NEWS RELEASE

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DPS MAKES SIGNIFICANT STRIDES IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND ATTENDANCE

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has released the annual Standards of Learning (SOL) pass rates for the 2024–25 school year, and the results show that Danville Public Schools (DPS) continues its rebound from the pandemic with strong gains across reading, math, and science.

Districtwide Results

Since the launch of the Danville Essential Knowledge and Skills Curriculum (DEKS) in 2021, DPS has been intentional about raising the bar for teaching and learning. By pairing DEKS with a literacy plan grounded in the Science of Reading and ensuring every classroom has access to high-quality instructional materials, DPS has equipped teachers with the tools needed to deliver rigorous, engaging instruction. In science, the adoption of STEMScopes has brought hands-on, project-based learning into daily lessons. Together, these initiatives have created a consistent, districtwide framework that is driving measurable gains in student achievement and laying the foundation for long-term success.

- **Reading:** District pass rates improved to 57% from 48% in 2021-22, the highest since 2016-17.
- **Math:** District pass rates increased to 54% from 36% in 2021-22, the highest since 2015-16, representing nearly 50% growth in four years.
- **Science:** District pass rates improved to 55% from 36% in 2021-22, the highest since 2017-18. Notably, science scores improved 15 percentage points over the previous school year.

These improvements mean that DPS students are not only surpassing pre-pandemic levels but also setting performance records across multiple subjects.

School-Level Highlights

Schools across the division are leading the way with impressive gains.

- **Above State Average:** Activ8 STEM Academy, Forest Hills Elementary, and Galileo Magnet High surpassed the state average in reading. Activ8, Forest Hills, Galileo, and George Washington High surpassed the state average in math. Galileo, Forest Hills, and Activ8 scored above the state average in science results.
- **Elementary Success:** Park Avenue Elementary and Woodberry Hills Elementary achieved over 65% growth in math and nearly 40% growth in reading since 2021.

- **Secondary Success:** Geometry results increased to 68% from 18% in 2022-23. Algebra I results increased to 76% from 48% in 2022-23. Algebra II results increased to 84% from 50% in 2022-23. Biology results increased to 65% from 35% last year.
- **All-Subject Growth:** G.L.H. Johnson Elementary (now Arnett Hills), Park Avenue, Woodberry Hills, Bonner Middle, and Westwood Middle improved in every tested subject compared to 2021–22.

The largest increases over the last four years (2021-22 to 2024-25) include:

- Forest Hills Elementary: Science pass rates improved to 80% from 38%.
- Schoolfield Elementary: Science pass rates improved to 68% from 42%.
- Bonner Middle: Math pass rates improved to 65% from 27%.
- Westwood Middle: Science pass rates doubled to 56% from 28%.
- George Washington High: Math pass rates improved to 73% from 42%.

"These results prove what we already know: when students are given the right tools, high-quality instruction, engaging learning opportunities, and attend school daily, they rise to the challenge," said Superintendent Dr. Angela Hairston. "We are proud of our educators, our students, and our families for working together to make these achievements possible."

Attendance Gains

Attendance matters! Attendance is a critical driver of achievement, and DPS has made meaningful progress in reducing chronic absenteeism in the past four years. During the 2024-25 school year, 88% of students attended school regularly, compared to 71% in 2021-22. DPS has used proactive strategies inspired by the Attendance Works framework, including social worker–led small groups and the innovative Second Chance transportation program.

Several schools, including Bonner, Forest Hills, Galileo, Park Avenue, and Activ8, have achieved a major milestone with less than 10% of students chronically absent. Other schools made notable strides, such as E.A. Gibson Elementary, which reduced chronic absenteeism by 60% in one year.

School Readiness & Early Literacy

DPS is also laying the foundation for long-term success by ensuring students are prepared before entering kindergarten. In 2021-22, only 34% of kindergarteners had public preschool experience; today, that number has grown to 54%.

Literacy benchmarks are also trending upward. Using the new Virginia Language & Literacy Screening System (VALLSS), DPS students showed gains from fall to spring in reading at the primary grades, ensuring more students are on track by the end of second grade.

Next Steps

Looking forward, DPS will launch the On Grade Level Reading Project and develop a new strategic direction that establishes high expectations for student performance in every subject.

"As a board, we are encouraged to see continued improvement in our student achievement," said School Board Chair Ty'Quan Graves. "These achievements are a testament to the work of our dedicated staff, as well as our students and families. Great outcomes happen when we all work collaboratively to support our students."

“Our students are performing at historic levels,” said Superintendent Dr. Angela Hairston. “Beginning this school year with all classrooms fully staffed during a national teacher shortage speaks volumes about the strength of our district. These results demonstrate that our students will meet expectations when provided the right support at school and at home. We are so very proud of everyone.”

The Virginia Department of Education will release the 2024-25 School Performance and Support Framework Results, including framework scores, graduation rates, and additional accountability measures, by the end of September.