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## NEWS

**August 16, 2016** – Staunton City Schools Celebrates Increases in SOL Pass Rates

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### **Staunton City Schools Celebrates Increases in SOL Pass Rates**

**Staunton, VA, August 2016** – During opening faculty meetings and convocation, the staff clapped and cheered as preliminary data from the 2015-2016 testing year was shared. This assessment year marked many celebrations for Staunton City Schools.

Highlights of student performance throughout the division include:

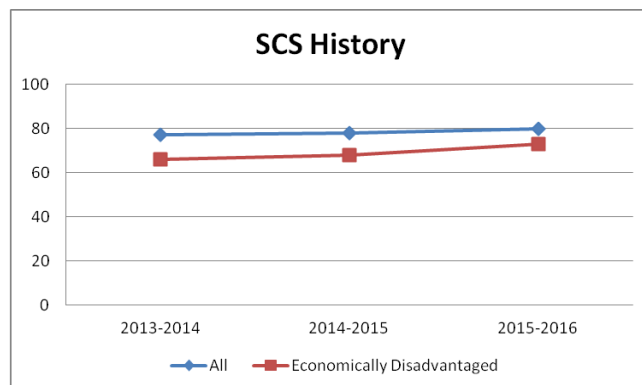
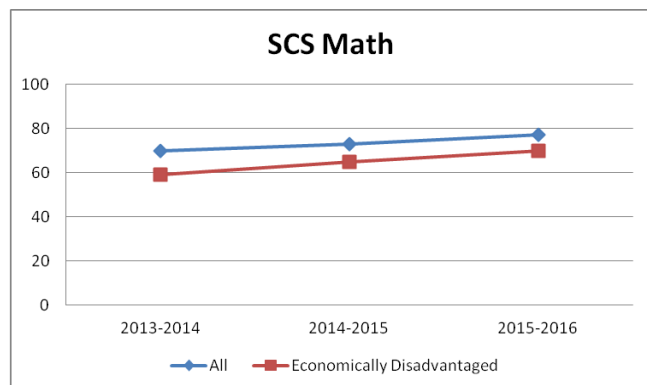
- English - Division Total Reading Pass Rate: 74%; Division Total Writing Pass Rate: 69%  
Most significant reading gains were seen at the elementary level ~
  - Bessie Weller Elementary had the most significant increase in reading percentage (increasing by 7 to 8 percentage points).
  - Ware Elementary exceeded the reading state averages in 2 of 3 tested grades.
  - McSwain Elementary exceeded the reading state averages in all 3 tested grades.
- Mathematics - Division Total Pass Rate: 77%
  - Mathematics pass rates increased by 4% for the school division.
  - ALL reporting groups at the division level had significant growth, with some categories (Hispanic and Economically Disadvantaged) exceeding the state average.
  - ALL schools contributed positively to results:
    - Bessie Weller Elementary had significant growth (increasing by 7 to 9 percentage points).
    - Ware exceeded state averages in all grades, with results of 98% in grade 3.
    - McSwain exceeded state averages in all grades, with 40% passing advanced.
    - Shelburne had 99 - 100% performance in Algebra I and Geometry.
    - Lee had significant growth (increasing by 11 to 12 percentage points), and 98% passing in Algebra II.
- Science - Division Total Pass Rate: 80%
  - Elementary had an increase of 6% in pass proficient and 9% in pass advanced.
  - Bessie Weller Elementary had the most significant gains (increasing by 14 to 17 percentage points).
  - Ware Elementary exceeded the state average in Science with an 88% pass rate.
  - Lee High School exceed the state average in Chemistry at 96% (6 consecutive years of exceeding state average).

- History - Division Total Pass Rate: 80%
  - History pass rates increased by 2% for the school division.
  - ALL reporting groups at the division level had improved results.
  - Bessie Weller Elementary had the most significant gains (increasing by 9 to 11 percentage points).
  - McSwain Elementary and Ware Elementary exceeded the state average at around 90% pass rate; McSwain Elementary had a 53% pass advanced rate.
  - Lee High School increased the history rate by 4%; World History II exceeded the state average with an 88% pass rate.

The staff at Bessie Weller Elementary School were particularly pleased by the SOL test results, raising the achievement level in *every* content area. The numbers vary slightly, depending on whether you use federal or state figures, but either way you tally it, the increases were significant, ranging from a 7 to 17 percentage point gain per content area. Teachers, students, and parents have all been elated with the news. Principal Dori Walk states, "We are proud of the achievement gains made at Bessie Weller this year. They are the result of an intentional team effort on the part of the Bessie staff to fully foster positive classroom learning environments, to create engaging lessons to support student learning, and to seek ways to involve more families at the school."

The staff at the school, with the leadership of Principal Dori Walk, began a more focused journey starting in May 2015 and continued throughout all of last year. The staff stayed focus in three main areas: Positive way we work (with actions related to improving culture and student behavior), challenging academics (with actions focused on quality lesson planning and delivery), and engaging family and community (with actions focused on improving parent and community involvement). The staff worked with the state in developing a corrective action plan that meshed these three key focus areas. Based on the gains that have been made, the school is staying the course for this year and continuing to deepen the work and focus in each of these areas. They believe that, collectively, they will exceed all benchmarks for the upcoming school year, and they are working hard already to meet that goal.

The division, as a whole, has seen positive gains over the past three years, as they have continued the work in such areas as literacy development, professional learning communities, data use, and instructional strategies that result in the highest level of impact for students. In addition to the increases in pass rates for all students, the division is also observing a decrease in achievement gaps, particularly in the area of economically disadvantaged. The charts below showcase two content areas - mathematics and history - that show this positive trend.



"Our data indicates that we are moving in the right direction, through the focused work of our staff, deep learning of our students, and ongoing partnership with our families. These are areas that we are continuing to strengthen, but we have laid a strong foundation for student success and preparation for future careers within and beyond our community," states Dr. Linda Reviea, Superintendent.