

August 18, 2011

Dear Agora Parent or Guardian,

Every year students across Pennsylvania in grades 3-8 and 11 take the Pennsylvania System of State Assessment (PSSA). This assessment provides specific information regarding student performance in math and reading. In 2005, the first operating year of Agora Cyber Charter School, fewer than 10 students completed the PSSA. This group of students did not meet the academic achievement targets set by the state. In 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 Agora did not meet the state requirements and did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In order to make AYP, not only does our entire population need to meet the thresholds, but so must each subgroup of students (subgroups are based on Ethnicity, Special Education, English Language Learners, and Economically Disadvantaged students when there is a group of 40 or more). At this time 2010-2011 PSSA comparisons to other districts are not available but 2009-2010 overall state scores show that 75% of students assessed in math were proficient and 72% in reading. More information about AYP scores across the state can be found on <http://paayp.emetric.net>

The charts below illustrate Agora's 2010-2011 results based on these targets in math and reading participation, performance and graduation:

| Math Target | Participation Goal = 95% | Met Participation Target | Performance Goal = 67% | Met Performance Target |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| All Students | 98.7 | Yes | 41.9 | No |
| White non-Hispanic | 98.8 | Yes | 48.0 | No |
| Black non-Hispanic | 98.6 | Yes | 25.1 | No |
| Latino/Hispanic | 97.8 | Yes | 31.3 | No |
| Multi-Racial | 100.0 | Yes | 51.7 | Yes -Safe Harbor |
| IEP | 96.4 | Yes | 22.5 | No |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 98.5 | Yes | 33.6 | No |

| Reading Target | Participation Goal = 95% | Met Participation Target | Performance Goal = 72% | Met Performance Target |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| All Students | 98.4 | Yes | 51.9 | No |
| White non-Hispanic | 98.6 | Yes | 58.5 | Yes –Growth Model |
| Black non-Hispanic | 98.2 | Yes | 36.5 | No |
| Latino/Hispanic | 97.3 | Yes | 39.4 | No |
| Multi-Racial | 98.1 | Yes | 51.7 | Yes -Safe Harbor with Confident Interval |
| IEP | 95.9 | Yes | 26.0 | No |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 98.3 | Yes | 45.0 | No |

| Target | Overall Rate | State Target | Met AYP |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Graduation | 66.4% | 85% | No |

As you can see, we did not meet the state minimums, but there are some academic gains to celebrate and our momentum continues to move ahead. When a school does not meet all AYP targets and is placed in Corrective Action II, we are required to notify parents. With this notification I also want to provide a little more information so that you can understand the whole story behind the scores and the state ratings. It's not as simple as it appears.

Our goal is to meet the proficiency standard for all students. With many new students enrolling in Agora two and three years behind grade level, it is difficult to turn around their academic history in one school year. With hard work, we can make a difference for these students and they can catch up. Until then, we can demonstrate how we

are closing these learning gaps by gains made in one year. We have good data that shows that the longer students remain with Agora, the stronger the results.

We are proud of our Agora school community, even if only 17 out of 29 targets were met. In order to ensure that all students receive individualized attention to any academic needs they have, we are building on last year's efforts to grow and strengthen relationships between Agora and families. I am confident with hard work, commitment and dedication, we will see additional improvements in academic progress, the graduation rate and attendance next year. Below are the strategies put into place for this year to ensure academic growth for all students above and beyond the PSSA thresholds so all students can reach their academic potential.

- We are creating a position whose primary responsibility is to be the point of contact for each family. We believe that it's important to build the relationship between home and school, as this strong relationship is a critical ingredient to student success. To that end, each newly enrolled student will receive a visit by a Family Coach. To support all students during the year the Family Coach will work with parents, learning coaches and students to eliminate barriers to academic achievement and attendance. We look for this relationship to improve attendance, engagement, and school drop-out and graduation rates.
- Students in grades 3-12 will continue to participate in Scantron Performance testing. The Performance assessment establishes a benchmark and is taken during the first week of school and then again at the end of the school year to show student growth throughout the year. The results of the initial assessment will provide parents and teachers with feedback and will guide individualized instruction for each student.
- All students in grades 2-12 are provided with the PA standards aligned program Study Island or A+. These web-based tools provide practice and instruction on math and reading standards. Consistent and daily use will help students gain the necessary skills to become proficient in the standards.
- Students identified as needing intensive academic support in order to close identified instructional gaps will participate in remediation activities with a highly qualified, PA certified teacher. These interventions will include (but not be limited to) to synchronous Elluminate sessions and an increased level of teacher/student interaction.
- Agora uses a Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) process to assist students who are not mastering skills. Through this process students are provided intervention strategies; individual learning plans, increased direct instruction with teachers and if needed, supplemental programs to address academic concerns. Students may also be required to attend face to face tutoring sessions in order to close achievement gaps.
- Eligible students will be invited to participate in Supplemental Educational Services (SES). This free tutoring is offered to help eligible students to improve in reading, mathematics and science.

According to NCLB, districts in school improvement must offer students the choice to transfer to another school in the district not in School Improvement however Agora does not have another school building available to offer the choice to transfer.

Parent support is essential to the success of Agora. Communicating with the family coach, making sure your child attends school regularly, helping your child with school work, and participating in school decision-making are important. Our Family Involvement Coordinator will continue to be in contact with families via kmail with opportunities for face to face events, parent workshops and many more opportunities for open, two-way communication.

Agora is committed to every student and embraces a collaborative partnership between teachers and parents in order to empower students to reach extraordinary heights. We know that this relationship is essential to student achievement and success.

Sincerely,
Sharon Williams
Head of School