







DR. JORIS M. RAY
SUPERINTENDENT
PROGRESS
UPDATE



Academics at Work



- Shelby County Schools is one of only two districts in the nation to show numerical academic growth in 4th and 8th grade Reading and Math across various demographic subgroups according to the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
- Through a new strategic partnership with Comcast, 100 students at Cummings K-8 received a free laptop and one year of Internet Essentials access to support digital literacy for students.
- Maxine Smith STEAM Academy and Campus School have been named 2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education for being “exemplary high performing schools.”
- The District’s 2019 graduation rate increased slightly, from 79.2 percent to 79.3 percent. Seventeen SCS-managed high schools school have a higher graduation rate than the previous year, including five schools with a graduation rate of 90 percent or higher.
- Middle College High School earned a 100 percent graduation rate for the sixth year in a row. Hollis F. Price Middle College High School earned a 100 percent graduation for the third consecutive year and fifth time in six years.
- The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) recognized 22 SCS-managed schools as Reward schools.
- For the second consecutive year, the number of SCS schools on the State’s Priority list has decreased. The total number of Priority schools has gone from 69 in the first year of the Priority list (2012) to 14 SCS-managed schools currently. Additionally, the District’s Priority schools increased the percentage of students who are on track or mastering the State’s standards for all subjects and grade bands in 2018-19.

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- 63 SCS-managed schools earned a TVAAS (growth) Level 3 or higher. This includes 29 Level 5 schools, 10 of which rose from a Level 1 to a 5. 
 - High school TVAAS (growth) scores improved from a Level 1 to a 2. Plus, more students were also on track or mastering the State's standards overall and in every subject for high school students. The percentage of high school students in the lowest achievement level ("below") decreased in all subjects. 
 - Over the summer, Superintendent Dr. Joris M. Ray launched the 3rd Grade Commitment campaign after the School Board voted on a revision to Policy 5013 Promotion and Retention. This policy ensures we hold district, school leaders, teachers, and all stakeholders accountable towards ensuring SCS students have the necessary reading skills to be successful. 
 - To launch the 3rd Grade Commitment campaign, we released a comprehensive website and the Commit to Me video, which has reached more than 42,000 people and has almost 27,000 views and 1,300 comments. In addition, a total of 8 community meetings were held educating parents and community stakeholders about this campaign. All components of the campaign are available in Spanish. 
 - In August 2019, Superintendent Dr. Joris M. Ray launched the Commit 2 Literacy Challenge asking local community members and personalities to participate in the Bedtime Story video series. To date, 13 english and 6 spanish videos have been released. The video challenge has reached 17,939 people with 6,901 views and the story videos have reached 72,377 people with 25,570 views.
 - Through a partnership with the Delta Fair we conducted a book collection drive in exchange for fair admission. The 696 books collected are being distributed to students who performed lowest on the TNReady assessment.
 - Thanks to Novel Bookstore we hosted the Book Fair for Those That Care. Shoppers purchased books for SCS students that aligned with the Bedtime Story video series and approximately 60 books collected are being distributed to students who performed lowest on the TNReady test.
 - The University of Memphis football team partnered with SCS to incentivize students around literacy by offering 3 game tickets to students who had a B+ average or who had been identified as having worked the hardest to improve literacy. SCS set up a literacy tailgate to giveaway books to SCS students who attended the game.
 - Superintendent Dr. Joris M. Ray along with Board Members launched the first 3rd Grade Commitment Literacy Tour - Boo 4 Books - by attending various schools and reading to students. Overall over 600 books were distributed students at schools who performed lower on TN Ready assessment.

African-American Male Empowerment – Our Boys Need Us



- Superintendent Dr. Joris M. Ray launched the African-American Male Empowerment initiative, which utilizes the strategic implementation of a robust variety of newly created resources, innovative approaches and advisory supports that have been designed to interrupt the destructive patterns in education that hinder our African-American males. The unveiling announcement was made during special ceremony at the National Civil Rights Museum (NCRM), which began with a solidarity march into the museum. A number of city and county leaders showed their support of the new initiative.
- One main component of this initiative is the delegation of “Equity Champions” across the District in an effort to change the narrative around implicit bias and how as a District we process and understand equity for students.
- Another strategic component was the launch of the Secure the Chalk Educator Fellowship to address the need to retain, induct, support, and grow our teachers and look to those with similar backgrounds as we challenge implicit bias and attitudes at the school level.
- Through a strategic partnership with PeerPower the ACT Prep University was kicked off at the University of Memphis. This program directly supports our African-American male students to guide them as they prepare for the ACT test.

Social Emotional Learning

- Shelby County Schools received the Tennessee Association of School Social Workers (TASSW) Friend of Children award for the achieved improvements through direct-service and promotion of child focused, public policy.
- The first trauma-informed center in the District, called the P.O.W.E.R. (Persevering Obstacles with Experiences and Resolutions) Zone opened at Geeter K-8 School.
- In honor of National Unity Day, Superintendent Dr. Joris M. Ray hosted a press conference along with schools, staff, local and national law enforcement, and the entire 901 community to show our commitment to safe and disturbance-free learning environments.
- In October 2019, we launched a new Social Emotional Learning (SEL) newsletter for principals, administrators, teachers and employees to share important updates and resources in an effort to keep information consistent.
- The opening of 30 ReSET rooms was approved as a strategy to create supportive, therapeutic settings that allow students to reflect and correct behavior. In addition, 27 of the new ReSET assistants have been on boarded.
- The 6-week Social Emotional Learning professional development was provided to staff members in all schools focusing in de-escalation strategies and support processes.
- 492 employees have attended the 3-hour training and 95 school teams have attended the mandatory train the trainer model sessions.
- 8,274 employees have attended the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) training and 10,095 employees have viewed the video component. Lastly, 191 parents have participated in the face-to-face awareness session.



Culture and Climate



- Brownsville Road Elementary, Dexter Elementary, Germanshire Elementary, and Grahamwood Elementary have been named to the 2019 list of America's Healthiest Schools by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, receiving national recognition for their commitment to students' health and well-being.
- 40 different SCS schools offered Summer Learning Academies. Elementary and middle school students were able to attend a full day of stimulating literacy, math and STEM lessons and activities, as well as music, arts, sports and other recreation for 6 weeks.
- In an effort to provide learning activities for students during this year's scheduled half-days, SCS has developed a new Half-Day Program. The program is available at all SCS-managed schools and will be held on all eight of the scheduled half-days.
- Spotlight 901 is an effort to highlight schools that are beating the odds in so many ways and are creating a culture of equity and success for students and teachers. The goal is to provide transformative learning experiences by modeling and rewarding proven excellence.

Reimagining 901

- Superintendent Dr. Joris M. Ray launched the Reimagining 901 campaign to address some of the critical challenges SCS faces. Some of our schools are struggling to keep pace due to factors beyond their control, such as inequity in programs and services, declining population trends or poor facility conditions. We want to eliminate these barriers to student success by creating a strategic community-driven plan.
- A series of 3 community meetings and 11 small group meetings have begun to obtain input from families, employees and community members who are living and working in our neighborhoods to help us identify the factors that define a high-quality education.
- An advisory committee comprised of Board Members elected officials, municipal superintendents and community leaders will provide guidance on the development of the overall plan.



College, Career and Technical Education – ReadyGrad Programs

- Nearly 60 students attended the first FedEx Logistics Academy, a new partnership program aimed to develop young talent and educate students about opportunities for careers in the logistics industry.
- The CCTE program was named Business Partner of the Year by the City of Memphis' Office of Youth Service MPLOY for their commitment to prepare students to succeed after graduation.
- Major investments into our CTC facilities and programming have been made, including new medical grade machining equipment at Southwest CTC, return of HVAC programs, and new auto-shop at Trezevant CTC.
- A new CCTE website with updated branding was released – scsk12.org/CCTE. To date, 2,500+ people have visited the new website.
- During the 2018-2019, 2,822 student certifications were achieved.
- Since Fall 2018, 84 strategic partnerships have been formed with local/national businesses, trade organizations, and post-secondary institutions.
- The new National Academy Foundation (NAF) program was inaugurated to allow students become a part of a national network with access to many exclusive opportunities, including scholarships and preferential hiring at prestigious multinational companies.
- We opened brand new CCTE facilities at Whitehaven High and Overton High which will house training programs in fields such as HVAC, Small Engine Repair, Aircraft Maintenance, and Plumbing.
- Trezevant Career and Technology Center celebrated the grand opening of Trezevant Savings Bank, a functioning student-run bank supported by our partner, Regions Bank.



Servant Leadership



- Superintendent Dr. Joris M. Ray announced several key cabinet additions including Yolanda Martin as Chief of Human Resources, Genard Phillips as Chief of Business Operations, Lakshmi Visvanathan as Chief Information Officer, Tutonial Williams as Chief Finance Officer, Shawn Page as Chief of Academic Operations and School Support and Patrice Williamson-Thomas as Chief of Staff.
- Superintendent Dr. Joris M. Ray hosted a first of its kind roundtable meeting with Superintendents from Bartlett, Lakeland, Millington, Germantown, and the Achievement School District.
- Four Shelby County Schools educators were recognized as finalists for the inaugural Shelby County Hispanic Teacher of the Year Award during by the Mid-South Latino Chamber of Commerce.
- Over the last few month's Superintendent Dr. Joris M. Ray has received the following recognitions and awards:

- 2019 University of Memphis Black Alumni Association Outstanding Alumnus by the University of Memphis Black Alumni Association.
- Living Legend Award by the State of Tennessee House of Representatives
- Roosevelt Todd Award for Education by the Teamsters National Black Caucus of Memphis
- The Educator Award by Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc – Memphis
- Living Legend Award by the National Alliance of Black School Educators
- West TN Supervisor of the Year by the Tennessee Principal’s Association
- Stolen Education Excellence in Education Award by Many Thousand Gone Abundant Grace Fellowship
- Friend of Children Award by TN Association of School Social Workers
- Pioneer of the Year 2018-2019 by Building Blocks Mentoring Program
- African American History Legacy In Education Award by Businesses United to Recognize Educators
- Pioneer of Justice Award by Memphis Restorative Justice Coalition
- Top 100 Influential People by Memphis Business Journal
- The Educator Award by the University of Memphis NAACP





Notes

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Board of Education

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Dr. Joris M. Ray, Superintendent



Shelby County Schools offers educational and employment opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, sex, creed, age, disability, national origin, or genetic information.