

# BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent

6901 Charles Street Towson, MD 21204-3711

Dr. Lynette Woodley, Principal  
Old Court Middle School  
4627 Old Court Road  
Pikesville, Maryland 21208

Phone: 410-887-0742  
Fax: 410-887-0670

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

For the 2008–2009 school year, your child is registered at Old Court Middle School, which has been identified, based on 2008 Maryland State Assessment (MSA) data, by the Maryland State Department of Education for school improvement Year 3. In an effort to help you understand what that means, the following questions and answers have been provided:

## **Why has Old Court Middle School been identified for school improvement?**

Under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*, schools must meet specific achievement targets in attendance, reading, and math. These annual improvement targets demonstrate if a school has made “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP). Old Court continues to show improvement in all areas. In Reading, the number of proficient students increased from 56.3 to 66.5 percent proficient which is a 10.2 percent gain. Because of these gains we made AYP in six of the eight subgroups for Reading. In Mathematics, the number of proficient students increased from 37.8 to 45.1 which is 7.3 percent gain. These gains led to our school making AYP in four of the eight subgroups for Math. However, despite these significant improvements, the MSA results indicated Old Court Middle School did not make AYP for a fourth year in the same reported area, and it has been identified for school improvement. However, despite these significant improvements, the MSA results indicated Old Court Middle School did not make AYP for a fourth year in the same reported area, and it has been identified for school improvement.

## **How does Old Court Middle School compare to other schools in our county and state?**

MSA results indicate that Old Court Middle School did not meet AYP in some of the areas of **reading** and/or **mathematics**. The chart below compares the percentage of students who scored advanced, proficient, and basic on the 2008 MSA for Old Court Middle School with the average scores for Baltimore County and schools across the state.

### **2008 MSA READING**

GRADES	OLD COURT MIDDLE SCHOOL			BALTIMORE COUNTY			MARYLAND SCHOOLS		
	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Advanced	Proficient	Basic
6	17.8	58.6	23.7	43.2	39.4	17.4	42.9	38.8	18.2
7	25.6	40.1	34.3	41.9	39.8	18.3	42.9	38.3	18.8
8	12.4	42.8	44.8	29.9	40.5	29.6	34.1	38.7	27.2

### **2008 MSA MATHEMATICS**

GRADES	OLD COURT MIDDLE SCHOOL			BALTIMORE COUNTY			MARYLAND SCHOOLS		
	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Advanced	Proficient	Basic
6	6.5	41.4	52.1	27.5	47.0	25.5	31.8	44.0	24.2
7	3.5	41.2	55.3	16.9	49.0	34.0	21.7	46.5	31.8
8	7.4	28.7	63.9	24.4	36.0	39.6	29.0	32.8	38.1

**What does it mean to be a school in Year 3 of school improvement?**

As a school in Year 3 of school improvement, Old Court Middle School must evaluate its curriculum, instructional time, staffing, and administrative needs and make the necessary changes to ensure that the issues that caused the school to not meet achievement targets are addressed in the school improvement plan for the upcoming year.

**What is the Old Court Middle School staff doing to improve student achievement?**

The School Improvement Team at Old Court Middle School is continuously analyzing school data to determine how to improve performance in **reading and/or mathematics**. Old Court Middle School staff will be continuously monitoring and evaluating student performance.

During the 2008-2009 school year Old Court Middle School will be implementing the following strategies to improve student achievement:

- Analyze the results of MSA data and pretests/placement tests to identify students in basic and lower 1/3 proficiency level to be placed in Algebraic Thinking/Foundations classes. Report weaknesses to Inclusion teachers/After school teachers/Math Review Teachers. (MATH)
- Provide consistent development of mathematics vocabulary of the basic regular and special education students; encourage these students to focus on the relationship of the definition with concept representation. Use word walls, vocabulary charts, or other visual means to integrate the use of vocabulary into instruction. Incorporate math vocabulary into the Word of the Day program/Word Walls for content developed through units. (MATH AND READING)
- Provide for the collaboration of regular educator and special educators in math classrooms that include special education students. (MATH)
- Provide differentiated staff development to middle school regular and special education mathematics teachers involving resources from the Office of Secondary Mathematics. Focus on such topics as the Voluntary State Curriculum, manipulatives, teaching for understanding, instructional strategies, graphing calculators, technology (whiteboards/Interwrite response boards, powerpoint, TI Navigation System) and bridging concepts. Provide access to TI 83, TI84 and explorers for special and regular education students. (MATH)
- Utilize mathematics department meetings to share information regarding pedagogy and strategies for regular and special education students related to teaching mathematics for high school students including two-column planning, foldable notes, concrete modeling, bridging from concrete to abstract and Cornell notes/AVID strategies. (MATH)
- Provide additional instructional time in mathematics for basic regular and special education students through increased daily mathematics class time, after school programs, Saturday programs, and summer school programs that provide intervention help that is directly aligned to the Voluntary State Curriculum and IEP Goals. Administer skill assessments, pre-tests, MSA practice tests that give data that will influence the content presented in the additional programs. (MATH)
- Recommend regular and special education students who are below grade level at the end of the school year or students who have documentation of skills regression during the school

year for math and reading intervention programs in BCPS Summer School. Communicate with parents the importance of attending these intervention programs. (READING AND MATH)

- Provide instruction for regular education and special education students in the integration of before, during and after reading strategies aligned with the BCPS Secondary Reading Program. (READING)
- Utilize Reading and Language Arts departmental meetings to share information regarding pedagogy and strategies related to teaching reading for basic and special education secondary students. (READING)
- Implement the Language! program for identified students in order to target achievement in reading. (READING)
- Monitor individual basic and special education student progress and determine next steps. (READING)
- Provide basic special and regular education students with opportunities to write BCRs and SRs and instruct them on the use of scoring rubrics in order to increase the number of proficient students on the MSA reading assessment.(READING)

### **What is Baltimore County Public Schools doing to increase student achievement?**

The *Blueprint for Progress*, a framework for improving student achievement, provides clear direction for everyone involved in education in Baltimore County. The *Blueprint for Progress* is built on a foundation of clear standards, quality instruction, and individual accountability. In addition, all students in BCPS receive instruction based on concepts in the Voluntary State Curriculum. Baltimore County Public Schools provides professional development to assist teachers to develop the talents of students and provide each student access to a rigorous education. Additionally, Old Court Middle School receives technical assistance from its area office in the development and implementation of its school improvement plan.

### **What can parents/guardians do to help Old Court Middle School increase student achievement?**

Parents/guardians can assist the efforts of the school by making sure their children come to school on time every day, ready to learn. In addition, parents can check that all homework assignments and school projects are completed on time. Parents are encouraged to participate in parent education activities, attend all parent-teacher conferences, and learn more about how to help their children at home and at school. Parents should tell teachers they want to hear from them as soon as problems - occur so that they can work together to find solutions. A list of parent support services is available on the district's Web site: [www.bcps.org](http://www.bcps.org)

Sincerely,

Dr. Lynette Woodley,  
Principal

C: William Lawrence, Northwest Area Assistant Superintendent  
Department of Research, Accountability, and Assessment