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Chambersburg school district passes benchmarks

By **ROB LUFF**

For the first time ever, Chambersburg Area School District as a whole made Adequate Yearly Progress as set by the state, a district press release confirmed Monday.

Also a first, all 16 elementary schools made AYP. All three secondary schools missed it.

AYP is, for the most part, determined by student performance on the state tests in math and reading known as the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment.

For the 2008-2009 school year, a minimum 56 percent of students must score "proficient" or better on the math tests, and a minimum 63 percent must score proficient on the reading tests.

Each school must meet those targets overall, as well as among every identified subgroup in the school. If at least 40 students of a certain population attend the school, then an additional subgroup is analyzed by the state Department of Education.

CASD's subgroups include black, Latino/Hispanic, economically disadvantaged and migrant students, among others.

With all the subgroups and goals, CASD had to meet 268 targets last year - more than most school districts in Franklin County.

It missed six targets, two at each secondary school.

Chambersburg Area Senior High School missed AYP for its seventh year running, putting it in "Corrective Action 2" status for the third consecutive year.

Its margin was closer than ever before, meeting 23 out of 25 targets. The targets were missed by economically disadvantaged students in both math and reading.

Chambersburg Area Middle School missed math targets in two subgroups: English Language Learners and students with Individualized Education Plans.

The targets missed by J. Frank Faust Junior High School were IEP students in both math and reading.

"We are very encouraged by these results," Eric Michael, assistant superintendent for technology and educational accountability, said. "For our secondary schools to miss only two targets each shows we are not there yet, but we're on the right track. I look forward to seeing every school in CASD make AYP for the 2009-2010 school year."

A few elementary schools also missed the necessary overall test scores, but achieved AYP by other means, usually based on significant improvement from previous years.

Cathy Dusman, assistant superintendent for K-12 services, praised the elementary school staff and students for making AYP across the board.

Some schools put on extra efforts with students in their struggling subgroups. Hamilton Heights Elementary School, for example, held Saturday lessons for students who needed extra help in math and reading leading up to test days.

The school district has six targets each for black and Hispanic student subgroups. According to the release, the district met all of them.

It also met 26 of 28 economically disadvantaged student subgroup targets and eight of 10 IEP targets.

Despite missing six targets and three schools, the district made enough progress overall that it qualified for overall AYP. The secondary schools will all stay in "Corrective Action" or "School Improvement" status for another year.

Rob Luff can be reached at 262-4754 or rluff@publicopinionnews.com.