

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**Re: Wayne County Schools district CATS scores rise**

**The Wayne County School District has been named an “Exemplary Growth District” due to the impressive academic strides being made in the climb to reach 100 on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) by the year 2014. This is the highest classification the local district can receive for accountability cycle 2008.**

**In fact, the elementary and middle school levels are already very close to reaching the 100 mark on their journey towards proficiency, with one of the elementary schools already exceeding 100 in every subject, in which they were assessed.**

**The district’s 2008 growth accountability index meets or exceeds its goal point and meets the dropout and novice reduction requirements, according to the latest results released by the Kentucky Department of Education.**

**“Our scores validate the hard work our students and staff have invested in strengthening academics on our campus. We know we are on the right track,” said Wayne County Superintendent John Dalton. “I am very proud of the high level of student learning and sincerely thank our students, parents, and staff for working together and placing an even stronger emphasis on learning.”**

**“Education becomes more essential every day,” said Dalton. “And it is our job to provide the best instructional program we possibly can to meet each child’s needs. We have a lot to be proud of when it comes to focusing on our students’ academic success.”**

**The newly released figures highlight that accomplishment, when you look at the latest cycle, showing Wayne County Schools once again moving in an upward trend since the original baseline was established in 2000. Wayne County Schools’ district index rose to 87 from 2007 to 2008, as it gets increasingly more challenging to raise the bar.**

**Wayne County Schools once again rose up the academic ladder when comparing the local district to their peers in the area. District administrators have had the opportunity to compare Wayne County’s performance to a group of 16 benchmark districts and are pleased with their performance in comparison to**

area schools. Wayne County Schools have made steady progress upward, especially during the past four years, currently placing the district fifth amongst these area school districts.

Recent ACT results also reflect a positive ranking for Wayne County, compared to other area schools with an average composite score of 17.6, which falls midway amongst area school rankings. Admittedly, Wayne County will be striving to increase their average ACT score, especially when analyzing their statewide ranking of 145<sup>th</sup> out of 231 schools. This past spring, the first mandated administration of the ACT to Kentucky's public school juniors provided a baseline for future administrations and gives districts and schools more information to meet individual students' needs. The ACT assesses English, reading, mathematics, and science skills which factor into five percent of the high schools' overall accountability indices.

In a breakdown of the local school results, the elementary level scores and the middle school scores met their goal, while the high school was labeled as "progressing" in the accountability results.

The testing results not only reflect the district's performance, but Wayne County School administrators use very specific information from the results to focus their attentions on areas that need to be strengthened or perhaps shift their emphasis from an area already mastered, as they develop curriculum strategies.

"Our elementary and middle school results show that they are exceeding the state average and doing exceptional work," said Assessment Coordinator Wayne Roberts. "We are especially pleased with the high science and mathematics scores."

"The mathematics scores reflect a district focus to enhance our students' knowledge of mathematics skills, so we are glad to see some of those efforts starting to pay off. Plus, with this year's addition of another year of mathematics mandated at the high school level, we expect to see improvement in that subject area on the next cycle of testing," added Roberts.

The elementary level showed an increase from 98.2 in 2007 to a high 99.6 in 2008. In half of the subject areas, the elementary results revealed outstanding scores over 100. The highest index was recorded at 123.75 in science, followed by 105.58 in writing portfolios, 104.02 in mathematics, and 102.62 in practical living/vocational skills. The biggest increase from the previous year was in mathematics with a 9.31 rise. The other most notable jumps from the previous year were in science and practical living/vocational studies.

"We just can't say enough about our strong elementary program," said Dalton. "We realize the benefits of a strong emphasis on learning with our youngest students."

**While the elementary scores reflect jointly between the performance in grades 3-6, not to mention the preschool and primary grades leading up to grade levels tested on CATS, the scores at Bell Elementary are truly phenomenal – breaking 100 in all five subjects areas in which they were tested.**

**“That is a record setting event amongst our schools and we salute the staff and students at Bell Elementary for their high standards and contributions to our elementary scores,” said Dalton.**

**Bell Elementary Principal Donna Rice attributed her school’s outstanding performance to effectively teaching the Program of Studies, which is the curriculum required by state of Kentucky. “We have an exceptionally hard working, dedicated ‘student driven’ staff. We have a standard based instructional program that our staff constantly improves and defines to better meet the needs of our students.”**

**At the middle school level, the scores rose four full points, bringing them up to an impressive academic index of 97.3. Their mathematics scores made a remarkable ten point increase, even exceeding the jump at the elementary level. Not to mention, a huge 18 point leap in practical living/vocational studies, breaking 100 at 103.32. The science score also broke the glass ceiling with the highest index of 106.24.**

**“We are particularly proud of the fact that the middle school scores fall in the top 20 percent of middle schools across the state,” said Dalton. “Our middle school has made remarkable strides and definitely deserves to be commended for their efforts. They are doing amazing work.”**

**“Our teachers have always worked hard, but they are now working smarter,” said former Wayne County Middle School Principal Bob Wixson. “They are one of the top middle schools in the area. They are in a position now that they are on track to make 100 by 2014.”**

**The Wayne County High School scores revealed a slight index drop from 75.2 in 2007 to 71 in 2008. They made a huge gain of 17.62 on their writing on-demand index, from 56.63 in 2007 to 74.25 in 2008. Another increase occurred in regard to writing portfolios with an index of 73.10 in 2007, compared to a 75.37 rise in 2008. The reading scores remained almost constant; however, decreases were experienced in the remaining subjects.**

**“We made a concentrated effort to emphasize the importance of writing and reading in our classrooms and felt like we were able to tap the potential of these students’ abilities,” said Wayne County High School Principal Peggy Shearer.**