

NCLB Making a Difference in Kentucky



- Between 2002 and 2005 (latest data available):
 - Fourth-grade reading proficiency increased by seven percentage points
 - Fifth-grade mathematics proficiency increased by 12 percentage points
 - The black-white achievement gap in fourth-grade reading narrowed by three percentage points
 - The poor-not poor achievement gap in fourth-grade reading narrowed by five percentage points
(*Education Trust*)
- “Top scoring Kentucky schools with large numbers of poor children succeed because teachers believe all children can learn and they repeatedly test kids’ progress, a new study shows. ... The [Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence] review focused on eight elementary schools that had 50 percent or more low-income students and moderately high state test scores. The schools all had improved scores over time. Those schools also had little differences – fewer than 15 points – in achievement levels between white and African-American students and between low- and middle-income students. ... The study recommended that other schools replicate the characteristics found in the eight successful schools, including high expectations for students and staff. (*Lexington Herald-Leader*, 2/4/05)
- “Every public school is expected to score at least 100 on the state’s proficiency measure by 2014. Johnson Elementary School is a decade early. The school’s Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) score was 101.6 for the two school years from 2002-2004, comfortably ahead of its state goal of 96.8. Johnson is the first Northern Kentucky school and one of only 23 in the state to reach the proficiency goal, a composite of factors including test scores, attendance and writing portfolios.... Johnson has 315 pupils, 18 classroom teachers, seven specialty teachers and eight assistants. The school’s CATS score ranks 13th out of 743 elementary schools in the state.” (*Cincinnati Enquirer*, 2/7/05)
- “The [Jefferson County school] district says it has a plan to improve those deficiencies and others at six schools that rank in the state’s lowest achievement category. It includes strengthening oversight of classroom teaching and council meetings; giving such schools priority in hiring top educators; and ensuring that the schools use strategies to close achievement gaps. ‘We’ve already poured a lot of resources into these schools,’ said Ken Draut, director of planning. ‘This gives us even more oversight and accountability.’ Four of five board members present at a meeting...approved the changes as part of a larger, 205-page districtwide improvement plan.... A team of 24 educators and parents spent 1,300 hours visiting 20 current and former low-performing schools, reading documents and conducting interviews as they examined academics, learning environment and efficiency. Overall, the district met or exceeded state standards on 50 of 55 measures. It got high marks for the quality of its curriculum, for ongoing teacher training and for efforts to boost student attendance. The plan will ‘give us some specific things we can count on from the district,’ said Jan McDowell, principal of Thomas Jefferson Middle School. ... There will be better monitoring of whether schools are using plans for closing achievement gaps.” (*Louisville Courier-Journal*, 6/14/05)