

# CONNELLSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## Notice of Adequate Yearly Progress, Public School Choice Please Read: Important Information Affecting Your Child

August 8, 2011

Dear Zachariah Connell 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 Connellsville 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 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 2010-11 school year, students at the Connellsville Area School District made remarkable progress in Reading and Mathematics proficiency on 167 of the 176 targets (95%).

Zachariah Connell met 88% of AYP targets in 2011. Below are highlights of reading and mathematics achievements:

#### **Reading**

- In Grades 3-5 the percentage of students scoring at proficient or advanced decreased from 58.8% in 2010 to 52% in 2011.

#### **Mathematics**

- In Grades 3-5 the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced increased from 73.8% in 2010 to 67.5% in 2011.

However, based on the performance of some subgroups, Zachariah Connell has been identified in AYP STATUS by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Zachariah Connell's PSSA results indicate that the school did not meet the state's academic achievement targets for the FOURTH year in a row, and is in Corrective Action I, based on 2010-11 PSSA results.

<u>Reading</u>	<u>Proficient/Adv</u>	<u>State Target</u>
SUBGROUP	33.5%	72%

<u>Math</u>	<u>Proficient/Adv</u>	<u>State Target</u>
SUBGROUP	54.1%	67%

Please review the attachment for an explanation of school improvement and more information on how the Connellsville Area School District compares to other Pennsylvania schools.

**Action Plan for Improving Student Achievement**

As a result of an in depth needs assessment, Zachariah Connell has identified the following areas as key strategies for instructional improvement:

- Alternative Method of Instruction in Reading and Math
- Additional Instructional Time
- Targeted Instructional Content
- Professional Development

As outlined in our school improvement plan, the school district and the Pennsylvania Department of Education will be offering Zachariah Connell assistance to implement these strategies.

**Explanation of School Choice Option**

According to NCLB, Zachariah Connell must offer students the choice to transfer to another school in the district not in School Improvement. Please know that the staff at Zachariah Connell has a relationship with your child and wants to continue serving your child all the way through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. However, if you feel your child will be better served in another school in the district, you may request a transfer for your child to one of the following schools: (1) Connellsville Township, (2) South Side or (3) Bullskin Township. If you are the parent of an exceptional child or a child with limited English proficiency, please call Lisa Hampe, Supervisor of Special Education, at 724-628-3300 x 314, for the available public school choices that best meet the needs of your child. (Educational records are confidential and access is limited to school officials having a genuine need to know.) Choice options are limited based on geography, attendance zones, and eligible school alternatives. School Choice options are limited based on geography, attendance zones, and eligible school alternatives. In the event that the school of choice is at maximum capacity for the student's grade level, the choice option would not be available for that building. Other options should then be considered.

Transportation to one of these schools will be provided by the school district for as long as Zachariah Connell remains in Title I School Improvement. (Zachariah Connell must make AYP for two consecutive years to exit School Improvement.) If a requested transfer is approved, your child will be permitted to attend the choice school until he or she completes the 6th grade, however the district will not pay transportation costs once the school exits school improvement.

If you would like to request that your child be transferred to one of these other schools, please complete the "Request for School Transfer" form enclosed for each child and return the form to 700 Park Street Connellsville PA 15425. The district will respond to your request by August 19, 2011, with written notice regarding your child's school assignment and transportation availability. You then will have an opportunity to communicate whether you accept the approved choice or want your child to remain at Zachariah Connell. If you do not complete this form and return it by August 15, 2011, we will assume that your child will remain at Zachariah Connell.

**How parents and Families Can Help Improve Student Achievement**

Parent support is essential to the success of Zachariah Connell. 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 Tammy Stern at 724-628-3300 x307. In addition, Zachariah Connell will have its annual meeting to revise our school parent involvement policy and parent compact and to review parent rights under Title I.

The many successes at Zachariah Connell cannot be measured in one test and we appreciate your continued support. 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

Sincerely,

Traci Kuhns  
PRINCIPAL



Enclosures: Additional NCLB Information  
Choice Selection Form

## 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 Connellsville Area School District with Statewide Goals

The Pennsylvania Department of Education tracked statewide gains in student achievement between 2002 and 2011 in reading and mathematics for the following subjects and grades:

#### **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS COMPARISON**

Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced

	Grades 3-5 Reading	Grades 3-5 Math	Grade 8 Reading	Grade 8 Math	Grade 11 Reading	Grade 11 Math
School Scores	63.2%	72.9%	64.3%	62.8%	58.9%	57.7%
*PA 2010 Scores	75%	84%	64%	74%	82%	75%

\*2011 state results not available yet

### 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's 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

