



Jefferson County Board of Education

1221 Gay Street
Dandridge, TN 3775

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jefferson County Schools Celebrates Academic Excellence as Majority of Schools Earn As

Jefferson County Schools is proud to celebrate a highly successful academic year marked by strong student performance, exceptional growth, and statewide recognition. The 2024 to 2025 school year reflected some of the highest proficiency levels in district history, the highest growth designation possible at the district level, and the second highest accountability designation available. In addition, four schools earned Tennessee Reward School status, while students achieved record Advanced Placement scores and earned a record number of industry certifications.

Each December, the Tennessee Department of Education releases school letter grades for the previous academic year. These grades are based on TCAP achievement and TVAAS growth for elementary and middle schools and include a college and career readiness indicator for high schools. Letter grades are reported on a scale of A through F and are intended to provide families and communities with a clear snapshot of school performance.

This year, eleven Jefferson County Schools were eligible to receive a letter grade. Jefferson County Schools is thrilled to announce that more than half of those schools earned an A rating. Schools receiving an A include Jefferson County High School, Maury Middle School, New Market Elementary School, Jefferson Elementary School, Talbott Elementary School, and Piedmont Elementary School.

Dr. Tommy Arnold, Director of Schools, praised the districtwide accomplishment and the work behind the results. “Having more than half of our schools earn an A rating is a testament to the collective commitment of our teachers, school leaders, students, and families. These results reflect intentional planning, strong instruction, and a focus on both achievement and growth. I am incredibly proud of the work happening across Jefferson County Schools and the direction our district continues to move.”

Kristi Waltke, Elementary Supervisor, recognized the elementary schools that earned both an A rating and Tennessee Reward School status. “Earning an A rating while also being named a Tennessee Reward School reflects sustained excellence at the elementary level. These schools demonstrated exceptional achievement through the most rigorous accountability pathway, and their success is the result of strong leadership, effective instruction, and a shared commitment to student learning.”

Trevor Collins, Data and Accountability Supervisor, celebrated the achievements of the district’s largest middle school and Jefferson County High School. “Jefferson County High School and Maury Middle School serve a significant portion of our students, and earning an A rating at that scale speaks volumes about the systems and supports in place. We are especially proud of Jefferson County High School for its continued growth in industry certifications alongside strong academic achievement. These accomplishments reflect a balanced focus on preparing students for both college and career success.”

Missy Hayes, CTE Supervisor, highlighted the district’s continued success in career readiness outcomes. “The growth in industry certifications at Jefferson County High School reflects the intentional work of our teachers, students, and community partners. Reaching a seventy five percent college and career readiness rate is an incredible milestone and demonstrates our commitment to ensuring students graduate with meaningful credentials and real world opportunities.”

The district also recognizes Rush Strong School and Mount Horeb Elementary School, both of which earned a B rating for the 2024 to 2025 school year. These results reflect solid academic performance and continued progress.

White Pine School and Jefferson Middle School earned C ratings for the school year. White Pine School demonstrated notable improvement from the previous year, and both schools are well positioned to move into the B range during the 2025 to 2026 school year.

Dandridge Elementary School continues to post some of the highest achievement rates in the district. While growth remains an area of focus in a few specific areas, the school earned an A in the achievement category and a C overall. This performance highlights strong instructional outcomes while clearly identifying opportunities for continued growth.

Jefferson County Schools is proud of the collective efforts of its students, teachers, school leaders, and staff. Their dedication to high expectations and continuous improvement continues to move the district forward academically and ensures strong outcomes for all learners.