

Public schools remain ‘in need of improvement’

By John Zucal Managing Editor, Orange Transcript

Even with bright spots among its schools, the Orange School District continued to be considered “in need of improvement” after the state released its list of such districts and schools following the 2008- 09 school year.

The list, released July 1, is part of the state Department of Education’s report under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The department’s evaluation includes information released during the past year, including a key component, levels of student proficiency shown through the state’s standardized tests in language arts and mathematics.

Orange was one of four districts in Essex County determined to be “in need of improvement” after the school year. Irving ton, Newark and the county’s vo-tech schools also were on the district list. In Orange, eight schools were placed or remained on the list.

The state’s declaration means the district must take action to resolve shortcomings within those schools. Such measures include tutoring, intra- district transfers if requested, and school restructuring, depending on the length of time schools have been on the list. Two schools – Central and Cleveland – achieved “adequate yearly progress” in language arts and mathematics and were retained or removed from the list. Schools on the list must record AYP for two consecutive years to be removed.

Even with certain elementary grades qualifying in both subjects, some schools in the K- 6 district did not qualify because their sixth grades did not achieve adequate yearly progress in one or both subjects.

Schools which achieved adequate progress, and their status, include: • **Central:** Elementary grades achieved AYP in both subjects; too few sixth- graders for consideration. Retained at Year 1 status. It was removed from Year 3 in 2005- 06.

• **Cleveland:** Elementary grades achieved AYP in both subjects; too few sixth- graders for consideration. Removed from Year 1 status, where it had been since 2005- 06.

Schools which were not considered to have made AYP include:

• **Orange High:** Did not qualify in both subjects. Dropped to Year 6 status.

• **Orange Middle:** Qualified in mathematics but not in language arts. Dropped to Year 8 status.

• **Forest:** Elementary grades qualified in both subjects; sixth- graders qualified in mathematics but not in language arts. Placed at Year 1 status. It had been removed from Year 4 status in 2007- 08.

• **Heywood:** Elementary grades qualified in both subjects; sixth- graders qualified in mathematics but not in language arts. Placed at Year 1 status. It had been fully qualified since 2004- 05.

• **Lincoln:** Elementary grades qualified in both subjects; sixth- graders qualified in mathematics but not in language arts. Dropped to Year 2 status. It was taken from Year 4 status in 2006- 07.

• **Main:** Elementary grades qualified in mathematics but not in language arts; middle school grades qualified in both subjects. Placed at Year 1 status. It had qualified each year since it opened for the 2004-05 school year.

• **Oakwood:** Elementary grades did not qualify in both subjects; too few sixth graders for consideration. Placed at Year 1 status after it had qualified each year since 2003-04.

• **Park:** Elementary grades qualified in both subjects; sixth- graders qualified in mathematics but not in language arts. Placed at Year 1 status after it had qualified each year since 2003-04.