



PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Press Release
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District Superintendent says, “Bottom Line is Learning.”

A majority of the Pulaski County Special School District (PCSSD) schools that administered the Arkansas Benchmark Exams in Literacy and Mathematics at the 4th and 8th grade levels showed improvement in the number of students reaching the Proficient or Advanced Proficiency levels (from spring 2000 to spring 2001).

Noteworthy to Superintendent Dr. Gary Smith was that in mathematics, 18 of the District’s 24 elementary schools showed improvement over last year’s scores at the Proficient or Advanced levels. Dr. Smith said, “This is an indication that some of the recent interventions, strategies, and the technology innovations being implemented District-wide are proving beneficial to our students.”

In mathematics, the highest scoring school in the District was College Station Elementary, with 85% of their students reaching mastery (i.e., Proficient or Advanced) on the Mathematics Benchmark Exam. Other District schools meriting recognition for improvement include Tolleson Elementary (going from 29% in 2000 to 62% of the students achieving proficiency in spring 2001) and Pine Forest Elementary (55% to 72%). Ten of the District’s 24 elementary schools made consistent, year-to-year improvement in mathematics over a three-year period from spring 1999-spring 2001. The three elementary schools that obtained marked improvements in mathematics were:

- Arnold Drive Elementary—from 27% Proficient/Advanced levels to 64 % Proficient/Advanced levels over a three-year period;
- Dupree Elementary—from 26% Proficient/Advanced levels to 57% Proficient/Advanced levels over three years; and
- Adkins Elementary (from 6% Proficient/Advanced levels to 34% Proficient/Advanced levels).

The other seven (7) schools making three-year gains increased from 15%-19% in the number of students who moved into the Proficient or Advanced levels in 4th grade mathematics from the time the exams were administered in the spring of 1999 to the spring of 2001.

On the Literacy exam, fifty percent (50%) of the 24 elementary schools in the District showed an increase in the number of students who scored in the Proficient or above level range in literacy over spring 2000 students. Five elementary schools have shown an increase in literacy scores, over the last three years—Adkins, Baker, College Station, Jacksonville, and Sherwood (see Fourth Grade Literacy Exam Results Table 2). The school scoring highest in the District at Proficient and Advanced levels was College Station, with 82%. Baker Elementary was a close second at 81%, followed by Tolleson at 76%. Sherwood students made a significant improvement over the three-year period, from 24% to 56% Proficient and Advanced in literacy.

At the 8th grade level, five of six junior high schools in the District showed an increase in the number of students who scored at the Proficient or Advanced levels on the Arkansas Literacy Benchmark Examination. Commendably, Robinson Junior High School showed continuous progress in this area over the last three years. However, the Superintendent noted, “Although test results show 31% of Robinson’s eighth graders scored at the Proficient and Advanced levels, 69% of the students scored at the Below Basic and Basic Levels of proficiency.” Dr. Smith

continued, “This tells us that PCSSD still has a long way to go toward meeting its goal of 100% proficiency for all students.” Smith added, “Students and teachers deserve praise for the progress that has been made over the three years, but we have a way to go. Improving student achievement will continue to be the District’s ‘number one’ focus for the 2001-2002 school year.”

The percentage of secondary students in the District demonstrating proficiency on the eighth grade Arkansas Mathematics Benchmark Examination remains low, as evidenced by the table displaying the eighth grade mathematics scores. Four of the District’s six junior high schools improved their percentage of students reaching proficiency. In addition to already making the transition this school year from junior high to middle schools, the District also plans to provide more technical assistance to secondary mathematics teachers. Dr. Ricki Bailey, Assistant Superintendent for Learning Services, stated that these data results certainly will be analyzed and used by curriculum specialists, administrators, and teachers to develop strategies toward making improvements in mathematics. She further stated, “For that matter, literacy also needs similar attention to refine existing plans for improvement based upon both District and individual schools’ results, and to establish goals, paths, and measures to bring about improvement for individual students.”

Although, Smith and Bailey agree, “PCSSD is not there yet,” and there are too many students scoring in the Below Basic or Basic levels on the State’s benchmark exams, PCSSD will sustain the focus on improving student achievement. Dr. Smith added, “We know how to bring about continuous improvement and are headed in the right direction as shown over the last three years.”

“We’re committed to student achievement and accountability,” said Superintendent Smith. “The bottom line is learning—how each school is using the test results to make improvements. We will use what we’ve learned from these results to help our students prepare for next year’s exams. Our teachers, administrators, students and parents are committed to meet this challenge.”

Table 1

Mathematics 4th Grade	PCSSD: 4th Grade Mathematics Benchmark Results						
	% Below Basic & Basic				% Proficient & Advanced		
	School	1999	2000	2001		1999	2000
Adkins	93	86	66		6	13	34
Arnold	73	50	36		27	50	64
Baker	50	37	32		50	63	68
Bates	96	92	78		4	8	23
Bayou Meto	61	48	46		39	52	54
Cato	65	68	51		34	33	49
Clinton	71	70	53		28	30	47
College Station	44	15	15		57	86	85
Crystal Hill	64	63	63		36	37	37
Dupree	73	67	43		26	32	57
Fuller*	88	71			12	29	
Harris	78	84	75		22	16	25
Jacksonville	81	80	71		18	20	29
Landmark	79	90	73		21	10	27
Lawson	48	72	53		52	28	46
Oak Grove	81	62	68		18	39	31
Oakbrooke	59	45	63		41	56	37
Pine Forest	32	45	28		68	55	72
Pinewood	70	70	68		31	30	31
Robinson	68	44	54		32	56	45
Scott	87	100	82		14	0	18
Sherwood	82	58	75		19	43	25
Sylvan Hills	70	57	56		30	42	44
Taylor	78	80	75		22	21	25
Tolleson	63	71	38		38	29	62
District	69	63	57		31	37	43

*Fuller Elementary and the “old” Daisy Bates Elementary School merged to become the “new” Daisy Bates Elementary, which opened in the 2000-2001 school year.

Table 2

Literacy 4th Grade School	PCSSD: 4th Grade Literacy Benchmark Test Results					
	% Below Basic & Basic			% Proficient & Advanced		
	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
Adkins	97	77	71	3	23	29
Arnold	46	50	31	54	50	68
Baker	60	26	19	41	74	81
Bates	80	82	78	19	17	22
Bayou Meto	54	51	62	45	49	38
Cato	55	62	63	45	39	37
Clinton	61	73	57	39	26	44
College Station	43	32	17	56	68	82
Crystal Hill	49	57	59	51	44	41
Dupree	50	58	72	50	42	29
Fuller*	90	71		11	29	
Harris	75	80	86	25	20	15
Jacksonville	78	72	67	22	28	33
Landmark	74	76	75	26	24	25
Lawson	29	61	64	72	39	36
Oak Grove	77	69	74	24	31	27
Oakbrooke	52	32	38	48	68	63
Pine Forest	28	49	44	71	51	56
Pinewood	76	62	75	24	38	25
Robinson	70	52	78	30	48	22
Scott	80	88	91	20	13	9
Sherwood	76	63	44	24	38	56
Sylvan Hills	60	51	55	41	49	45
Taylor	76	79	76	24	21	25
Tolleson	49	61	24	51	38	76
District	61	60	60	39	40	41

*Fuller Elementary and the “old” Daisy Bates Elementary School merged to become the “new” Daisy Bates Elementary, which opened in the 2000-2001 school year.

Table 3

Literacy 8th Grade	PCSSD: 8th Grade Literacy Benchmark Test Results					
	% Below Basic & Basic			% Proficient & Advanced		
School	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
Fuller Jr.	62	65	63	39	35	36
Jax Jr.	86	90	84	13	11	16
Oak Grove Jr.	86	91	78	14	9	22
Northwood Jr.	74	85	75	26	14	26
Robinson Jr.	78	72	69	22	29	31
Sylvan Hills Jr.	75	70	73	26	29	28
District	77	79	74	23	21	26

Table 4

Math 8th Grade	PCSSD: 8th Grade Mathematics Benchmark Test Results					
	% Below Basic & Basic			% Proficient & Advanced		
School	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
Fuller Jr.	78	79	77	23	21	24
Jax Jr.	91	92	89	9	8	11
Oak Grove Jr.	97	93	85	3	8	15
Northwood Jr.	87	86	86	14	14	15
Robinson Jr.	79	83	81	21	18	18
Sylvan Hills Jr.	87	89	89	12	11	11
District	87	87	85	14	13	14

For more information, contact:

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http://pcssdweb.k12.ar.us/account/Press_Release_ACTAAP_9_13_2001.PDF