



NJDOE News

For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:
Richard Vespucci
Jon Zlock
609-292-1126

For Release: October 3, 2003

DOE Releases [List of 271 "Early Warning" High Schools](#) *Commissioner Librera Supports NCLB Goals; Questions Implementation, 'Failing' Label*

▶ [Media Packet - NJ Accountability System Summary Reports - NCLB](#) (10/01/03)

The New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) today identified 271 "Early Warning" schools so that they may be able to rectify the issues that would put them in a "needs improvement" category next year, under the federal *No Child Left Behind* Act (NCLB). The DOE intends to assist such schools this year.

The "Early Warning" status for high schools in New Jersey is based solely on the 2003 High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), which serves as a high school graduation requirement in New Jersey. The number of schools has been adjusted since Wednesday because preliminary data has been further refined. Should the schools show the same results in 2004, they would be elevated to "needs improvement" status next year in accordance with the NCLB Act.

"As we release this list, it is again important to view this in a larger context," Commissioner Librera said. "These are not 'failing' schools. Many of these fine schools have been placed in 'early warning' because they did not meet criteria for one or two indicators out of 40. That does not equate to 'failing' — not in the least. Any characterization that these schools are 'failing' is inaccurate and wrong."

"It is important to understand what we are doing and why we are doing it," Commissioner Librera said. "We view the release of this information as a service to the public in that it helps everyone gain a broader understanding of what this means for our high schools. We can think of no better way than to demonstrate that many of these schools are in the 'Early Warning' category because they missed the mark on so few indicators."

Because this is the first time high school data have been reported for NCLB purposes, the state has opted to institute an "Early Warning" year. Schools are classified as "in need of improvement" after two consecutive years of not meeting the established criteria. Schools deemed "in need of improvement" must offer school choice, according to the law.

Schools are judged each year by 40 indicators, according to the federal law. Should a school miss the mark on one for two consecutive years, it would be deemed "in need of improvement." The 40 indicators are as follows: 95 percent participation rate in language arts literacy and math tests, as well as meeting the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmark target in the same subject areas. Data are then examined by looking at 10 subgroups.

The 10 subgroups are: total school population, students with disabilities, limited English proficiency (LEP) students, white, African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Native American, Hispanic, other, and economically disadvantaged.

Out of 271 high schools in the state identified as "Early Warning" schools, 85 of them were as a result of missing only one or two indicators (about one-third, or 31 percent). Also, 149 schools out of 271 missed the mark in less than four (4) indicators out of 40 (more than half, or, 55 percent).

In releasing the high school list today, the Commissioner reiterated the DOE stance that, while the law on its face is important to help children in programs that may not work, the implementation of the law is flawed and the labels associated with the law are misleading. He also noted that the strict timelines associated with the implementation cause more confusion.

"We will continue to work with the federal government because we believe it is important to help each and every child as best we can," Commissioner Librera said. "But we will continue to keep an open dialogue about the law's implementation. We believe it is wrong and bad policy."

The Commissioner has said previously that many of the schools were placed in "Early Warning" status because of

HSPA results for special education and LEP students.

"While we remain concerned about the strict timelines the federal government has issued in reporting this information, we should, and we do, view this occasion as an opportunity to find ways to better serve diverse groups of students," Commissioner Librera said. "We pledge our support and assistance as all schools work to develop and implement their response to the challenges they face."

Attached is the list of "Early Warning" high schools, as well as the number of indicators they made out of 40.

More information about the DOE's reporting of AYP can be found here:

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/news/1001ayp.htm>. Please note that all data are preliminary and subject to change as the verification process continues.

For additional questions, please call the Department of Education Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.