

PRESS RELEASE

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KCPS Students Make Academic Gains in 2019 State Report *Accreditation status remains unclear until final science data is available*

Kansas City, October 17, 2019: Students in Kansas City Public Schools continue to make significant gains in their academic growth, according to the 2019 Annual Progress Report data released today to the public by Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

This year's APR data also highlights opportunities for improvement that are already being addressed by KCPS in academics, career and college readiness, attendance and graduation rates. KCPS officials are awaiting final results in science to determine if the school system has met the state standard for full accreditation.

KCPS students posted impressive progress in English Language Arts (ELA) and math that exceeded state expectations this year. KCPS produced overall improvements in ELA and math this year compared to 2018, while statewide results declined in both academic areas.

"As a school district, we've been working very hard over the last couple of years to help our students rise from one level to the next in terms of academic growth," Superintendent Mark Bedell said. "These results demonstrate how the academic structure that we've put in place is paying dividends. I am very proud of all our students, families and staff."

Public school officials in Missouri were only given access to 2019 science results on Oct. 16. KCPS accountability experts will be reviewing the data for accuracy and then reporting needed changes to DESE. Results in social studies were also not available this year due to the fact that that exam was new this year and was being field tested by state education officials.

DESE releases the APR to measure improvement based on several different factors for every public school and Local Education Agency (school district) in the state. These performance factors include, among other elements, Missouri Assessment Program and End-of-Course exam results, attendance and graduation rates, and career and college readiness.



APR points are accumulated for achievement and improvement in each category. School districts are expected to get at least 70 percent of the possible points in order to be considered at a “full accreditation” level.

State accreditation status is actually determined by a vote of the Missouri State Board of Education, which considers APR and DESE recommendations when making this decision. After losing provisional accreditation in 2011, KCPS earned that status back from the state school board in 2014. Since then, the school system has been steadily gaining ground under the leadership of Superintendent Mark Bedell.

Unlike previous years, DESE opted to not automatically provide APR scores in each category for school districts in the state this year. Instead, school districts will have to request those scores. It isn't known when those scores will be available.

Dr. Bedell has made it clear that full accreditation is one mark of progress but not the ultimate goal.

“KCPS needs to become a world-class public education system that produces graduates who are prepared to succeed in the modern global economy, achieve their dreams and contribute to their communities,” Dr. Bedell said. “We’ve got a lot of hard work to do to get there.”

Staff are already making changes across KCPS in order to improve results in academics, college and career readiness, attendance and graduation rates. Significant upgrades have been made to classroom technology and the training needed to use the tools effectively. More Advanced Placement classes are being offered and workforce development programs are being expanded at the high schools. KCPS has also intensified efforts to increase attendance rates through special incentives and awareness campaigns.

“Schools need support from our stakeholders if we’re going to achieve our goals as an educational system,” Dr. Bedell said. “One of the most valuable things our community members can do is to help us make sure that every student is at school and in class on time, every day.”

Academic Progress Reports for individual KCPS students will be produced and distributed soon by schools to parents/guardians.