



Hickory Public Schools
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PRESS RELEASE

TO: All Area Media
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SUBJECT: Dramatically Improved Dropout Rate - HPS
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HPS Dropout Trend Represents Dramatic Improvement

HICKORY...The number of students who dropped out of school in 2010-11 was at a record low for Hickory Public Schools, according to this week's released reports from the State Board of Education.

According to Superintendent of Hickory Public Schools, Dr. Walter Hart, the district's dropout rate reveals a positive trend over recent years. "We are pleased to announce a continual decrease in our dropout rate as our 2010-2011 school year represents another drop in numbers. The HPS dropout rate decreased from 8.65 percent in 2007-2008 to 4.10 percent for 2010-2011," said Dr. Hart. "While there is still work to be done, the scores clearly represent that Hickory Public Schools is making significant progress in addressing the issue of dropouts. This year's report is a tribute to the hard work put forth by our teachers and staff in meeting the needs of all students."

The release of the latest dropout rates represents a considerable advancement for the district. Since 2007-08, when HPS reached the highest dropout rate in the state at 8.65 percent with a dropout of 125 students, HPS teachers and district leaders immediately began to implement new methods to engage students and help with reduction in dropout numbers. The district worked closely with social workers from the Department of Social Services to help locate students who were showing signs of potentially dropping-out of school and to immediately find new ways to help them experience success.

The following year, 2008-09, the dropout rate improved with a reported score of 6.42 percent. For 2009-2010, another decrease in dropouts was reported with a score of 5.23 percent. And now for 2010-2011, the trend significantly continues, reporting 4.10 percent with a dropout of 49 students.

In the last three years, Hickory Public Schools has initiated staff development programs including "Capturing Kids' Hearts" and "Literacy First." These programs focus on individual student needs at every developmental stage—providing academic and personalized tools to help students reach their greatest potential. In addition, HPS received grant funding to transform Catawba Valley High School, the former alternative school, into the new Hickory Career and Arts Magnet High School (HCAM), which today, provides smaller classes and eight career-accelerated academies in a non-traditional, technology and arts-centered environment. The new program development combined with the collective efforts of HPS employees and the community—helps to contribute to the district's ongoing success.

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