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State Board of Education Honors High-Achieving Title I Schools *Two Divisions also Cited for Raising Achievement of Disadvantaged Students*

The Virginia Board of Education is honoring 40 Title I schools and two school divisions for raising the academic achievement of economically disadvantaged students. The awards are based on student performance on Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments during the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

The board recognized four schools as Title I Highly Distinguished schools. Title I Highly Distinguished schools must exceed all state and federal accountability benchmarks for two consecutive years and have achieved pass rates on English and mathematics SOL tests at or above the 85th percentile. The four schools achieving this distinction are as follows:

- Amherst County — Temperance Elementary
- Arlington County — Henry Elementary
- Franklin County — Snow Creek Elementary
- Isle of Wight County — Carrsville Elementary

“The principals, teachers and students of these award-winning schools are proving that poverty — whether urban or rural — need not stand in the way of learning and that it is possible to narrow and close achievement gaps,” Secretary of Education Anne Holton said. “We will be looking closely at these schools to identify best practices and strategies that might benefit students in similar schools.”

“Not only are these four schools the highest-performing Title I schools, they also are among the highest-performing elementary schools — Title I and non-Title I — in the commonwealth,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples said. “In these schools, educators and parents work together to dismantle barriers to learning and students are encouraged to work hard and strive for excellence.”

Thirty-six schools were recognized as Title I Distinguished schools for meeting all state and federal accountability requirements for two consecutive years and achieving reading and mathematics SOL pass rates at the 60th percentile or higher. These schools are as follows:

- Alleghany County — Sharon Elementary
- Charlotte County — Eureka Elementary
- Danville — Forest Hills Elementary
- Franklin County — Callaway Elementary
- Hanover County — Mechanicsville Elementary
- Henry County — Rich Acres Elementary
- King George County — Potomac Elementary
- Lee County — St. Charles Elementary
- Manassas — George Carr Round Elementary
- Middlesex County — Middlesex Elementary
- Norfolk — Sewells Point Elementary and Willoughby Elementary
- Page County — Springfield Elementary

(more)

- Pittsylvania County — Mount Airy Elementary
- Portsmouth — Churchland Primary & Intermediate
- Powhatan County — Powhatan Elementary
- Prince George County — L.L. Beazley Elementary, South Elementary and William A. Walton Elementary
- Pulaski County — Pulaski Elementary
- Richmond — George W. Carver Elementary
- Roanoke County — Mount Pleasant Elementary
- Rockingham County — South River Elementary
- Scott County — Yuma Elementary
- Tazewell County — Abb's Valley-Boissevain Elementary and Tazewell Elementary
- Virginia Beach — Rosemont Elementary
- Washington County — Greendale Elementary and High Point Elementary
- West Point — West Point Elementary
- Wise County — Coeburn Primary, Powell Valley Primary, St. Paul Elementary and Wise Primary
- York County — Dare Elementary and Magruder Elementary

“Students in these Title I schools are challenged every day to meet the same expectations we have for students in more affluent communities,” Board of Education President Christian N. Braunlich said. “The principals and teachers believe that high standards and high expectations are for all students and there are lessons to be learned from their success.”

West Point Public Schools — for a third consecutive year — and Poquoson Public Schools — for a second consecutive year — were recognized as Highly Distinguished Title I school divisions. The designation is earned by divisions that exceed all federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) achievement objectives in English and mathematics for two consecutive years, have all schools fully accredited for two consecutive years, and graduate more than 80 percent of students with Standard or Advanced Studies diplomas.

Each school and division will receive a certificate celebrating its status and achievement. Highly Distinguished and Distinguished Title I schools with poverty rates of at least 35 percent may also apply for selection as National Title I Distinguished schools. National Title I Distinguished School awards — two for each state — will be announced in December, and the winning schools honored during the 2015 National Title I Conference, February 5-8, 2015, in Salt Lake City.

Title I of ESEA provides funding to school divisions and schools for programs to raise the achievement of students identified as being at risk of academic failure. The federal education law, whose most recent reauthorization is also known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, requires schools and school divisions to meet annual objectives for increasing student achievement on statewide assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics.

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