



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

August 20, 2024

Contact

Lanie Davis Hayes, Public Information Officer

ldavis2@mail.dps.k12.va.us

O: (434) 799-6434 x 262

M: (434) 770-1166

TWO DPS SCHOOLS SURPASS STATE AVERAGES IN SOL PASS RATES, OTHER SCHOOLS SEE SIGNIFICANT GAINS IN STUDENT PERFORMANCE

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) recently released the annual pass rates on the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments from the 2023-24 school year, in which Danville Public Schools (DPS) saw improvements in achievement levels over the past several years.

School Results

Galileo Magnet High School's pass rates for reading are 21 percentage points higher than the state average at 94%. Likewise, Galileo's math pass rates are 91%, 20 percentage points higher than the state average, and their science pass rates are 78%, 10 percentage points higher than the state average. Forest Hills Elementary School pass rates exceeded the state average in reading, math, and science.

Individually, some schools saw significant increases in their pass rates over the previous year. Compared to the 2022-23 school year, George Washington High School's reading pass rates increased to 69% from 60% and math pass rates to 68% from 34%. In 2023-24, O.T. Bonner Middle School increased its reading pass rate to 58% from 48% and math pass rate to 56% from 36% over the 2022-23 school year. Westwood Middle School also increased its science pass rate to 61% over 41% in 2022-23.

While not listed in the released pass rates by the VDOE since it is a program, the Activ8 STEM Academy saw exemplary student achievement in its first year with a 90% pass rate in both mathematics and reading.

DPS also saw some movement in achievement among two student groups in math: Black students at 12 percentage points higher over the previous year and Economically Disadvantaged students at 11 percentage points higher over the previous year.

In addition, several schools saw continued improvements in their reading and math scores, including Westwood, Galileo, Park Avenue Elementary, Schoolfield Elementary, and Woodberry Hills Elementary.

"Our schools have been working incredibly hard in previous years to increase student achievement," School Board Chair Ty'Quan Graves said. "We are excited to see that our schools are improving and excelling."



District Results

As a district, pass rates for reading were 53%, a steady improvement over four years from 43% in 2020-21. DPS has not seen pass rates at this level since the 2017-18 school year. Likewise, district math pass rates were 49%, a steady improvement from 30% in 2020-21.

"While we still have work to do, we are proud of the gains we have been able to make, especially because we are seeing numbers we haven't seen in several years," Superintendent Dr. Angela Hairston said.

Other Improvements

DPS also continues to monitor data for students who are not yet SOL tested. Students in kindergarten through second grade receive the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screener (PALS), which monitors their knowledge of literacy fundamentals, including alphabet recognition, letter sounds, and spelling.

With data from the PALS assessments, the division can tell whether students are reaching their important benchmarks. Since the 2020-21 school year, the percentage of students on or above benchmarks in grades K-2 has increased, with 75% of kindergarten students reaching benchmarks in 2023-24, along with 64% of first graders and 65% of second graders

Tutoring Efforts

This year, in accordance with Governor Glenn Youngkin's ALL In plan, DPS launched a rigorous tutoring program, which included before, after, and Saturday school tutoring. Through the tutoring programs, the division reclaimed approximately 12,715 instructional hours missed.

In addition, the division saw a 23% reduction in students who were chronically absent, with Forest Hills Elementary, Galileo Magnet High, the Activ8 STEM Academy, the Virtual Academy, Park Avenue Elementary, Schoolfield Elementary, O.T. Bonner Middle, and Westwood Middle demonstrating excellent attendance during the 23-24 school year.

Next Steps

Going forward, the division will continue to work on literacy, with further implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act and targeted work with Reading Specialists.

The Virginia Department of Education is expected to update division School Quality Profiles, including accreditation ratings and on-time graduation rates by the end of September.