

NEWS RELEASE



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CINCINNATI PUBLIC SCHOOLS AGAIN RATED EFFECTIVE BY STATE Growth Measure Gained Despite Higher Bar

For the second year in a row, Cincinnati Public Schools earned the Effective category on the Ohio Report Card, the district announced today.

“We are extremely excited to repeat this accomplishment because it means that our students progressed at a greater rate than the state as a whole,” said Superintendent Mary Ronan. “We attained Effective status through the Ohio Department of Education’s (ODE) Value-Added Measure, but, this year, the state raised the bar and made it more difficult to achieve.”

The district announced its results at a news conference. Although considered “unofficial” until ODE releases statewide data on Wednesday, August 24, the data are final and not expected to change.

CPS previously learned that students’ test scores rose on all 24 tests administered by the state over eight tested grade levels, but actual district and school ratings were not available until the state calculated the its value-added growth measure, by which it assesses whether students make, exceed or do not make a year’s worth of projected learning growth.

Ronan praised schools for their strong showings in moving up in the ratings, resulting in more CPS schools in the higher report card categories and fewer in the lower two. In the latest ratings, more than 82 percent of CPS schools are rated Excellent, Effective or in Continuous Improvement.

In particular, she singled out the performance of the district’s Excellent and Effective-rated schools. Excellent schools include College Hill Fundamental Academy, Covedale, Dater Montessori, Fairview-Clifton, Kilgour, Mt. Washington, Sands Montessori, the School for Creative and Performing Arts, Taft Information Technology High School, and Walnut Hills High School. Rated Effective are Hartwell, North Avondale Montessori, Saylor Park, Silverton, South Avondale, Aiken College & Career High School, Clark Montessori, Hughes STEM, Western Hills University High School and Withrow University High School.

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Again this school year, formerly low-performing schools made significant gains that helped lift the district as a whole, including most of the 16 schools identified for comprehensive support through the district's Elementary Initiative. Four of these schools – Mt. Airy, Rothenberg Preparatory Academy, South Avondale and Taft Elementary – were completely redesigned with new staffs and revamped curriculum in 2009 and 2008.

“What is particularly striking about these results is that every single one of the redesigned schools has made impressive progress,” Ronan said. She noted that all four met their federal annual progress targets; Mt. Airy has moved from Academic Emergency into Continuous Improvement, Rothenberg and Taft STEM are in Continuous Improvement and have emerged from School Improvement status under No Child Left Behind; and South Avondale made so much progress in student achievement that it earned the Effective rating for the first time since the state began issuing school ratings more than a decade ago.

Other CPS Report Card Highlights:

- The district's Performance Index, a composite score of gains on all state tests at all performance levels, has reached 87.3, its highest score ever
- The district has earned 10 Report Card indicators compared with seven last year
- The percentage of student proficiency rose on every state test at every grade level by an average of 5 percent

Ronan said her goal for the 2011-12 school year is to “take these results to the next level” by beginning the transition to new, more rigorous academic standards designed to prepare students for the demands of the 21st century.

“Even as we celebrate our progress, we know we cannot stand still,” Ronan said. “In today's world, our students aren't just competing with their suburban counterparts – they will be vying for jobs with young people in China and India. For our region to survive and thrive, our students need to be higher-order thinkers and problems-solvers, great communicators and technologically astute. These are the skills the new standards will help our students attain.”

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