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Missouri Education News
May 2008
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22 Missouri High Schools Earn State's "A+" Designation

Twenty-two more public high schools have qualified for designation as "A+ Schools,"

([**http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/aplus/proginfo/A+facts.html**](http://dese.mo.gov/divimprove/aplus/proginfo/A+facts.html)). As a result, eligible seniors in these schools may receive state-paid tuition assistance to attend a Missouri community college or technical school.

A total of 253 Missouri public high schools have now earned A+ status. The program was created by state law in 1993. It is intended to raise academic standards in participating high schools, improve the graduation rate and prepare more students for postsecondary learning and high-wage jobs.

Since 1997, more than 33,000 Missouri graduates have taken advantage of the A+ tuition assistance to attend a community college. This year (2007-

08), the state is providing almost \$22 million to underwrite the assistance for eligible A+ students.

To qualify, high school graduates must attend an A+ school for at least three years, have a grade-point average of at least 2.5 on a 4-point scale, maintain a 95 percent attendance record, and perform 50 hours of unpaid tutoring in the school district.

Members of the Class of 2008 who attend the newly designated A+ Schools will be eligible to use their state assistance as early as this summer, if they are ready to enroll in a community college.

The A+ Schools program encourages participating schools to eliminate general-track courses and raise academic expectations for all students; concentrate on reducing the dropout rate; and work closely with higher education and private-sector leaders to better prepare students for life after high school.

Bell City High School
Belle High School (Maries County R-II)
Blue Springs High School
Blue Springs South High School
Centralia High School
Clarkton High School
Cole Camp High School
Conway High School (Laclede County R-I)
Ft. Zumwalt East High School
Grain Valley High School
Lincoln High School
Marion C. Early High School (Morrisville)
Miller High School (Miller R-II)
Ritenour High School
Scotland County High School (Memphis)
Staley High School, (North Kansas City)
Stoutland High School
Sweet Springs High School
Wellington-Napoleon High School

Wellsville-Middletown High School
West County High School (West St. Francois R-IV)
West Platte High School

15 Public Schools Honored as "Gold Star Schools"

Fifteen public secondary schools in Missouri have been selected as "Gold Star Schools" for 2007-08, state education officials announced today. The schools will be formally honored May 6 at a reception in Jefferson City.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has conducted the Gold Star Schools program since 1991-92. The program now operates in conjunction with the national Blue Ribbon Schools program, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education.

Missouri's Gold Star Schools must meet the academic performance criteria used to evaluate schools in the Blue Ribbon program. Gold Star Schools must complete a written application to provide evidence that they are using research-based strategies and practices to improve student achievement.

The following schools have been named Gold Star Schools for 2007-08:

- **Ballard High School**
- Mr. John K. Siebeneck, Principal
- **Blue Springs High School**
- Mr. David E. Adams, Principal
- **Brentwood High School**
- Mr. David R. Faulkner, Principal
- **Carver Middle School, Springfield Public Schools**
- Dr. Dan O'Reilly, Principal
- **Hixson Middle School, Webster Groves School District**
- Dr. Mary J. Stefanus, Principal

- **Jefferson High School, Jefferson C-123 School District, Conception Junction**
- Mr. Tim R. Jermain, Principal
- **Kearney High School**
- Mr. Daryl W. Rinne, Principal
- **Lee's Summit High School**
- Mr. John Faulkenberry, Principal
- **Leopold High School**
- Mr. Keenan D. Kinder, Principal
- **Lincoln College Prep, Kansas City School District**
- Dr. Cheryl Wright, Principal
- **McKinley/Classical Jr. Academy, St Louis Public Schools**
- Ms. Brenda B. Smith, Principal
- **Metro High School, St. Louis Public Schools**
- Mr. Wilfred D. Moore, Principal
- **South Nodaway High School, Barnard**
- Mr. Kyle A. Collins, Principal
- **Stanberry High School**
- Mr. Greg Dias, Principal
- **Stewartsville High School**
- Mr. John B. Reed, Principal

Findings from the Pilot Teacher Compensation Survey: School Year 2005-06

This brief publication contains summary data from the research and development effort to collect individual salary and demographic data on public school teachers. Seven states participated in this effort: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, **Missouri**, and Oklahoma. Data from full-time public school teachers who teach at only one school were included in the analysis. Median salaries and counts for different groupings by experience, age, race, and gender are presented.

Selected Findings: School Year 2005-06

- The mean base salaries¹ of full-time public school teachers in the seven states participating in the Pilot Teacher Compensation Survey ranged from \$34,631 in Oklahoma to \$44,777 per year in Colorado. The median base salaries of full-time public school teachers ranged between \$33,516 in Oklahoma and \$42,676 in Colorado (table 1). The median total salary for full-time teachers ranged from \$34,973 in Oklahoma to \$42,500 in Arkansas for school year 2005–06.
- The median level of teaching experience ranged from 8 years in Arizona to 15 years in Iowa. The median teacher age was between 43 and 45 in each of the states reporting these data.
- The number of teachers that held master’s degrees as their highest degree varied across the seven states. The percentage of teachers holding master’s degrees ranged from approximately 28 percent in Iowa and Oklahoma to almost 50 percent in **Missouri**. Over the seven states, the majority of teachers (58 percent) held a bachelor’s degree as their highest degree.
- Teachers holding master’s degrees earned more than teachers who held a bachelor’s degree. For example, the median base salary for teachers with a master’s degree was \$51,077 per annum in Colorado, while the median base salary for teachers with a bachelor’s degree was \$36,702.
- The proportion of teachers with one year of teaching experience (teachers hired at the beginning of the reported school year) ranged from 4.4 percent in Iowa to 10.9 percent in Arizona. The median base salary for teachers with one year of experience ranged from \$27,864 in Iowa to \$33,940 in Florida.
- Full-time teachers 66 years old or older comprised 1.0 percent of public school full-time teachers in Florida and 0.9 percent in Arkansas compared to 0.4 percent in Iowa and 0.5 percent in Colorado. In three of the five states reporting age data, the highest proportion of teachers were 51 to 55 years old; Florida had equal proportions of teachers (14 percent) in the 26-30 and 51-55 age groups. In the fifth state, Colorado, the second highest proportion occurred in the 51-55 age group.
- The majority of teachers in the seven reporting states were White, with the smallest percentage of White teachers (74 percent) reported for Florida.
- More than three quarters of the teachers across six of the seven reporting states were female, with the highest percentage of male teachers (27 percent) reported for Colorado. The largest difference between males and females was \$1,027 in Arizona.

Full report:

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008440.pdf>

Urban School Students Score at Highest Levels Ever On State and Federal Tests

Report Includes City-by-City Profiles of Big-City School District Trends On Math and Reading Assessments

Kansas City School District

<http://www.cgcs.org/BTO8/Kansas%20City.pdf>

St. Louis Public Schools

<http://www.cgcs.org/BTO8/St.%20Louis.pdf>

Students in the nation's major city public school districts continue to advance in reading and math on state tests and on the more rigorous federal test– the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

A new report analyzing academic progress in 66 urban school systems in 37 states and the District of Columbia shows substantially higher test scores in 2007 than in 2003 in fourth and eighth-grade mathematics and reading on state assessments. It indicates that the state and national test scores are at their highest levels since academic proficiency data have been collected for urban schools.

Beating the Odds: An Analysis of Student Performance and Achievement Gaps on State Assessments by the Council of the Great City Schools compares this past school year's state test scores with those reported a year after the federal *No Child Left Behind* law was implemented in 2002, requiring school districts to report performance levels based on state tests and show the percentage of students who score at the "proficient" level.

The *Beating the Odds* findings for the 2006- 2007 school year show that 63 percent of urban school students scored at or above the proficient level in fourth-grade math on their respective state assessments, a whopping 14 percentage point gain from 49 percent in 2003. For eighth-graders, the percentage climbed to 55 percent, compared with 42 percent in 2003, a 13 percentage point rise.

In reading, urban schoolchildren also posted gains over the past four years. From 2003 to 2007, the percentage of fourth-graders scoring at or

above the proficient level in reading on state tests rose to 60 percent from 51 percent – a 9 percentage point hike. For eighth-graders, the percentage increased to 51 percent from 43 percent in 2003, an 8 percentage point gain.

National Test Assessments

The report also reveals that the state-test trends coincide with NAEP gains by urban students, but with lower percentages of students scoring at or above the proficient level on what is generally considered a more rigorous exam than most state tests.

Students in big-city public schools have made faster math and reading gains than the nation on the NAEP over the past few years, according to *The Nation's Report Card* for 2007 released by the U.S. Department of Education. The report last November marked the first time that the nation could see four- or five-year trends on NAEP for the country's major urban public school systems since the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) was launched in reading in 2002 and math in 2003.

Some 28 percent of urban fourth-graders scored at or above the proficient level in math in 2007 on NAEP, an 8 percentage point hike from 20 percent in 2003. In reading, 22 percent of urban schoolchildren in fourth grade reached or went beyond the proficient level in 2007, a 5 percentage point increase from 17 percent in 2002.

Beating the Odds also includes how student test scores in 11 big-city school districts that volunteered for the trial urban NAEP compare with scores on their respective state tests. Among the 11 cities are New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, the nation's three largest school systems.

Although urban schools show gains in math and reading performance, the districts still generally lag behind state and national averages in fourth and eighth grades, and acknowledge that they still have a long way to go to reach proficiency levels. But there are exceptions.

State Math Achievement

In the report's eighth annual analysis, data show that 22 percent of urban school districts now score as high as or higher than their respective states in fourth-grade math, and 16 percent score as high or higher at the eighth-grade level in 2007.

The school districts with both fourth- and eighth-grade math scores equal to or greater than their respective states are Anchorage, Broward County (Fort Lauderdale, Fla.), Charleston, New Orleans, Palm Beach and Portland, Ore.

State Reading Progress

In 2007, 16 percent of urban school districts scored at or above their respective states in fourth-grade reading, and 14 percent at the eighth-grade level. The school districts with both fourth- and eighth-grade reading scores equal to or greater than their respective states are Anchorage, Broward County (Fort Lauderdale, Fla.), Charleston, New Orleans, Portland, Ore., San Diego and San Francisco.

Achievement Gaps

Beating the Odds VIII also indicates that racial achievement gaps in urban schools narrowed in math between 2003 and 2007, although they remain wide. Some 66 percent of bigcity school districts narrowed the gap between their fourth-grade African-American students and white counterparts statewide in math proficiency – 63 percent in eighth-grade math.

Among Hispanic students, 63 percent of the urban school districts narrowed the gap with white fourth-graders statewide – 58 percent in eighth-grade.

In reading, between 2003 and 2007, 64 percent of major city school systems narrowed the achievement gap between fourth-grade African-American students and white counterparts statewide in reading proficiency – 67 percent at the eighth-grade level. Among Hispanic students, 57 percent of urban school districts narrowed the gap with white fourth-graders statewide – 63 percent in eighth grade.

Urban Environment America's big-city school systems enroll about one-quarter, or 26 percent, of all students of color in the nation, and a disproportionately high number of English language learners and poor students.

The report attributes the standards movement as the catalyst that triggered change in urban schools. It gave urban school administrators direction on what they were being held responsible for delivering.

Beating the Odds analyzed two assessments – state and national – because the nation does not have a single system to measure progress relative to the same standard across school districts in all states.