



Calendar of Events:

April 24
Art Fair at WCMS

May 19-30
Testing Window

June 10-12
Math CAMP

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[What Do High Achievers Need?](#)

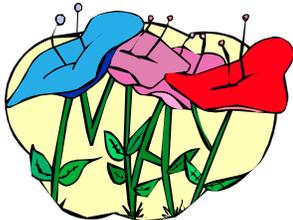
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Friday Focus

CARTER COUNTY SCHOOLS

Volume 2, Issue 25

April 11, 2014

Reaching Our Highest Achievers

In a recent report from the Fordham Institute, two studies were analyzed which examined the status of high-achieving students since the implementation of No Child Left Behind and other forms of high stakes testing that accompanied and/or followed this piece of legislation. It was concluded that the achievement of the nation's most academically talented students has "languished" while that of the lowest achievers has (with much celebration) made dramatic gains. Furthermore, the report also stated that while it offends their sense of fairness, most teachers tend to focus more on the needs of their lowest performing students while often neglecting those of their highest achievers. As teachers, we know in our hearts that each of our children should leave us better than they came. In order to ensure that no child is left behind at either end of the academic spectrum, the state of Kentucky requires school dis-

tricts to not only report achievement scores for our students but also report gap and growth scores. This means that ALL students must demonstrate learning while they are in our classrooms...even those who are already achieving proficiency. The state of Kentucky has chosen to hold schools accountable for that measure of success.

"Seventy percent of the kids who are high ability are underachieving," says Rider University. Often this is because they are bored, frustrated, disciplined for bad behavior, or sometimes overlooked. The percentage is higher in low income areas. What can teachers do to ensure that our highest achievers are being pushed to their highest potential? We can provide open-ended assignments, direct resources to these students that give them access to technology and people that will help them solve problems and do projects, make sure these students are identified early and properly mentored, strengthen the home/school connection, and articulate achievement to these bright and talented children. In our classrooms, we can differ-

entiate their assignments. We can assess them with interest inventories and pretests that allow us to get a picture of who they are and identify their strengths. As they get older, we can provide these students with access to honors classes, vocational education, and AP courses that prepare them for college and/or a career.

It is very important that schools in Kentucky have a renewed emphasis on reaching every student occupying a seat in their classrooms. Not because these children represent some kind of number or score on a report. These students deserve to be challenged early and often throughout their education, otherwise they may get the impression that school is not worth their effort.



Growth For All Students Matters

No Child Left Behind required schools and districts to focus on low performing students, moving them to proficiency. The new Unbridled Learning Accountability Model in Kentucky requires districts to look at the academic growth of all students from the low to high range of performance. Kentucky schools and districts get **growth points** in the new accountability model that take into account individual student growth in math and reading from one year to the next. The KDE growth calculation uses a Student Growth Percentile. It compares an individual student's score to the student's academic peers. Points are awarded for the percentage of students that show typical or high rates of growth. For elementary and middle schools, the calculation is completed for reading and mathematics where annual testing occurs (grades 3-8). Schools receive one point for each percent of students that show typical or high growth. At high school, points are awarded for the percentage of students showing growth when comparing student performance on PLAN (grade 10) to ACT (grade 11). In this model of accountability, individual student growth is expected for *every child every year*.