

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 11, 2018

Contact Information:

Joseph Cirillo, Superintendent of Schools

Palisades Park School District

201-947-3550

jcirillo@palpkschools.org

Palisades Park, NJ- In a December 17, 2017 letter from the New Jersey Department of Education, the Board of Education learned that Palisades Park Jr./Sr. High School has been identified as a Targeted School by the New Jersey Department of Education under the new guidelines established for Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

The designation of Target School was applied to Palisades Park Jr./Sr. High School because, using new calculations that are part of the new ESSA Accountability system, one student subgroup, specifically Hispanic students, performed at or below the fifth percentile of Title I schools.

As a result of this designation, staff members from Palisades Park will be participating in technical assistance sessions with the New Jersey Department of Education to develop and implement a school improvement plan. The successful implementation of this plan will enable the district to remove the label after three years.

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Joseph Cirillo stated that the district has been and will continue to work to address complicated challenges at the high school level. He added, “Our high school staff has been creating personalized instruction to assist every student with meeting individual academic goals. For example, some high school students have entered our school with little or no previous formal education. Our staff works one on one to help students “catch up” in order to join their peers and start on a college and career pathway.”

According to Dr. Cirillo, “There are many means to assess progress in education. Just last year, Palisades Park Jr./Sr. High School was listed in the 2017 Top 100 high schools in New Jersey by niche.com. The data used by niche.com to assess high schools for the list included data focused on academics (SAT and ACT); teachers; culture and diversity; parent and student surveys; health and safety; resources and facilities; clubs and activities; and sports.”

Dr. Cirillo added, “We are certainly concerned to be named a Target School and welcome the assistance of the Department of Education to develop a plan with specific student goals, action steps, and timelines for improvement. However, our staff has been working to improve the academic performance of all student subgroups and new action items will be part of an already ongoing comprehensive improvement plan. “