



NEWS RELEASE

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SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REPORTS IN THE MAIL

Copies of the 2006 Arkansas School Performance Report Card are being mailed to parents of public school students across the state. The Arkansas Department of Education, working with Gov. Mike Beebe, releases copies of Arkansas School Performance Reports annually as required by state law to provide members of the public with accurate information about the performance of their schools. This is the sixth year the report has been distributed.

"Parents of children in our public schools deserve to know how their schools are doing on important measures of education," said Dr. Ken James, Commissioner of the Arkansas Department of Education. The mailed reports contain information about a student's school with the same information for the district as well as for the state. The School Performance Reports are also available on the Arkansas Department of Education's Web site, ArkansasEd.org, with links to the information for each school and district.

"This allows parents to compare their individual school to other schools in their district as well as in the state," Dr. James said. "This transparency and level of accountability is important for students, parents, educators and policy-makers in Arkansas."

Performance reports are being mailed to every parent of children in the state's 245 public school districts, which totals about 452,000 students. "We hope that the information will empower parents and community leaders to become more involved in helping local schools provide a quality education for students," said Dr. Charity Smith, Director of Public School Academic Accountability, whose office is responsible for issuing the reports.

The reports consist of specific statistical performance information, including indicators for achievement, access, retention, discipline, demographics, choice, and financial status.

Changes to the reports this year include information regarding the presence of teachers deemed highly qualified under the federal No Child Left Behind Act; the fulfillment of training hours by elected school board members; and additional information on school expenditures.

Also included in the report are achievement gains on state and national assessments, plus information on core curriculum and definitions that should be helpful to parents in understanding educational issues.

In 1999, an act passed by the Arkansas General Assembly committed the state to producing a complete accountability report customized for each school in the state and mailing the report to every student's parent or guardian.

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The Arkansas Department of Education strives to ensure that all children in the state have access to a quality education by providing educators, administrators and staff with leadership, resources and training.