



TOMS RIVER INTERMEDIATE SOUTH

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Dear Parents and Families,

Our school district was recently notified by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) that Toms River Intermediate South has been identified as a school in need of Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI).

Expectations for a high-quality education are outlined in the federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and in New Jersey's corresponding state plan, which was developed in collaboration with parents, educators and broader community members throughout New Jersey. This state plan describes how the NJDOE must identify schools most in need of improvement and then work with the district to support schools so that each and every child can learn and thrive in the school community.

New Jersey holds all of its schools to a high standard of performance so that your child, and every child, receives the best education available. Our school's educators and administrators remain committed to working with all of you in our community to help all of our students achieve success both inside and outside of the classroom.

In the coming months, we will work as a community to look in-depth at the academic results of our students and, together with the input we gather from our educators and families; we will build a plan with specific student goals, action steps and timelines for improvement. This gives us a critical opportunity to utilize the resources we have at school, at home and within our community to address the needs of our students along with the needs of our educators and families who support them.

The NJDOE remains committed to supporting our school community as we improve outcomes for our students. Specifically, the NJDOE will support us as we work with parents, families, teachers, and community groups to identify our needs. This partnership will help determine important strategies for improvement, and together we can create plans to improve.

Included with this letter is a one-page overview of New Jersey's process for identifying a school for improvement; this information may help answer some of your immediate questions.

I encourage you to learn more about the Every Student Succeeds Act by visiting the NJDOE's website at www.state.nj.us/education/ESSA; in addition, the NJDOE homepage www.state.nj.us/education provides links to other useful education information in the state of New Jersey.

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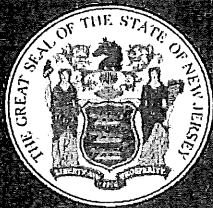
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You have my commitment, and those of all of our school's educators, that the improvement status of Toms River Intermediate South will provide an opportunity for us as a community, to define our expectations for our students and to provide your child with the best opportunities to learn, grow, and succeed.

Thank you for your continued support as we take additional steps to make positive changes in your child's education.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul T. Gluck". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Paul T. Gluck
Principal



STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Process for Identifying New Jersey Schools in Need of Support and Improvement

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is responsible for upholding a federal law called the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, which replaced the *No Child Left Behind Act*. The federal law provides funding so all children may receive equitable programs and services, and sets forth minimum requirements, particularly around measuring and reporting school performance and providing support to the schools that need the most help.

To meet the new federal requirements, the NJDOE collaborated with parents, educators and broader community members to develop New Jersey's ESSA State Plan, which was approved by the U.S. Department of Education in August 2017. The state plan describes New Jersey's ESSA school accountability system, which is being used to identify the schools where assistance is needed most so the state can provide resources to help those schools best support their students.

What measures are included in New Jersey's school accountability system?

The accountability system under ESSA includes indicators to measure how well schools are preparing students for success after high school. Indicators include: Academic Achievement, Academic Growth (for elementary and middle schools), Graduation Rate (for high schools), English Language Proficiency, and Chronic Absenteeism. These indicators are assigned weights with the Academic Growth or Graduation Rates School performance on these indicators is then combined to create summative scores for the entire school and for specific student groups. These scores are used to identify schools that are in need of targeted or comprehensive support and improvement.

This January, the state will include all data to produce a finalized list of schools based upon 2016-17 and 2017-18 data. What does that mean?

- A school in need of **comprehensive support and improvement** is any school performing at or below the fifth percentile of those schools that receive Title I federal funds or any high school with a graduation rate less than 67%.
- A school in need of **targeted support and improvement** is any school with one or more student subgroups performing at or below the lowest 5% of schools that receive Title I funds (i.e., the "cut score" established for schools in need of comprehensive support and improvement). A school can also be identified for targeted support and improvement if it has consistently underperforming subgroups (i.e. one or more subgroups misses interim targets and performs below the state average for all available indicators for two consecutive years).

Note: Student subgroups are defined in federal law and include different racial and ethnic groups, English language learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students.

How do I learn more about the performance of my school on the accountability indicators?

- Detailed information about each school in New Jersey is publicly available in the NJDOE's School Performance Reports. Each year, the NJDOE releases a reader-friendly companion to the in-depth reports.
- Visit the NJDOE's ESSA webpage for more information about New Jersey's accountability system.

What will happen next and how can parents and families get involved?

- Reach out to your school and district to learn about opportunities for how parents, families and educators will work together to improve their schools.
- Schools and districts are required to engage with parents, families, educators and community members throughout the year to assess needs related to areas of weakness, identify strategies and resources that can impact improvement and to create an improvement plan and timeline for completion. See the NJDOE's Stakeholder Engagement Guide for detailed descriptions of these requirements.

This information sheet is intended to supplement district and school communications about identifying New Jersey schools in need of support and improvement.