



BILL HASLAM
GOVERNOR
STATE OF TENNESSEE

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CONTACT: David Smith
OFFICE: (615) 741-3763
or
CONTACT: Kelli Gauthier
OFFICE: (615) 532-7817

TENNESSEE NAMES TOP SCHOOLS FOR ACHIEVEMENT, GROWTH IN 2011-12
Reward Schools located in 70 districts across the state in cities and rural areas

BRENTWOOD – Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam and Education Commissioner Kevin Huffman today announced 169 schools as the 2011-12 Reward Schools, the top 5 percent of schools in the state for annual growth and the top 5 percent for academic achievement.

The Reward Schools are spread across 70 districts, located in major cities as well as rural areas, and 102 of the recognized schools serve mostly economically disadvantaged populations. A list of the schools can be found on the department's website, at www.tn.gov/education/accountability.

Many of the state's schools celebrated by tuning in for a special webcast featuring U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Haslam, First Lady Crissy Haslam and Huffman.

"Tennessee is leading the way in education reform, and these schools demonstrate two key focuses of education in our state: high levels of achievement and continuous growth," Haslam said at an event held at Kenrose Elementary School in Brentwood. "Job creation and education are inextricably linked, and continuing our momentum in education reform is important as we work to make Tennessee the No. 1 location in the Southeast for high quality jobs. We are proud of the teachers and staff at each of these schools and excited to recognize their efforts on behalf of Tennessee students."

Tennessee has set out to become the fastest-improving educational system in the country by raising student performance each year. For the first time, the state has recognized Tennessee schools that have shown the most progress year-over-year alongside the schools with the highest achievement scores on statewide tests.

Nearly a quarter of the 169 schools on the Reward School list actually earned both designations, rising to the top 5 percent for annual value-added growth while also ranking in the state's top 5 percent for overall achievement, according to a new accountability system adopted through Tennessee's No Child Left Behind waiver.



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The 2011-12 Reward Schools made these impressive accomplishments during a year when Tennessee saw unprecedented gains on the statewide Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program, or TCAP. As schools across the state made improvements and reached higher levels of proficiency, the 169 Reward Schools led the way.

Because Tennessee's new accountability system rewards growth and recognizes schools' varying baselines, every school in the state can strive for the Reward Schools designation.

"We believe that all students deserve strong schools where they can grow to high levels of achievement," Huffman said. "At the beginning of each year, every school in this state should know that they have a shot at becoming a Reward School."

For more information, contact Kelli Gauthier at (615) 532-7817 or Kelli.Gauthier@tn.gov.

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