

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Moon Area Exceeds Adequate Yearly Progress Benchmarks, Middle School Sees Largest Improvements

Moon Area School District students excelled on Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) tests in the 2007-08 school year and math, reading and writing proficiency rose throughout the district.

Every building made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and students achieving advanced and proficient reading requirements improved 3.1 percent, advanced and proficient math requirements climbed 2.1 percent and advanced and proficient writing requirements jumped 1.3 percent over the 2006-07 school year.

In all, nearly 86 percent of Moon Area students scored proficient and higher in reading, 85.1 percent reached proficient or higher in writing and 83.8 achieved proficient or higher in math.

Under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) benchmarks for 2007-08, 63 percent of students must be on grade level in reading and 56 percent in math.

"I was very pleased to learn that all of our schools achieved AYP status and that the majority of our students are performing significantly above the NCLB benchmarks. Additionally, Moon Area School District's PSSA scores were confirmation that our academic initiatives, which focused on raising proficiency levels, have been right on target.

"Looking forward to the coming year, I envision more concentrated efforts in reaching students who are not performing at proficiency levels in reading and math. We intend to focus on these students' individual needs in order to close the achievement gap," said Dr. Donna K. Milanovich, Moon Area superintendent of schools.

Moon Area Middle School scores improved 4.1 percent in math and 3.8 percent in reading. In the 2006-07 school year, the middle school was given warning status, one step below AYP, with a possibility of falling to school improvement status.

Mandatory intervention programs for basic and below-basic scoring middle school students were started after school and during non-core classes throughout the school day. Online remediation tools and other efforts aided struggling students in lower-

performing demographics in the middle school including economically-disadvantaged, minority and individualized education plan (IEP) students.

African-American students' reaching proficiency levels improved 15.1 percent in math and 5 percent in reading, economically-disadvantaged students' proficiency levels jumped 10.9 percent in math and .5 percent in reading and IEP students reaching proficiency levels in math rose 7.9 percent and 3.6 percent in reading

The same efforts behind those improvements will be implemented throughout the middle school curriculum this school year, said Jeffrey Zollars, Moon Area curriculum director.

"Study Island," an online tool, will be used in sixth-grade language arts classrooms and during seventh and eighth-grade computer classes. "Measuring Up," a workbook, will become part of sixth, seventh and eighth-grade language arts and math curriculums. An after-school program will continue to meet focusing on tutoring, content awareness and proficiency skills.

Teachers also will start focusing upon specific students' weaknesses in fourth and fifth-grade classrooms.

"We are trying to be proactive and provide a foundation for success. With this initiative, students will arrive for middle school prepared to learn.

"The dedication of our teachers is unsurpassed. They viewed students' needs and exceeded Moon Area's expectations to find interventions for those students."

PSSA tests are given annually each spring to evaluate all public schools in Pennsylvania as required by NCLB. Other factors including participation, attendance and graduation also factor into AYP results. In Pennsylvania, 461 out of 501 districts met AYP requirements or made progress toward AYP.

For more information visit www.pde.state.pa.us or www.paayp.com

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