

# NCLB Making a Difference in Iowa



- “One Ankeny school is offering additional assistance to students who do not require special education classes, but need extra help. Northview Middle School administrators are blurring the lines between their traditional and special education programs, cross-training teachers who provide specialized before- and after-school instruction and offering an additional reading course to children with lower test scores. ‘We need to start taking a different look’ at those students barely meeting proficiency levels, Northview Principal Scott Osborn said, ‘to see if there are some things we could do. If students don’t master these basic skills while [here] at Northview,’ Osborn said, ‘it’s much more difficult for them to do high school.’ District officials said the additional assistance should be offered at all Ankeny schools within three to four years. ‘We just decided we needed to support more kids’ with additional resources, said Pat Sievers, executive director of special programs for Ankeny schools.... Ankeny was placed on the watch list last year for eighth- and 11th-grade special education reading scores from the 2002-03 school year. The district has since improved those groups’ marks and been removed from the list.” (*Des Moines Register*, 3/1/05)
- “While many districts in Iowa have seen success, Davis County wanted to make a big deal out of the scores in order to get students pumped up about academics. ... Current math proficiency is at 81 percent. Reading is at 86.9 percent. Elementary Principal Linda Perry said the reading score is a big jump – six years ago, proficiency was at 58.3 percent. ‘The thing I feel strongly about is that each child is improving. They may not even be proficient, but have gone up two grade levels,’ she said. But most of the kids are proficient, and Perry believes she knows why. ‘We went to a guided reading [and math] program...research-based programs using best practices,’ she said. ‘We have a very active professional development program...’ Little tests before the big test may also be a factor. ‘We do a lot of assessment, and analyze the data,’ she said. ‘The big difference is we use that data to meet the needs of...individual students.’” (*Ottumwa Courier*, 5/28/05)
- “The Mid-Prairie School District has seen fairly steady scores over the past five years. However, scores for eighth-grade students jumped this year from the 59th percentile in 2003-2004 to the 80th percentile for the core subjects of reading and math and 85th for the composite of all subjects. Gary Curtis, the guidance counselor at Mid-Prairie Middle School, attributed the increase to emphasizing the importance of the tests to students and to a stronger class academically.... The Washington School District has made use of a consultant to help with math instruction and regular meetings between assistant superintendent and curriculum director Julie Grotewold and teachers to help with student achievement, Superintendent Dave Schmitt said. That has led to math scores rising to the 79th percentile this year, up from just below the 76th percentile last year for eighth-graders. ‘We’re very encouraged with this year’s progress,’ Schmitt said. ‘We will just keep doing our best. We are constantly evaluating our teachers...constantly meeting.’” (*Iowa City Press-Citizen*, 2/28/05)