

Dear Friends of Wilkes County Schools,

It is with tremendous excitement that I share with you the 2016-2017 School Report Card for Wilkes County Schools, as this gives me the opportunity to address the outstanding efforts and accomplishments of our students and teachers. Just as your child receives a report card to update you on their progress, our school system receives this report card to help us see how we are progressing and also to identify areas in which we can improve. The NC School Report Card contains information about school and student performance, class sizes, attendance, school safety, instructional resources and teacher quality. As you will see from our results, 2016-2017 was a very successful year for our students. Our school leaders have already used this data in their planning of how we can help our students be even more successful in 2017-2018.

The two areas reflected by this report card in which I take the most pride are our increases in Grade Level Proficiency and Graduation Rate. Our overall grade level proficiency increased from 56.8% in 2015-2016 to 60.3% in 2016-2017, which puts Wilkes County Schools above the state average. In a district where 12,633 End of Course and End of Grade Tests were administered, this increase means that 408 more students achieved proficiency in 2016-2017 than in the previous year! Subject areas which showed the greatest increases were in Reading in Grades 4 through 6 and Math in Grades 3 through 6. Our 4 year Graduation Cohort increased from 87.6% in 2015-2016 to 88.9% in 2016-2017. These two measures show that students are leaving our classes prepared for success in their next endeavor, whether it be the next grade level, college, the military or entering the workforce after high school. Again, I am so proud of the effort and hard work of our students and teachers.

In terms of academic growth, 77.2% of schools in Wilkes County “Met Expected Growth” or “Exceeded Expected Growth,” while only 73.7% of schools statewide fell into these categories. The number of schools identified as “Exceeding Expected Growth” increased from 4 to 7 from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017. Moravian Falls Elementary School “Exceeded Expected Growth” for the fourth consecutive year, while West Wilkes High School did for the third year in a row. This will continue to be a focus for our school system, as we believe every student who walks through our doors should show academic growth over the course of the year.

Schools received letter grades for the fourth consecutive year and these are tremendous cause of celebration for Wilkes County Schools. For the first time since school performance grades have been assigned, no school in Wilkes County received a grade lower than a “C”, while 22.6% of schools in NC received either a grade of “D” or “F”. Wilkes Early College High School became the first school in our system to earn a grade of “A” and we are very proud of their accomplishment. Both CC Wright Elementary and North Wilkes Middle School improved from grades of “D” in 2015-2016 to grades of “C” in 2016-2017. While I still don’t totally agree with how these grades are calculated, I am exceptionally pleased with our schools’ results.

While the student accomplishments reflected on this report card are impressive, there are many that are not reflected here. Implementation of “The Leader in Me” at the middle school level has helped our students achieve numerous goals that are measured more by quality than by numbers. Participation in Science Olympiad, STEM Investigations, Battle of the Books and Poetry Out Loud has shown impressive increases. Student organizations have had success on the regional, state and national level. Our performing arts programs are growing, as our student numbers are increasing in band, chorus and theater arts. Athletic teams in the district continue to be successful. At the high school level, Wilkes County had 12 Conference Championship teams, one State Championship team, 14 Individual Conference Champions, one Individual Region Champion and one Individual State Champion. Even more impressive was the fact that five athletic teams had the highest team Grade Point Average of any teams in the state, while three teams were runner-up in their respective sports. These accomplishments are clear evidence of the high expectations maintained for all students in our school system.

In conclusion, these accomplishments are great sources of pride for our entire school system and I would hope that they are for all of you as well. I want nothing but the best for all of our students and will continue to strive to ensure that every student who walks through our doors has the best educational experience possible.

Please take a moment to review the data for yourself and I invite you to learn more about our school system by visiting our website. I hope to see you at a Wilkes County Schools event sometime soon.

Thank you,

D. Mark Byrd

Superintendent

Wilkes County Schools