



TPSD, Eight Schools Receive A-Ranking From MDE

TUPELO, Miss. — It was a day of celebration for the Tupelo Public School District, which received an A ranking from the Mississippi Department of Education’s accountability model.

The great news on Thursday didn’t stop there, as eight schools received A’s, while four earned B’s.

It marked one of the top assessments in the history of TPSD.

“The TPSD 2021-2022 accountability rating represents a lot of hard work,” fifth-year superintendent Dr. Rob Picou said. “Our admin team, teachers, support staff, and students worked very hard to achieve growth and proficiency on the state’s MAAP assessment. We are very proud of their effort and hard work.

“However, if we only base our accountability on the state’s letter grade, some might argue we do not need to improve because we are an A or that the state’s rating tells the entire story of any one school. We all know great learning occurs in B-rated schools and there is room for improvement in both B- and A-rated schools.

“In addition, there are many great learning opportunities that occur in all our schools that do not get measured on a standardized test. I stand firm in my belief that, while I am very excited about the A rating because it does represent hard work, the amazing staff and students of TPSD are bigger than any one letter grade. Congratulations, TPSD.”

Schools earning A’s were Carver, ECEC, Joyner, Lawhon, Lawndale, Rankin, Thomas Street and Tupelo Middle. Milam, Parkway, Pierce Street and Tupelo High each earned B’s.

The 2021-22 grades are based on how students performed during the 2021-22 school year and how much progress they made since the 2020-21 school year. Overall, Mississippi students made more progress than they typically do in one year as schools focused on accelerating learning after the first year of the pandemic. Mississippi educators provided an enormous amount of support to help students overcome the setbacks of the pandemic.

“I want to congratulate the administrators, teachers, students, and the community for achieving an A-rating,” TPSD Board of Trustees president Paul Mize III said. “Our district has been and will continue to put in the hard work necessary to provide an exceptional educational experience. I want to thank our wonderful community; without the support of our parents and citizens this would not have been possible. This rating is an indication of the amazing work our district is doing and should be celebrated.”

As a district, TPSD was one of 45 across the state to receive an A, while 248 schools earned the top score — including the eight here.

“The last couple of years have been challenging to say the least, but we did not let that detour us from accomplishing our goal of becoming an A school,” TMS principal Mark Enis said. “This accomplishment is a testament to the hard work of our students, teachers and staff at Tupelo Middle School. We want to celebrate our success from this past school year, but now we must work ever harder to sustain our A.”

Mississippi’s school grading system considers many indicators, including how well students perform on Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) tests for English Language Arts and Mathematics in grades 3-8 and high school, whether students are showing improvement on those tests from year to year, and whether students are graduating within four years.

The system also factors in performance on the ACT and advanced high school courses and how well schools are helping English learners and the lowest-achieving students make progress toward proficiency.

Additional Quotes

“We are beyond thrilled to be an A-rated school. Carver has such a phenomenal staff that works diligently to meet the needs of all of our students and to build a strong academic foundation. I am so thankful for Carver’s parent, family and community support that creates the perfect partnership for success. Having an A-rating is definitely a combined effort and a huge celebration for our staff, students and our whole school community.” — Christy Carroll, Carver Elementary Principal

“It is such an honor to be recognized as an A school. That letter grade is comprised of countless hours of dedication by the ECEC teachers and staff who work to ensure our students receive an engaging and meaningful pre-kindergarten experience.” — Katie Coon, ECEC Principal

“It is a blessing to be a part of such a gifted team of teachers, staff, and students. Congratulations on this awesome accomplishment! Go Lawhon! Go Wave.” — Ian Shumpert, Lawhon Principal

“Rankin Elementary takes every opportunity to shine, and this A rating is just another example of the diligent work of teachers and students. Despite every obstacle, the teachers and students of Rankin never lost sight of the goal we aim to achieve each and every day: student success. Rankin’s success comes in many forms. From making good grades on a test to giving high-fives in the hallway, we know that All-Stars are shining through every moment.” — Heather Cartwright, Rankin Principal