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Dr. Sharon Vitella

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Dear Parents:

The federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) holds all school districts accountable for measuring student success. Here in New Jersey, the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK) test in grades 3-7 and the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) test are the NCLB measurement tools.

Last Spring, Mount Laurel students in grades 3-8 were tested in both Mathematics and Language Arts as part of this assessment. All of our Kindergarten through Fourth-Grade Schools met all 41 indicators to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress. The Mount Laurel Hartford and Harrington Middle Schools each met 40 of 41 indicators. At both Hartford and Harrington, those who face the most significant learning challenges, our special education students, failed to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress in the area of Language Arts. The number of students deemed partially proficient in Language Arts represents less than one-percent of our total population.

In fact, the state benchmark for AYP in Language Arts during this testing year was 66-percent proficient. In Mount Laurel, our proficiency rates across the district were as follows for general education students in Language Arts:

Third grade – 96.3%

Fourth grade – 94.2%

Fifth grade – 98.4%

Sixth grade – 93.5%

Seventh grade – 93.0%

Eighth grade – 92.5%

It is important that you understand the NCLB requirements. That law provides that schools receiving Title I funds based on the number of low to moderate-income families in their communities face consequences as a result of missing AYP targets. Last year, Hartford and Harrington did not fall within the scope of NCLB Title 1 Schools. In preparing the 2007-2008 grant, our demographic indicators now place both schools under the Title 1 umbrella.

While we must monitor the Hartford School, there are no specific consequences at that building this year. At Harrington, however, students who receive free or reduced lunch, are entitled to tutoring services. The Mount Laurel Community Education Program is a state-approved provider of such tutoring services. There are also private providers in our area.

If your child is a Harrington Middle School student who receives free or reduced price lunch, please contact your child's guidance counselor for information on how to obtain these supplemental services.

We remain committed to success for all students, and are continuing to develop programs aimed at a goal of proficiency or above for all Mount Laurel students in standardized testing. Should you have questions or concerns relating to the *No Child Left Behind Act*, please contact your child's teacher, your building principal or our administrative offices.

Sincerely,

Sharon Vitella, Ed. D.
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment