



News

from Metro Nashville Public Schools

Dear MNPS Students, Parents and Community Members,

This year, Tennessee made an unprecedented move in educational expectations and assessments. The state's public education system made a triple jump:

- First, we embraced dramatically higher academic standards.
- Second, we increased the student test scores required to qualify as proficient.
- Third, we changed from using a three-year average of test scores to using a single year's test results to measure achievement, putting enormous weight on students' performance on a single assessment. This change eliminated the Safe Harbor provision that allowed districts to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based on significant achievement gains.

The State Department of Education has now released district test results and official status under the federally mandated No Child Left Behind Law. These results give us a picture of how well we managed those three significant changes and help us identify areas of needed improvement.

This year, Metro schools did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind Act. Our district status remains *Restructuring 1-Improving* through a Natural Disaster Appeal, which we filed due to the flood. The law allows a waiver when a district's failure to make AYP is "due to exceptional or uncontrollable circumstances, such as a natural disaster."

While Nashville schools did not meet the new benchmarks in every subject and every subgroup as set by the state, we did make significant gains in student achievement.

- Overall, students in grades K-8 met the benchmarks in Reading and Math. We did not make AYP with three groups of K-8 students: African American students in Math, students with disabilities in Reading/Language Arts, and students with Limited English Proficiency in both subjects.
- Our high school writing assessment scores improved by 10 percentage points overall and by 22 percentage points among students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency.
- In high school, we made AYP in math, but two groups of students, students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency, missed the benchmark in reading/language arts.
- Our graduation rates increased from 73.1% to 82.9%, jumping nearly 10 percentage points, an unprecedented increase in a single year.
- Every Metro high school and every subgroup made the graduation rate benchmark.

We are pleased with these improvements, particularly since we made them despite the May flood that uprooted so many of our students and staff. As a result of the flood, we cancelled school for one week and postponed end of course high school tests throughout that week. State guidelines required students to take their tests upon returning to school, even though they were still dealing with dislocation and the trauma of the flood.

We now know how our students performed during this first year of implementation of the new standards and tests, and we are equipped to continue implementing our *MNPS Achieves: First to the Top* transformation plan that is already proving effective. This newly released data will allow us to pinpoint areas that need more attention and to continue exploring new ways to support our teachers and school staffs. We know we must be effective in teaching all students, including challenging our highest achieving students. Families can help by making sure students come to school, every day, prepared to learn.

We appreciate your continued support of Metro Schools and are excited about the momentum we have gained and the opportunities that await.

Sincerely,

Jesse Register, Ed. D.
Director of Schools