need of Improvement

These schools did not achieve AYP and have an achievement gap of more than 25% in attaining the State standards. The progress achieved by these schools demonstrates that significantly greater assistance is needed to reach full State standards.

This includes those schools that met the above criteria for one or more grade levels, even though they also achieved Category II, Schools in Performance Monitoring, in another grade level.

2. Category II - Schools in Performance Monitoring

These schools did not achieve AYP; however the schools have demonstrated the ability to make progress toward incrementally eliminating the achievement gap; 25% or less of students failed to achieve the State standards in one content area. If AYP is not made in the next academic year the school will enter Category I.

Category II includes those schools that met the above criteria even though they also achieved Category III, Schools Approaching the Standards, in another grade level.

3. Category III - Schools Approaching the Standards

These schools have nearly achieved AYP; less than 5% of students have not achieved State standards in only one content area. These schools are likely to meet the State standards within one academic year. However, if AYP is not made in the next academic year the school will enter Category II.

Category III includes those schools that met the above criteria even though they also achieved Category IV, Schools Receiving Conditional Approval, in another grade level.

4. Category IV - Schools Receiving Conditional Approval

These schools have achieved their designated AYP and are progressing toward meeting the State standards. These schools must be monitored for maintenance of achievement.

Category IV includes those schools that met the above criteria even though they also achieved Category V, Schools Receiving Full Approval, in another grade level.

5. Category V - Schools Receiving Full Approval

Category V schools have met State standards in at least one of the prior two years in each subject area.

6. Category VI - Schools Demonstrating Excellence

Category VI schools have always met or exceeded State standards and may be considered exemplary models of success.

The School Improvement Process

Schools that have not made adequate yearly progress for two consecutive school years in the same content area will be identified as needing school improvement before the beginning of the next school year. If any school in the district is identified as a Title I school in need of improvement, the following steps need to be taken in the Title I portion of the Consolidated Application/Plan for funding of programs governed under the No Child Left Behind Act. The plan must be developed in accordance with NCLB §1116 and NJDOE guidelines and shall include:

1. Improvement Plan - The school must develop a two-year improvement plan showing programs and strategies that will be adopted to improve teaching and learning.
2. Professional Development - The school must provide professional development for the school's staff to improve their skills. At least ten percent of the school's Title I allocation for two years must be spent to support these professional development activities.
3. Intra-district Choice - The district must develop and offer an intra-district school choice program that includes the process to be used to notify parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of pupils enrolled in the school of the school's designation as a school in need of improvement. An intra-district school choice program must offer parent(s)/legal guardian(s) the opportunity to transfer their child to another school within the district that is not identified for improvement.
4. Supplemental Services - The school must offer and provide supplemental educational services to disadvantaged children in accordance with NCLB and NJDOE guidelines.

Districts with schools that fail to make AYP, after being identified as needing school improvement, by the end of the first full year after identification must continue to:

1. Offer the intra-district school choice option to parent(s)/legal guardian(s);
2. Make available supplemental educational services in accordance with NCLB §1116; and
3. Provide technical assistance in accordance with NCLB §1116.

Districts that have schools that fail to make AYP by the end of the second full year after being identified as needing school improvement must continue 1, 2 and 3 above and take at least one of the following corrective actions as identified in NCLB:

1. Replace the school staff who are relevant to the failure to make adequate yearly progress;
2. Institute and fully implement a new curriculum that includes appropriate professional development for all relevant staff that is based on scientifically based research and offers substantial promise of improving educational achievement for low-achieving students and enabling the school to make adequate yearly progress;
3. Significantly decrease management authority at the school level;
4. Appoint an outside expert to advise the school on its progress toward making adequate yearly progress based on its school plan;
5. Extend the school year or school day for the school; and/or
6. Restructure the internal organizational structure of the school.

If, after one full year of corrective action, a school subject to corrective action continues to fail to make AYP, the district shall continue to offer the intra-district school choice option, make available supplemental educational services and prepare a plan and make necessary arrangements for alternative governance in accordance with NCLB §1116.

The district may delay, for a period not to exceed one year, implementation of certain corrective action and/or restructuring in accordance with NCLB §1116.

Funds for transportation and supplemental educational services shall be provided in accordance with NCLB, §1116.

No Child Left Behind §1116

Adopted: 09 Aug 2006