

FAQs

School in Need of Improvement

November 2011

Still have questions?

This document is designed to answer the most frequently asked questions about the middle school's designation as a School in Need of Improvement (SINI). If you have additional questions about how or why it received its designation, or about the steps B-P is taking to improve student achievement, pre-K through grade 12, contact one of the following district leaders:

- ★ **Stephen Tomlinson**
Superintendent of Schools
tomlinsons@bpcsd.org
(518) 954-2500
- ★ **Christine Foglia**
Dir. of Special Programs
fogliac@bpcsd.org
(518) 954-2727
- Parents can also contact their child's principal:
- ★ **Robin Blowers**
High School Principal
blowersm@bpcsd.org
(518) 954-2600
- ★ **Wayne Bell**
Middle School Principal
bellw@bpcsd.org
(518) 954-2700
- ★ **Dan Casey**
Intermediate School Principal
caseyd@bpcsd.org
(518) 954-2750
- ★ **Terry LaFountain**
TLC Principal
lafountaint@bpcsd.org
(518) 954-2650

Recently, the State Education Department announced its list of "Schools in Need of Improvement," and Broadalbin-Perth Middle School was on the list. We know that our residents—especially parents of students who attend the middle school or will soon be attending the middle school—have a lot of questions about this designation. Some of the most frequently asked questions are provided here.

Q What is "SINI" status?

A "SINI" stands for "School in Need of Improvement." It is a designation based on whether a school was deemed to have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward achievement of the New York State Standards. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is one of the cornerstones of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. It is a measure of the year-to-year change in student achievement on statewide tests. Title I schools (schools receiving specific federal funding to address the needs of low-income populations) that do not meet the state standard for AYP for two or more consecutive years are designated as schools in need of improvement.

This designation alone does not indicate a failing school. However, it does provide information for principals, teachers and parents on the areas of the academic program that can be improved.

Q How did the middle school receive the SINI designation?

A The Broadalbin-Perth Middle School was identified as a SINI because it failed to make AYP on New York State standardized tests in one student subgroup for two consecutive years. In this case, the middle school's students with disabilities

subgroup did not achieve AYP in English Language Arts for the second year in a row.

Although district leaders believe there is no excuse for any of Broadalbin-Perth's schools not meeting AYP, there are two factors to consider when talking about the students with disabilities subgroup: First, all students, including students with disabilities, are held to the same academic standards by the state. Second, not all students in this subgroup are educated at Broadalbin-Perth Middle School; some are educated at out-of-district schools that are structured to meet students' needs, as indicated on students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

Q What is Broadalbin-Perth doing to improve student achievement in the middle school?

A While the SINI designation is based on testing results from a sub-group that contains 102 students at the middle school, the district is using the situation as an opportunity to make changes geared toward raising the academic proficiency of all students, K-12.

Starting last spring, before students even took the state assessments that the SINI designation is based on, district leaders began to develop plans in which they

Q What can parents do to help?

A Parents are an integral part of ensuring the academic success of their children. Here are some suggestions to help you work with your school and the district to support improvements:

- ★ Continue to visit the district website to learn about our improvement initiatives.
- ★ Contact your child's principal, Director of Special Programs Christine Foglia or Superintendent of Schools Stephen Tomlinson for additional information about Broadalbin-Perth's improvement initiatives.
- ★ Talk with district staff about the school improvement plans.
- ★ Volunteer with the PTO, Sports Boosters, Music Boosters or other school/parent organization.
- ★ Learn more about NCLB requirements and Title I by accessing the NYSED website at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/TitleI/> and <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/nclb/>.
- ★ Become aware of strategies to improve student academic achievement. The United States Department of Education (USDOE) website offers many helpful publications for parents at www.ed.gov/index.jhtml, including a website of free academic resources from federal agencies: <http://www.free.ed.gov/index.cfm>.

identified problem areas, created strategies and action plans to improve student success, and set goals for the 2011-12 school year. During the October Board of Education meeting, high school Principal Robin Blowers and middle school Principal Wayne Bell presented their schools' improvement plans; The Learning Community Principal Terry LaFountain and intermediate school Principal Dan Casey will present their schools' improvement plans during the board meeting on Monday, Nov. 21.

Some of the strategies that are being implemented at each of Broadalbin-Perth's four schools include:

- ★ Additional professional development focused on reading instruction;
- ★ Administering additional assessments to gather benchmark data and gauge student improvement before students take the state exams; and
- ★ Using data gathered from all assessments to inform classroom instruction so teachers can better meet students' needs.

District leaders also plan to study the effectiveness of Broadalbin-Perth's integrated co-teaching program, also known as its inclusion program. The integrated co-teaching model allows teachers to provide academic support and specially designed instruction in the general education setting. There is at least one integrated class in every grade, K-5. These classrooms have additional adult help in the form of a special education teacher or teacher assistant at all times. There are many academic and social benefits of the integrated model for both students with disabilities and general education students assigned to the classroom. However, district leaders are analyzing the amount of individualized attention and explicit reading instruction that is provided to students with disabilities and they plan to make adjustments to the program based on the data.

A Closer Look at Each School's Goals

Last spring, before Broadalbin-Perth Middle School was identified as a SINI—before the students even took their New York State exams—B-P's leadership team began developing goals, strategies and action plans designed to improve student achievement in each building. Here are some of the "end focused" goals that each school set:

High School

- ★ During the 2011-12 school year, B-P High School will decrease the number of students scoring less than 80% on the algebra Regents and 75% on the ELA Regents exams.
- ★ During the 2011-12 school year, B-P High School will increase the number of students who go on to attend an accredited college.

Middle School

- ★ During the 2011-12 school year, B-P Middle School will increase the engagement of students and parents through increased communication and activities that will help lead to increased student achievement.

Intermediate School

- ★ During the 2011-12 school year, B-P Intermediate School will decrease the number of students in grades 3-5 who score at Levels 1 and 2 and increase the number of students who demonstrate proficiency on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and math assessments.

The Learning Community

- ★ Students who are identified as below-level readers will demonstrate accelerated reading progress during the 2011-12 school year.