

West Allis - West Milwaukee School District SES Students Outperform the State Average at All Grade Levels in All Content Areas

(June 7, 2007 - West Allis) West Allis - West Milwaukee School District students from economically disadvantaged homes exceeded the state average at all grade levels in all content areas assessed by 2006 - 2007 school year Wisconsin Knowledge and Concept Exams (WKCE).

District-wide, West Allis - West Milwaukee math scores exceeded the state average at all grade levels by two to eight percentage points. While state math scores are in the mid-seventies, those of West Allis - West Milwaukee range from the upper seventies to mid-eighties. Reading scores equaled or exceeded the state's performance at grades three, four, five, six, seven, eight and ten. They were within one percent in grade five.

Math and reading results are especially significant because they are a major factor used by the United States Department of Education in determining school and district Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). AYP results have not yet been released. The district does anticipate, however, that AYP will be met, just as it has been every year since the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act.

In the content areas of Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies, the district met or exceeded the state average at most grade levels.

Superintendent Kurt Wachholz said that he was pleased to learn that the district again defied expectations in terms of test score performance among students from socio-economically disadvantaged households, although he wasn't surprised. He said, "West Allis - West Milwaukee educators 'teach to the student.' They will find a way to reach all of their students with the instruction they need to find success. We don't dwell on socio-economic status, race, or other labels. The only variable that matters is the individual student and identifying the instructional method that best fits his or her needs."

This philosophy is paying off. *Newsweek* magazine has again named Nathan Hale High School as one of the best in the nation based on Advanced Placement test results and participation. Among 57 area school districts, West Allis - West Milwaukee was rated

among *Milwaukee Magazine's* top six "Overperformers." Overperformers are defined by the magazine as districts with average or below average per pupil costs that enjoy higher achievement than expected given student income levels.

West Allis - West Milwaukee also received more "Wisconsin Schools of Promise" recognition awards than any other district in the state for academic achievement. Jefferson, Lincoln, Longfellow, Pershing, and West Milwaukee received this award. These schools each have significant numbers of students that are eligible for free and reduced hot lunch.

Superintendent Wachholz said that district educators will continue striving to meet the needs of all their students. The results of this year's WKCEs, the district's own Measures of Academic Progress tests, and classroom assessments, among other achievement measures, will be thoroughly analyzed by teachers, principals, and instructional administrators, Supt. Wachholz said, and school improvement goals and action plans will be developed.

"Test score results are put to good use," Supt. Wachholz explained. "We use them to improve instruction, curriculum and staff development activities. That's evident by the kind of recognition our schools have received this year. We will always strive to do better. So, while I'm pleased with our students' performance on many of this year's Wisconsin Knowledge and Concept Exams, I also recognize that there is room for improvement in some areas. We've already started work in that regard and the staff knows that it is my expectation that we show continued improvement next year. We're all in this together and despite continuing revenue shortfalls, we will work hard to provide the students and staff with the tools necessary to achieve higher levels of academic achievement."