

PINELANDS REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

520 Nugentown Road
P.O. Box 248
Little Egg Harbor, N. J. 08087-0248

Telephone (609) 296-3106
FAX (609) 294-9519



DETLEF KERN, Ed. D.
Superintendent

STEPHEN J. BRENNAN, M.B.A., C.P.A.
*School Business Administrator/
Board Secretary*

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As you know, our school district is dedicated to ensuring that our students succeed. While we have always held high expectations for our students, the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) has set new standards for students to meet.

This summer, our state released a report on the progress our schools are making toward achieving proficiency for 100 percent of our students under NCLB. The report identifies whether schools have made “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) – a simple yes or no grade based on a complex set of measurements. To make AYP, each school district must achieve 40 indicators: 21 areas of test participation and performance measured across 9 subgroups of students. In addition, schools must meet graduation rates and attendance targets. If just one subgroup misses just one target, the entire school does not make AYP.

In our school district, two subgroups tested under the new law missed the designation. Please know that many good schools have not made AYP. For example in our state, 544 schools have been identified as “Schools in Need of Improvement.” That doesn’t mean they’re not successful. AYP is an all-or-nothing proposition, but student achievement is not. Academic success is measured in many ways, including classroom tests, teacher observation, report cards, homework and standardized tests. But AYP focuses only on state tests. Entire schools can miss the target if too many students are absent on a day of a test or if students who aren’t fluent in English miss the reading and writing goals.

I am firmly committed to achieving our goal of success of every child, and I recognize that we must continually improve. We currently have programs in place to help improve scores: established a task force, district-wide initiative for test improvement, Transition Program, GEPA Prep, HSPA Prep, Communications, after school help, summer enrichment, extended school year. Our schools are filled with outstanding teachers, supervisors, principals and support staff who regularly update their skills and participate in training to help them meet the needs of all students.

I urge you to examine the results and look closely at the progress our schools are making. Most important, I encourage you to join me in addressing our challenges and applauding the great work students and staff are doing in classrooms throughout the district. As always, I welcome your comments, suggestions, and involvement in our schools and in the challenges our students face.

Yours truly,

Detlef Kern, Ed.D
Superintendent