

# Urbana School District 116 News Release

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## **Urbana School District Releases 2007 AYP Results**

### ***All District 116 Elementary Schools Meet AYP***

The Urbana School District is pleased to announce that all elementary schools in District 116 have met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), according to Illinois State Board of Education data. School District administrators and staff will continue to implement intensive strategies to bring Urbana Middle School and Urbana High School test scores up to meet AYP. All students in grades 3-8 take the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and 11th graders take the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) each spring as way to measure student academic achievement under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

"In almost all areas, we are seeing progress in increasing student achievement and closing the achievement gaps. At the district and building level, we are taking a close look at the services and programs for special education students, who are required to meet the same high standards and take the same tests as regular education students," says Don Owen, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for District 116.

Each elementary school in District 116 made AYP. Owen says, "All of our elementary staffs and students have been working hard to stay above the ever-increasing target set by NCLB. Prairie school students, staff and parents should be especially commended for showing so much progress over last year in their subgroup scores." Assistant Superintendent Gayle Jeffries was principal last year at Prairie Elementary when the school made AYP. "This can be attributed to the hard work and commitment of the students, parents, and the staff that worked hard to encourage the importance of learning, attending school daily, and that "all students can achieve!" We hope that this effort continues this year and those students and their parents continue to commit themselves to strive to "achieve" at Prairie School," Jeffries says.

Urbana High School Principal Dr. Laura Taylor says high school staff will give students intensive and individual attention to make sure they all perform well on the PSAE. Taylor says,

"While we recognize that our students need to improve their overall performance on the PSAE, we are quite pleased with the academic growth our students have shown. Our PLAN and ACT data are beginning to establish a trend that supports our school improvement efforts. Our students have been increasing their academic growth as they progress from year to year in our building, and we are confident that with our current initiatives, this trend will continue.

Current initiatives at UHS provide all students with the opportunity to learn the information needed for academic success and raise the expectations for learning for all students. Remedial classes are gone, and all students are exposed to a rigorous academic curriculum. We have created courses that address explicit literacy instruction and provide additional support for students taking all required mathematics courses. There is a new English curriculum for most 9th -11th grade students that was developed based on the Illinois' assessment frameworks and standards. Tied to this new curriculum is an additional 15 minutes per day of sustained silent reading for all 9th and 10th grade students that serves to increase the time students have in English class. In order to improve instruction, teachers are being exposed to professional development in the areas of content area literacy through a partnership with the University of Illinois' Center for Education in Small Urban Communities, and to differentiated

instruction training from the Regional Office of Education. In addition, the faculty is in the process of creating a Professional Learning Community based on relevant research and best practice.”

Urbana Middle School Principal Nancy Clinton remarks that she and her staff will also continue intensive programs to raise student achievement saying,

“We will continue to use our support classes in reading and math which have been successful over the past few years. These courses are providing the backup for the core reading and math classes for many of the students. For those students in the subgroup that has not met the benchmarks, we have intensified our effort. They will now have very individualized plans dependent on the data that surrounds each of them. We are in the process of meeting these students at their particular levels of learning and moving forward from that point. Some students may actually have 2 or 3 classes of reading if that is what it takes to meet their needs and help them to advance their learning. Frequent monitoring of their learning, on an individual basis, and using the results to guide their education is key to the continued improvement in ISAT scores.”

Urbana School District #116 Superintendent Preston Williams commented on the AYP results saying, “I applaud the efforts of our staff in working with students and families to reach the goals of making AYP in our schools. The efforts of our elementary staff and students in making AYP throughout the district certainly needs to be acknowledged and celebrated but we also must keep in mind that the target is being raised each and every year. I also recognize the efforts and hard work of our secondary staff members in challenging our students to improve their state assessment scores; we are not there yet but we have made significant progress in a number of areas.”

Members of the media wishing to schedule an interview with Urbana School District #116 personnel regarding AYP, please contact the district office at 384-3600.

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