

**October 1, 2009**

**Three Newton County Schools and the District Make AYP After CRCT Summer Retests  
*Clements Middle School Removed from Needs Improvement List***

According to information just released by the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE), after tabulating CRCT (Criterion Referenced Competency Tests) summer retest scores, Livingston Elementary, Middle Ridge Elementary, Clements Middle School now Liberty Middle School, and the Newton County School district made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the 2008-2009 school year!

“We are pleased to learn that in the final calculations, Livingston, Middle Ridge, Clements, and our district all made AYP for the 2008-2009 school year,” said Dr. Steve Whatley, Superintendent of Newton County Schools. “As the achievement bar required to make AYP is being raised, it becomes more difficult for all students to meet the criteria. I commend the students and staff at these schools for their efforts in a job well done. I also want to congratulate Clements, now Liberty, on being removed from the Needs Improvement list as a result of making AYP for the second consecutive year. It’s an accomplishment for which we are all very proud.”

AYP designation is a reflection of the individual schools’ performance in several criteria: percentage of students taking the test; the percentage of students meeting standards in reading/language arts and mathematics; and for elementary and middle school students, the percentage of student absenteeism. Performance in several subgroups, including students with disabilities, the economic status of families, race ethnicity, and limited English proficiency, is also analyzed.

A school that does not meet the criteria in any one of the three areas (test participation, academic achievement, and attendance/graduation) for any subgroup is classified as not meeting AYP. Should any of the subgroups fail to meet the standards, the school is also classified as not meeting AYP—even if the school as a whole meets the criteria.

After calculating the scores from the original spring 2009 testing period, this is what occurred in the AYP classification of Livingston Elementary, Middle Ridge Elementary, and Clements Middle. These three schools did not make AYP on the GDOE preliminary report due to the academic performance of one or more subgroups.

As a result, during the summer break, students who failed the math and/or reading language arts portions of the CRCT were offered the opportunity to retest. Scores from these tests were then calculated by the state and included in the GDOE’s final AYP report. With the retest scores included, all three schools have now made AYP for the 2008-2009 school year. The Newton County School System also made AYP as a result of summer retest scores.

The news about the new AYP status for Clements Middle School was especially important and a cause for celebration at Liberty Middle School as Liberty assumed the Clements school zone and AYP status this school year. Because this was the second consecutive year that the school has

made AYP, Liberty will be removed from the Needs Improvement List under No Child Left Behind.

“It is with pleasure that I congratulate Dr. Sylvia Jordan and the faculty and staff of Clements Middle School for making AYP for the past two years,” said Victor Lee, principal of Liberty Middle School. “Their hard work over the past several years allows Liberty Middle School to open its doors with a fresh start. With the making of AYP by Clements Middle School, Liberty Middle School will not be on the Needs Improvement list. The Liberty faculty and staff look forward to building on the successes of the past as we implement our vision for the future of Liberty’s students.”

Livingston Elementary School had been designated as a Needs Improvement School when the preliminary 2008-2009 AYP report was released in August (the school had not made AYP the previous year and this would have marked the second consecutive year); however, the final results indicated the school made AYP and as a result, the Needs Improvement designation has been removed.

“I speak for the entire Livingston faculty when I say that it has taken the commitment of students, families as well as the entire school staff to make this improvement,” said Wendy Hughes, principal of Livingston Elementary School. “I cannot commend our staff and students enough. They have worked hard, implemented new strategies and programs, and have collaborated in ways they never had before. They are analyzing data, sharing data with students and their families, and are planning differentiated lessons that are hitting the target. We are so proud!”

Newton County School System will also be moved from the Needs Improvement list; it too had been placed in Needs Improvement status after the preliminary report was released because this would have marked the second consecutive year of not making AYP.

“We are extremely pleased that the district has made AYP,” said Dr. Carl Skinner, Director of Testing for Newton County Schools. “Over 80% of our schools made AYP and the schools that did not meet AYP standards still performed well but fell just shy of the State AMO (Annual Measurable Objective). Our goal is to have 100% of the district meet AYP standards and we will be working diligently throughout this school year towards that goal!”

If Middle Ridge makes AYP for the 2009-2010 school year, the school will also be removed from the Needs Improvement list. Schools must make AYP for two consecutive years in order to come off the list.

“I am very proud that the hard work and dedication of the staff, students and parents has paid off,” said Alan Satterfield, principal of Middle Ridge Elementary School. “As indicated in the data, Middle Ridge Elementary has made great gains in student achievement and continues to make every effort to meet the needs of all our students.”

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