



PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

925 East Dixon Road/P.O. Box 8601
Little Rock, Arkansas 72216
(501) 490-2000

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 3, 1999**

***"District Superintendent Pleased
with Higher Student Test Scores"***

"Pulaski County Special School District fifth and seventh grade students scored significantly higher on the Stanford Achievement Test compared to the previous year's test scores," Dr. Gary Smith, District Superintendent of Education, announced at a press conference held Friday afternoon in the Board Room of the District's Administrative Services Building.

According to Smith, tenth grade students maintained marked increases realized over the past four years on the SAT-9 and generally showed minor gains this year.

"The complete battery test scores of tenth grade students are the highest in the District among the 5th, 7th, and 10th grade levels at which statewide testing is mandated," Smith said.

Smith said these findings are based on a comparison of District test scores with national norms.

Since assuming his role as Superintendent, Smith has emphasized efforts to increase student learning through: raising expectations of performance; the teaching and testing of skills that students most need; the improvement of all students' test scores; and by infusing technology into the classroom.

"I have encouraged and challenged principals and teachers to use innovative and creative approaches to increase student learning and test scores," Smith said. "Principals were offered special incentives for their schools prior to the start of the current school year if test scores were raised."

Smith also credited the PCSSD Board of Education for creating two new positions within the District-Director of Accountability and Director of Technology Services-to further improve efforts to provide patrons and students with enhanced emphasis on accountable teaching, student learning, and what Smith referred to as "the ever increasing technology needs of the next century."

"The increase in PCSSD test scores is not only attributable to administrator and teacher efforts, but especially to students' better focus on doing well," Smith said.

In an attempt to echo the Arkansas Department of Education's new emphasis on more accountable schools and increased student learning, Smith said substantial emphasis by the Pulaski County Special School District has been placed on SmartStart, Performance Assessment, Balanced Literacy, Curriculum Alignment, and ACTAAP (the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program).

Teachers and administrators in the District are involved with ongoing training in the SmartStart and Balanced Literacy Initiative. The alignment of the curriculum has brought increased focus to student learning and aggressive focus to test scores throughout the District. Heavy emphasis has been placed on writing and is linked to Performance Assessment which, when linked to Balanced Literacy, is believed to have provided positive "ripple effects" throughout a variety of student test scores.

"These initiatives are particularly notable in the substantial increases in language arts and reading test scores, where increases of up to five percentile points were achieved this year," Smith said.

Continued efforts to provide students with an integrated curriculum may also be viewed as a factor causing increased student test scores. Federal Eisenhower funds have been used to provide summer teacher workshops in targeted areas of mathematics and science as identified by SAT-9 data, and materials purchased for science classrooms has increased the number of integrated lab activities.

"The 1999-2000 school year is seeing greater emphasis in the area of Language Arts, including additional training in Balanced Literacy," Smith said.

Superintendent Smith said further efforts to improve student learning and test scores will include: placing more emphasis on Performance Assessment; free administration of the Preliminary ACT (PLAN) college entrance test for 10th graders for the first time; and plans for informational meetings with parents to enable them to become more involved with students' learning and awareness of new programs and initiatives the District is providing to meet the anticipated needs of students as we move into the 21st century.

"The District will continue the programs it believes have been successful at raising student test scores and will further the efforts of educational accountability and the learning and technology needs of the next millennium to provide the high standards of educational quality the students and patrons of Pulaski County Special School District deserve," Smith said.

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*For more information, contact:
Dr. Robert Clowers, Director of Accountability
(501) 490-2000, ext. 269*

PRESS RELEASE
Pulaski County Special School District
Office of Educational Accountability
1999 SAT-9 Score Increases
December 3, 1999

PCSSD GRADE 5						
Percentile Ranks	1996	1997	1998	1999	1996-99 Change	1998-99 Change
Complete Battery	40	43	41	44	+ 4	+ 3
Reading	40	44	43	45	+ 5	+ 2
Math	34	38	34	37	+ 3	+ 3
Language Arts	39	42	40	45	+ 6	+ 5
Science	34	39	36	40	+ 6	+ 4

PCSSD GRADE 7						
Percentile Ranks	1996	1997	1998	1999	1996-99 Change	1998-99 Change
Complete Battery	46	45	44	46	0	+ 2
Reading	43	42	41	44	+ 1	+ 3
Math	41	40	39	41	0	+ 2
Language Arts	41	41	38	42	+ 1	+ 4
Science	48	50	50	50	+ 2	0

PCSSD GRADE 10						
Percentile Ranks	1996	1997	1998	1999	1996-99 Change	1998-99 Change
Complete Battery	45	46	48	48	+ 3	0
Reading	40	41	44	44	+ 4	0
Math	49	49	50	52	+ 3	+ 2
Language Arts	41	42	45	47	+ 6	+ 2
Science	49	48	50	49	0	- 1

PRESS RELEASE
Pulaski County Special School District
1999 SAT-9 Score Increases
Highlights of a Successful School Year

- **5th Grade** students in the PCSSD increased their national percentile average on their Complete Battery of test scores and in each major subject area of Reading, Math, Language Arts, and Science scores over the previous year.
 - Scores on the Complete Battery increased 3 percentile points over the previous year.
 - Language Arts increased 5 percentile points over the previous year.
 - Science increased 4 percentile points over the previous year.
 - Mathematics increased 3 percentile points over the previous year.
 - Reading increased 2 percentile points over the previous year.
 - Language Arts and Science have increased 6 percentile points over the four-year period that the SAT-9 version has been administered.

- **7th Grade** students in the PCSSD increased their national percentile average on their Complete Battery of test scores and had increased scores in the major subject areas of Reading, Math, and Language Arts. Their Science scores held steady at the 50th percentile—the national average—when compared to the previous year.
 - Language Arts increased 4 percentile points over the previous year.
 - Reading increased 3 percentile points over the previous year.
 - Math increased 2 percentile points over the previous year.
 - Scores on the Complete Battery increased 2 percentile points over the previous year.
 - Science scores held at the 50th percentile for the third consecutive year.

- **10th Grade** students in the PCSSD increased their national percentile average in Math and Language Arts scores over the past year and only dropped one percentile point in Science. They held steady on their Complete Battery and in Reading.
 - Math increased 2 percentile points over the previous year.
 - Language Arts increased 2 percentile points over the previous year.
 - Students maintained previous gains of 3 percentile points on the Complete Battery over the period that the SAT-9 version has been administered.
 - Language Arts has increased 6 percentile points over the four-year period that the SAT-9 version has been administered.