

Germantown School District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2015-16 school and district report cards released

Germantown School District earned five stars (☆☆☆☆☆) on state report cards from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, issued for the 2015-16 school year. Based on the star rating, Germantown School District significantly exceeds expectations for educating students.

State mandated school district report cards are issued based on four priority areas: student achievement in English language arts and mathematics, student growth, closing gaps between student populations, and measures of readiness for graduation and postsecondary success. While school and district report cards provide information to the community, they do not represent a full picture of the work happening at a school, particularly Germantown School District.

According to Board President Bob Soderberg, "This is wonderful news and reaffirms that we have the right tools in place that create opportunities for a high level of learning to occur, without our focus being on Common Core Standards and the assessments derived from those."

District Administrator Jeff Holmes added, "Germantown School District's improved scores are most likely the result of the natural variations associated with standardized testing and the arbitrary and capricious measures that come with that. We contend that the manner in which our curriculum is conveyed and learned is more important than nationalized standards and State assessment scores and that our State scores will fluctuate over time just like other districts. DPI data and local research suggests that, while incremental statistical improvement and regression can be noted both locally and statewide, meaningful and/or clinical improvement in student learning is the ultimate aim and is not occurring on a statewide basis;

e.g., achievement gaps. Our approach is to create opportunity for deeper, broader, and longer-lasting learning of our curriculum for all of our students without becoming a test-prep factory in the process. Our goal is to better prepare students for life-success beyond their years in our system; we do not believe in the one-size-fits-all methodology in order to promote this. Coincidentally, this year's school report card results, as gauged by the State, allow us to recognize and celebrate our District's efforts among and with the students, parents, staff, community, and Board of Education as we look to continually improve upon the educational services we provide."

According to DPI, "The 2015-16 report cards underwent major changes that were part of Wisconsin Act 55, the 2015-17 state budget. Those changes include variable weighting to address the impacts of poverty on student achievement, a new model for measuring student growth based on value-added methodology developed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the legislative requirement to change from the Badger Exam offered through the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to the Forward Exam. Because report cards rely on multiple years of data, the 2015-16 report cards are based on one year each of Badger and Forward exams for grades three through eight and the ACT Plus Writing as well as Dynamic Learning Maps assessments in grades three through eight and grade 11. The third year of data came from the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam and Wisconsin Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities. Using data from three different assessments in calculations, along with other legislated changes, makes comparisons of school and district performance to prior report card ratings inaccurate and inadvisable."

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