

Superintendent's Notes

By **Matt Baker**

Walton-Verona Schools Superintendent



I recently administered a survey of all parents in our district in an attempt to determine the level of parent satisfaction in our schools. Another goal of this activity was to identify opportunities to make our district even better for our children, parents, and community.

I am pleased to share the following percentages of parents who indicate that they are highly satisfied with our schools:

- * Walton-Verona Elementary School: 91.7% of 60 total responses
- * Walton Verona Middle School: 77.8% of 53 total responses
- * Walton-Verona High School: 89.3% of 74 total responses

In addition to the impressive data above, I would like to share some individual parent comments about our schools:

Walton-Verona Elementary School:

- * My child has been supported academically and emotionally her entire WV career. She feels safe. She feels loved. She is challenged academically and provided opportunities to grow personally.
- * The teachers have been great at communicating expectations, and sending appropriate work home. The work my son brings home daily that he is doing in class is very appropriate for his age.
- * Caring and communicative teacher, interactive lessons, hands on activities that are engaging.

Walton Verona Middle School:

- * The teachers support and push the kids to grow as independent thinkers.
- * We moved in from another district recently and we're happier with WV than we've been in years.
- * I believe that Walton-Verona schools do their best to help our children with their education along with parental involvement.
- * The entire staff is dedicated to the success of my daughter.

Walton-Verona High School:

- * We moved to Walton for the school district 2 years ago and have not been disappointed.
- * Walton-Verona has so many opportunities for our children to excel in many areas.
- * I believe my child is not only educated by our faculty and staff, but he's also nurtured and encouraged by them! We truly have some top notch educators!
- * My child is challenged in a positive way by the courses available; great opportunities with extra-curricular activities.
- * Teachers are always willing to go the extra mile to make sure my kids have an adequate chance to learn the material even if it means after school help, retaking tests at times, etc.

After reading these and many other comments from our parents, it is easy to understand why our district is a "district of choice" in Northern Kentucky. While I was thrilled to read the many positive statements from our parents, I was also very eager to hear their suggestions for how we can better serve our children, parents, and community.

These and other suggestions will be invaluable when we develop, adopt, and implement a new Strategic Plan for our district. This work will intensify next spring when teachers, parents, community members, administrators, and Board members meet over multiple days to examine this survey data along with several other sources of data to determine our greatest strengths, as well as our greatest opportunities for improvement. The product of this work, our new Strategic Plan, will guide our improvement efforts over the next several years. Once this important work is complete, the new Strategic Plan will be widely shared with all parents, community members, and stakeholders.

If you did not receive the parent satisfaction survey discussed in this update, then please contact your child's school and update your email address. I will be administering another parent survey in the spring and will need your input as we work together to ensure the future success of all children in our school district.

2018-2019 School Calendar

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| November 21 | No School - Non-Instructional Day |
| November 22-23 | Thanksgiving Break |
| December 21- Jan 2 | No School - Winter Break |
| January 3 | First Day after Winter Break |
| January 21 | No School-Martin Luther King Day |
| February 18 | No School-Non-Instructional Day |
| March 15 | No School - Non-Instructional Day |
| March 18 | No School - Non-Instructional Day |
| April 15-19 | No School Spring Break |
| May 17th, Friday | Last Day of School (subject to change) |

Early Release Days
Thursday, December 20st
Thursday, February 7th
Friday, April 26th

Possible Make-Up Days Make-up days will be decided by the School Board and will be based on the number of days missed. Any days not made up during the school year will be added to the end of the school calendar.



Principal's Pause



By Rob Hartman

Walton-Verona Elementary Principal

When Being Considered an “Other” is a Good Thing!

This fall, the WVES Bearcats eagerly awaited the 2018 KPREP results from the spring. They came in early October of this year, and to our delight (but not surprise), our 3rd and 4th graders performed very well. I was extremely excited to share the good news as soon as possible.

When the scores come in, however there is a bit of an “embargo period” where schools are told they need to keep all state assessment information confidential until released from the embargo. It was during this time period our administrative team had a chance to dive into our data for an early peak at how our kids did.

While doing this early investigation, we were also undergoing a little self-teaching of how to interpret the new Kentucky Assessment System which had just been revamped to include several new parts designed to make the data more clear and easier to communicate to parents and community. Essentially, the opposite effect was true.

While the kids still achieve the ratings of “Novice, Apprentice, Proficient or Distinguished” in elementary reading and math, many of the other working parts of the assessment system changed.

Within the system, students are also rated on the growth made from one year to the next. This system, which took nearly 4 years to create, produced a growth rating which is definitely not easy to explain and is frankly, a little funny to say. Based on a student’s score over a 2 year period, he/she is labeled as “catching up, keeping up or moving up.” If the student is doing poorly and not on track to make it to proficiency, then he/she is considered “less than catch up.” One popular humorist in Kentucky holds up a little packet of ketchup as he explains this in a video.

On top of this ridiculous component, Kentucky schools are placed into rating categories since the assessment creators and the Kentucky Department of Education abandoned the idea of ranking schools. The 3 categories are “CSI” (comprehensive support for improvement), “TSI” (targeted support for improvement) and “Other.” The first two categories indicate the school is performing poorly enough in an area or two or with a particular sub group (minorities, genders, free/reduced lunch status, English learners etc.) to get the attention of the Department of Education. If a school gets one of these two labels, the school is treated to creating extra improvement plans for and will ultimately be receiving extra monitoring or “support” from the Department of Education. Needless to say, we do not want to be “TSI” or “CSI.” Incidentally many, many schools in Kentucky were put into one of these categories.

This leads back to the title of this article. In a lot of cases, being labeled an “Other” in systems where a school is awarded titles or trying to describe how well an entity had performed on some task, the term “Other” may not necessarily sound like a good thing. However, in the new Kentucky Assessment System, it is just that.

And this is exactly what Walton-Verona Elementary (and our other two campus schools) were able to achieve this testing cycle. We had an excellent rate of proficiency in 3rd and 4th grade reading and math. We scored at a 65.2% proficient/distinguished rate for 3rd grade reading and 61.3% for 4th grade. 3rd grade scored at a 48.6% proficient rate in math and 4th grade was at 57.2%. All of our subject level scores outperformed the state average. What’s more, all of demographic groups such as minorities, genders, free/reduced lunch status and students with disabilities all out-performed last year’s marks for proficiency and helped us elude the cut off scores which might have placed us in a “TSI” or “CSI” category.

Philosophically, I do not disagree with the notion of students taking a state test. I think assessments whether given during the year or near the end can and do give us valuable information about students with which we can make generalizations about our practices as a school. What I don’t like is that the KPREP test is a snapshot from a few days in May around which so much importance is placed. This one test, can make or break a school from a managerial standpoint. This is the one test the community and press know the most about. However, it is probably the one that gives us the least information and is definitely the least timely (in terms of when we get the data and how quickly we can use it). By the time we get the 2018 Spring scores, one of our two grade levels that took that test has since departed for our middle school. The KPREP is also one that comes with enormous built-in pressure frankly, we as a school, community and state, place upon our students. This can weigh heavily on a child who is 8, 9, or 10 and may not yield results from particular students one might expect.

Overall, I was proud (to put it mildly) in our first year under the new system, we were able to attain the coveted title of “OTHER.” Our teachers work tirelessly with kids to get them prepared for the next grade level coming up and the natural by-product of that work is the preparation for the state assessment. The kids did a fantastic job of taking this task seriously over the course of almost an entire week in the month of May (when many of them are thinking more about summer break than taking a test). They really rose to the occasion, so to speak. I think everyone realizes students should do their best on the test since testing is part of simply being a good school citizen. But at the end of the day, it is more about the day to day progress one makes (which can be assessed by a skilled teacher) than an end-of-the-year state autopsy report that comes in late.

Matters from the Middle

By Eric Morwessel

Walton-Verona Middle School Principal

WVMS ESS Program

The ESS program is under way and meets on Mondays and Thursdays from 2:40-3:40. Students can receive homework help as well as, additional support in math and reading. Bus transportation is available and an ESS form needs to be filled out and returned to the middle school office. Lindsey Stephens is the ESS Coordinator for WVMS (lindsey.stephens@wv.kyschools.us)

Veterans Day Program

WVMS will host a Veterans Day program on November 9, 2018. We need your help in finding local veterans we can invite to the program. If someone in your family, a friend of yours, or just someone you know is a veteran or currently serving in any branch of our military, please get us their contact information so we can invite them to our program. We would also love to have pictures of our veterans and current enlisted persons so we can show them during the program. For more information please contact Amber Hedges here at school. Her email address is amber.hedges@wv.kyschools.us.

Parent/Guardian Information

- * Student drop off before school and pick up after school are not permitted in the middle school lot. All morning drop offs and afternoon pick-ups must occur in the back lot behind the high school.
- * Please keep information we have on file in Infinite Campus up-to-date. If you have a change of phone number, email address, or any other demographic information please contact Tina Wagner in our main office to make us aware of the change.

WVMS Noteworthy Dates:

- * November 9th – Veterans Day Program
- * November 9th – Sports Of All Sorts Fun Night sponsored by PTSA 9:30 pm – 12:00 am
- * November 21st – PD Day (No School)
- * November 22nd – Thanksgiving Holiday (No School)
- * November 23rd – School Closed
- * November 28th – SBDM Meeting 3:00 pm
- * November 29th – MS Picture Re-take Day
- * December 20th – Early Release Day (MS dismisses at 1:00 pm)
- * December 21- January 2 – Winter Break (School's Closed)
- * January 3rd – Students Return from Winter Break (3rd Quarter Grading Period begin)



STUDENT ATTENDANCE REQUEST

Attention Parents: Should your child need to be *absent for 5 days or more* due to illness, surgery, hospital stay, or certain extenuating circumstances, please contact the school where he/she attends. HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION is available for students that have a qualifying ailment verified in advance by a doctor. Homebound Instruction allows your child to keep up with his/her school work and he/she is not counted absent while in this program.

Public Notice

Asbestos Management Plan for Walton-Verona Schools

This notice is being issued to insure that you know that the Walton-Verona Board of Education is in compliance with both national and state regulations and laws that relate to building materials which contain asbestos that have been used in building construction in past years.

An inspection for building materials which contain asbestos has been completed for all buildings owned by Walton-Verona Board of Education. This inspection has been conducted by a certified inspector and the material samples were evaluated by an accredited laboratory. Building materials with as little asbestos as one percent (1%) have been identified and made part of a management plan for the school system.

A complete asbestos management plan for the school system is on file at the Walton-Verona Board of Education office. Also, a copy of the asbestos management plan for each individual school is on file in each building principal's office.

We will continue to notify you at least once each year on the status of the management plan. Should it be necessary, more frequent updates will be issued as a result of an additional inspection, normal surveillance practices, response actions, or remodel work which might disturb building material which contain asbestos. Every precaution will continue to be used to protect the well-being of students and employees of the Walton-Verona Schools.

Directory Information

From time-to-time school-related groups and organizations ask for the addresses of students or graduates. Examples of these groups include the PTSA, Music Parents Association (WVMPA), WAVE Foundation, Alumni Association, class reunion groups, Military recruiters, and so on. If you object to having this information released, please contact the appropriate school or district office.

WVHS Message

By Joanne Estenfelder

Walton-Verona High School Principal

The last week of September, the Kentucky Department of Education released the 2017-18 test scores. As in years past, the information has always been available to stakeholders by viewing the state generated school report card. The school report cards will not be released on the Kentucky Department of Education website until sometime in December. Until the school report card is available for public view, I wanted to share with you a snapshot of our state testing results.

We are currently in year two of transitional testing data. There are many pieces of the state accountability data that are changing, so comparison of data year to year is difficult, but we are proud to showcase the results.

The percentage of our junior class who met proficient or distinguished benchmarks on the ACT exceeded the state average on all subjects of the ACT. Since 2014-15 the percentage of juniors meeting or exceeding English and Reading benchmarks shows positive linear growth. Based on the junior ACT administered in March of 2018, our juniors' composite average was a 22.06. This same class had a composite ACT average of 19.68 on their sophomore Mock ACT given in March the previous year. This speaks volumes of the academic programs our students are receiving and the extra help sessions the students are taking advantage of during seminar time. Walton-Verona High school currently ranks thirteenth in the state of Kentucky for our juniors' performance on the ACT and our district ranking for this same score places us at sixth in the state of Kentucky.

Other areas of strength were the juniors' performance on the On-Demand Writing assessment, with 26% of the junior class earning a distinguished score and 40.9% of the junior class earning a score of proficiency.

The area of accountability for our senior class focuses on two areas: Transition Readiness and Graduation Rate. The Class of 2018 showcased a College Readiness rate of 63.1% and a Career Readiness rating of 63.8%. The graduation rate for the Class of 2018 was 99.2%, one of the highest rates we have seen in the past five years. We are proud of the efforts of our staff and students to help the Class of 2018 with their transition to college or the work place.

This year the state ratings for schools took a shift with the categories of CSI (Comprehensive Support and Improvement – the bottom 5% of performing schools), TSI (Targeted Support and Improvement – for schools where gap groups did not meet proficiency standards) and “Other.” We are very excited that our student performance indicators have classified us as an “Other” school. The teachers at Walton-Verona High School have been working with the data from all areas of accountability to see how we can improve and continue to earn high marks with the state testing accountability.

One area to showcase not reflected in our school report card, is the number of students we have participating in our dual credit program. Juniors and Seniors who meet specific criteria are given the option to take some of their courses at the college level. Some of these courses are offered at our school, while some students are seeking out opportunities at other college campuses. This year we have students taking courses through Northern Kentucky University, Kentucky State University, Murray State University and Gateway Community College. The courses being taken this year are as follows: Speech, Spanish 101, Spanish 102, Spanish 201, Spanish 202, Vet Sciences, College Algebra, Composition, Advanced Composition and numerous CTE dual credit courses including electrical, circuits, automotive, welding and healthcare. Students who qualify for the dual enrollment program are charged only \$168 for the three hour course. That is a huge savings for our students, as taking one college level course typically exceeds \$1200 at the university level. For this current year, we have 116 students taking 255 college classes. Given the enrollment numbers above, that represents

Outside of the classroom our students have many opportunities to participate in sports and club activities. Our sports teams continue to stay competitive at all levels and our clubs are involved in many service projects and competitions as well. I will always encourage high school students to get involved in something outside of the school day in their area of interest. Involvement in extra-curricular activities always enhances a student's high school experience.

I truly enjoy my role as high school principal and value the staff, the students and their families and our close knit community. If you ever have a question or concern, please feel free to contact me at 859-485-4181, Option 3 or via email at joanne.nesmith@wv.kyschools.us.

The Walton-Verona Mirror

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The Walton-Verona Mirror is a reflection of the Walton-Verona School District and is intended to provide information to its students, parents, and employees. Any comments or suggestions can be submitted to Ms. Sampson's Journalism

Walton-Verona Provides Equal Educational and Employment Opportunities

FEATURES

WVHS Band News and Notes

It has been an exciting start to the school year for the WVHS Band! The band traveled to Aurora for the annual Farmers Fair Parade and was the guest of honor at the Florence Freedom's home finale, where we performed the National Anthem on the field. Our first concert of the year took place on October 8th with special guests the Florence Community Band and our 2018 halftime show, Queen, has been a big hit!

Congratulations to Frannie H. & Ethan C. for being selected for the Northern Kentucky Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Also congratulations to the members of the 2018 Asbury University All-Star Band: Ethan C., Dora F., Haydn G., Kaela D., Annemarie H., Frannie H., Bianca J., Zach L., Luke N., Emma R., Charlotte W., Catherine W., & Elizabeth W.

On October 22nd, the high school band and choir kicked off their annual fall fundraiser... delicious Butter Braid Pastries! Be sure to see a band or choir member to order yours. Deliveries on November 19th; just in time for the holidays!

Upcoming Events

Nov 8 – HS Jazz & Percussion Concert, 7:00pm

Dec 7 – Christmas on Main Parade, 6:00pm

Dec 13 – High School Band & Choir Concert, 7:00pm



FBLA Students Compete In National Competition

Walton-Verona High School was once again well-represented at the 2018 Future Business Leaders of America National Leadership Conference. The conference was held in Baltimore, MD and there were over 12,000 students from across the country in attendance. WVHS students who qualified to compete at the national level were: Abrar S. – Computer Problem Solving, Bianca J. – Business Communications, Katelyn W. – Hospitality Management, and the Cassidy L. and Elizabeth S. – Business Ethics. The students did an outstanding job and represented themselves, their families, WVHS, and their community with great class and dignity. While in Baltimore, students had the opportunity to compete against the best and brightest students from across the country, attend leadership workshops and seminars, visit Edgar Allen Poe's gravesite and childhood home, enjoy Baltimore's Inner Harbor, and tour the Baltimore World Trade Center, which is the tallest regular pentagonal building in the world. Congratulations to all students on this amazing accomplishment and for a job well-done!

