

**Farrell Area School District
Farrell Area High School
1700 Roemer Blvd.
Farrell, PA 16121**

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

August 9, 2010

Dear Farrell Area High School 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.

To make AYP, a school must meet the state goals for the student body as a whole as well as 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 of the **Farrell Area School District made AYP**. The Farrell Area High School made remarkable progress in Reading and Mathematics proficiency on 12 of the 13 targets. The Farrell Area High School met 92% of AYP targets in 2010. Below are highlights of reading and mathematics achievements:

Reading

- In Grades 7, 8, and 11 the percentage of students scoring at proficient or advanced increased from 56.7% in 2009 to 57.1% in 2010.

Mathematics

- In Grade 7, 8, and 11 the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced increased from 66% in 2009 to 70.7% in 2010.

However, based on the performance of some subgroups, the Farrell Area High School has been identified as Corrective Action II by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). The Farrell Area High School's PSSA results indicate that the school did not meet the state's academic achievement targets for the 3rd year in a row, based on 2009-2010 PSSA results.

Overall Reading	70.7% (Growth) Proficient/Advanced
State Target	63%
Overall Mathematics	57.1% (Growth) Proficient/Advanced
State Target	56%

Reading:

Subgroup: Black	46.2% Proficient/Advanced
Subgroup: Economically Disadvantaged	52.3 % Proficient/Advanced
State Target	63% Proficient/Advanced

Mathematics:

Subgroup: Black	37.8% Proficient/Advanced
Subgroup: Economically Disadvantaged	46.1% Proficient/Advanced
State Target	56% Proficient/Advanced

Please review the attachment for an explanation of school improvement. Information on how the FARRELL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT compares to other Pennsylvania schools will be mailed to you once the Pennsylvania Department of Education makes that available.

Action Plan for Improving Student Achievement

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

- Reading
- Mathematics
- Science

As outlined in our school improvement plan, the school district and the Pennsylvania Department of Education will be offering Farrell Area High School assistance to implement these strategies by providing services through the Midwestern Intermediate Unit (IU IV) as well as services through PaTTAN to address the needs of our special education population. In addition, the Farrell Area High 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 High School must offer students the choice to transfer to another school in the district not in School Improvement; however, the Farrell Area High School does not have another school building available to offer the choice to transfer. For example, in the 2009-2010 school year, 380 students were eligible for school choice in the FHS, but zero (0) students were able to opt for school choice. The Farrell Area High School will offer SES and EAP Tutoring services.

How Parents and Families Can Help Improve Student Achievement

Parent support is essential to the success of Farrell Area High 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 Farrell Area High School is creating a parent-teacher support network. If you are interested in having a more active role, please call Victoria Phillips-Latzoo at 723-509-1245. The first meeting is currently scheduled for Thursday, September 16, 2010 at 6:00 P.M. in the High School Auditorium. Parents are also encouraged to participate in the Seventh Grade Orientation Night which will be Thursday, August 17, 2010 in the High School Auditorium. In addition, specific parent involvement opportunities include, but are not limited to: Meet the Teachers Night, Open House, Parent Conferences, Scholastic Book Fairs, Parent Trainings provided through the Intermediate Unit, and School Events.

The many successes at Farrell Area High School cannot be measured in one test and we appreciate your continued support.

- An articulated standards-based curriculum for grades 7 –12 in Reading and Mathematics.
- 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 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.
- Data analysis meetings will be held after each round of assessment.
- A school-wide Title I Program in grades 7 and 8 that provides supplemental Reading and Mathematics services for students.

- A professional development focus on Universal Design Instructional Principles - “Teaching Matters.”
- The integration of the Principles of Learning from the Institute for Learning and the research of Dr. Lauren Resnick.
- A school-wide Title I Program that provides supplemental Reading and Math services for students in grades 7 and 8.
- An Accountability Block Grant that provides for a Literacy and Math Coaches to assist in improving Instruction and professional development for grades 7 - 12.
- An Accountability Block Grant that provides a Social Worker to work with families and students.
- Parent Nights for parents and 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 7 - 9.
- Students will participate in a computer program called Study Island which is aligned to the PSSA eligible content.
- A free tutoring program for students in grades 7-11 through the EAP Grant.
- A tutoring program will be offered for all seniors who were not proficient on the reading, writing, and /or math PSSA or PSSA retake.
- An intensive professional development program for teachers and administrators.
- Professional development for the staff on best practices for special education students.
- Professional development and on-site consultation with Dr. Jan Jacob (Texas Association of School Administrator’s Auditor) and formerly of the Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education (CDDRE) at Johns Hopkins University.
- An inclusionary based-model for students in special education will be provided according to the child’s IEP.
- An additional Guidance Counselor will support middle school students.
- Graduation rate target has been met.

While we celebrate our successes we contend, that if ALL of our students are not doing well, we are not as good as we can be; **failure is not an option.** Our challenge, our goal and our commitment is for every Farrell student to be successful.

Sincerely,

Victoria A. Latzoo
Farrell Area High School Principal

Michael Cummings
Farrell High School Assistant Principal

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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. While the Farrell Area School District has met Pennsylvania's benchmark of AYP, the Farrell Area High School has been identified as Corrective Action II- 3rd year by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

Comparison of FARRELL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT with other schools in Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) tracks statewide gains in student achievement between 2002 and 2010 in reading and mathematics. Comparisons can be made between districts and regions. This information will be forwarded to you upon its release from PDE. In light of the High School's AYP status, Supplemental Educational Services are being offered.

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 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.