

The Swedesboro-Woolwich School District
Dr. Victor P. Valeski, Superintendent
Governor Charles C. Stratton School (856) 241-1552 Fax (856) 467-7041

Karen L. Pszwaro, Principal
Margaret C. Clifford School
601 Auburn Avenue
Swedesboro, NJ 08085
(856) 241-1552 Fax 241-9285

James Marchesani, Principal
Governor Charles C. Stratton School
15 Fredrick Boulevard
Woolwich Township, NJ 08085
(856) 241-1552 Fax 467-4379

Robert Titus, Principal
General Charles G. Harker School
1771 Oldmans Creek Road
Woolwich Township, NJ 08085
(856) 241-1552 Fax: 241-2365

Karen L. Pszwaro, Principal
Walter H. Hill School
1815 Kings Highway
Swedesboro, NJ 08085
(856) 241-1552 Fax 467-4016

September 23, 2010

Dear General Charles G. Harker Elementary School Parents:

Swedesboro-Woolwich School District is dedicated to providing all students with the educational foundation necessary to succeed in school and in life. To ensure your child's success, we have set high standards that are reflected in what is taught in our classrooms. The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) requires that adequate yearly progress (AYP) in language arts literacy and mathematics be measured annually for each school in New Jersey.

AYP is based primarily on the results of the New Jersey state assessments given to students in grades 3 through 8 and grade 11. Schools must meet the state's academic proficiency benchmarks, as well as other indicators such as test participation and attendance/dropout rate, to make AYP. These benchmarks increase on an incremental basis every three years.

Schools that do not make AYP for one year (Year 1) receive an Early Warning designation to alert them that students did not meet at least one of the AYP indicators. If a school does not make AYP for *two or more* consecutive years in the same content area (language arts literacy and mathematics) it is identified as a school in need of improvement and certain sanctions must be applied.

The General G. Harker Elementary School has not made AYP in language arts literacy within the same subgroup for two consecutive years and is in need of improvement. You can see how the Harker School compares academically in language arts literacy and mathematics to other schools in our district and the state by going to:

<http://education.state.nj.us/rc/>

The school improvement requirements that apply to the General Charles G. Harker School are:

Year 2 – Supplemental Educational Services: Our district is unable to provide a school choice option; supplemental educational services (SES) are available to *income-eligible* students.

For more information about these sanctions, please see the attached information sheet.

All schools in need of improvement that receive federal Title I funds must assemble a school improvement committee to develop a school improvement plan that identifies areas of need and programs and activities to help increase student achievement. As a parent, you are encouraged to contact your child's school principal to provide input to the school improvement plan and see how you can become involved in helping the school address its achievement issues.

Some of the steps we have already taken or plan to implement this year to address the problem(s) that placed your child's school in improvement status include coordinating the Special Services and Curriculum Departments to develop strategies that will help students within the Students with Disabilities subgroup improve their language arts literacy test scores. The school district is developing Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) so teachers may share ideas they can use in their classrooms to help students improve their NJASK test scores. The state is also active in helping the school and district achieve its academic goals by sponsoring trainings, school support teams (CAPA), and guidance.

We want to continue serving your child, and we'll use all the resources available to us to help our students achieve. An important part of this effort involves parental involvement and support. The district and each school must develop and implement a parental involvement policy. We encourage you to become involved in this and other initiatives at your child's school by contacting Mr. Rob Titus, Principal at 241-1552. Building and maintaining a high-quality school, is a job for the entire community.

We will continue to communicate with you throughout the year regarding the school improvement efforts underway and hope you will join us in supporting our students and teachers as we work toward reaching our goals for next year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Victor P. Valeski".

Dr. Victor P. Valeski
Superintendent

School Improvement Checklist for General Charles G. Harker Elementary School

We are in improvement, Year 2:

- Year 2 – School Choice:** Under NCLB, schools that did not make AYP for two consecutive years must offer students the opportunity to transfer to a high-performing school within the district if capacity is available.

Year 2 – Supplemental Educational Services: *Our district is unable to provide the choice option because each grade level is housed in a single school. In lieu of school choice, supplemental educational services (SES) is offered to income-eligible students.*

- Years 2 & 3 – Supplemental Educational Services:** These services, such as tutoring, are offered over and above those ordinarily provided in the regular classroom during the normal school day and after-school program. *Students must be income eligible to receive SES.* Parents will be notified separately if their child is eligible. SES providers must be state-approved and posted on the New Jersey Department of Education Web site at www.nj.gov/cgi-bin/education/title1/ssp.pl?string=r&maxhits=10000. If you exercise this option and *your child is eligible*, the school must pay for these services, up to a threshold, using Title I funds. Upon request, your child's teacher or principal will assist you in selecting an appropriate provider. (School choice must also be offered in Year 3.)

- Year 4 – Corrective Action:** In addition to school choice and SES, as noted above, corrective action schools must update their school improvement plans and describe the steps they will take to improve their students' performance. These include 1) providing scientifically based professional development; 2) instituting a new scientifically based curriculum; 3) extending the school day/year; 4) replacing school staff; 5) decreasing management authority at the school; 6) restructuring the internal organization of the school; or 7) seeking advice from outside experts. You are encouraged to become involved with your school in this process.

Schools in corrective action must also participate in a comprehensive school review process called Collaborative Assessment and Planning for Achievement (CAPA). During the CAPA review, teams of educators, including those from outside of the district, will examine all aspects of the school's operations. The team will issue an extensive report summarizing its findings and recommendations. These recommendations are then included in the school's improvement plan.

❑ **Year 5 – Planning for Restructuring:** Because the school has not made AYP for five consecutive years, the district must restructure it, developing an alternate governance plan during Year 5. In addition to school choice and SES, as noted above, one or more of the following governance alternatives may be selected:

- Implement any major restructuring of the school’s governance.
- Re-open the school as a public charter school as defined by and consistent with state statute and regulation.
- Replace all or most of the school staff, which may include the principal, who are relevant to the school’s inability to make adequate progress.

The district develops its plan for restructuring the school in Year 5 of improvement. If this school does not make AYP for the next consecutive year, the restructuring plan will be implemented at the start of the next school year. All schools in Year 5, planning for restructuring, must involve parents and the community for input as the restructuring plan is developed. You are encouraged to provide input to the district’s deliberations during this planning year.

❑ **Year 6 (and above) – Restructuring:** The school has not made AYP for six or more consecutive years and is now in restructuring. The district, in consultation with key stakeholder groups, has selected the following governance alternative:

- Implement any major restructuring of the school’s governance.
- Re-open the school as a public charter school as defined by and consistent with state statute and regulation.
- Replace all or most of the school staff, which may include the principal, who are relevant to the school’s inability to make adequate progress.

In addition to school choice and SES, as noted above, this alternative along with other changes to the operations and academic programs at the school will be implemented during this school year to help increase student academic achievement. You are invited to participate during the implementation of the restructuring plan.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Fact Sheet

This chart identifies the level of proficiency a school must achieve based on the annual state assessments given during the 2009-2010 school year. These results are used to determine a school's improvement status for the 2010-2011 school year.

Subject	Percent of Students Proficient		
	Elementary Grades 3, 4, & 5	Middle Grades 6, 7, & 8	High School Grade 11
Language Arts Literacy (Reading/Writing)	59%	72%	85%
Mathematics	66%	61%	74%

AYP is calculated for the total school population and for subgroups with students who have been enrolled in the school for the full academic year. The subgroups are as follows:

- Total Population
- Students with Disabilities
- Limited English Proficient
- White
- African-American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian/Native American
- Hispanic
- Other
- Economically Disadvantaged

NCLB allows for a “safe harbor” provision so that schools are not penalized for a particular student group’s performance being below the goal, providing sufficient progress is made. For example, if the student group improved its performance by decreasing the number of students not proficient by at least 10 percent over the previous year, the student group would make AYP by qualifying for the safe harbor provision.