

TITLE 1—RIGHT TO KNOW LETTER NCLB

September 2015

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* is our country's most important federal education law. In 2001, this law was reauthorized and is now called *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). *NCLB* was designed to make changes in teaching and learning that will help increase academic achievement in our schools.

The law requires that all schools receiving Title I funds must inform parents of their right to ask schools the qualifications of their child's teachers. Our school receives Title I funding and we are happy to share this information with you at your request.

We believe that nothing is more important to your child's education at school than having a well-prepared and highly qualified teacher. The law requires that all teachers must meet a specific legal definition of "highly qualified" in order to teach in schools that receive Title I funding. The legal definition of a "highly qualified teacher" has three parts and states that a teacher must have the following:

1. A four year college degree
2. A regular teaching certificate/license
3. Proof of his/her knowledge in the subject he/she teaches

New Jersey has some of the most qualified teachers in the country, and we are extremely proud of the quality of the teaching staff in the Rockaway Borough School District. All of our teachers have college degrees and many have advanced degrees. The state of New Jersey has always required a teaching certificate/license for all teachers. In addition, every teacher continues learning through professional development activities and our teachers are evaluated each year to make sure that their teaching skills remain at the highest possible level.

Most teachers throughout the state already meet this legal definition of "highly qualified". All teachers hired after the beginning of the 2002-03 school year were required to meet this definition. According to NCLB, veteran teachers, hired before the 2002-03 school year that did not yet meet the legal definition of highly qualified had until the end of the 2005-06 school year to do so. The state of New Jersey requested flexibility from the United States Department of Education to extend the deadline to the end of the 2006-07 school year.

To ensure that every child in every classroom has a highly qualified teacher, the state of New Jersey and our school district are working together to help teachers meet the requirements of the federal law by providing several options. Teachers will soon be able to take a new test, or they can demonstrate their expertise through a combination of college coursework, professional development activities, and experience.

A highly qualified teacher knows what to teach, how to teach, and has a full understanding of the subject matter being taught. We believe that every teacher is fully qualified and dedicated to teaching your child, and we will do everything possible to continue hiring and retaining teachers who meet this criterion.

I encourage you to support your child's education and communicate with your child's teacher(s) on a regular basis. For more information on NCLB, and the role of parents, please visit the United States Department of Education Web site at www.ed.gov/nclb. By partnering, families and educators can provide your child with the best education.

Sincerely,

Mark Schwarz
Superintendent of Schools