

COMMUNITY REPORT



Fall 2006

www.springfieldpublicschoolsmo.org

Citizen survey

Springfield citizens believe teacher salaries must remain competitive, class sizes should be smaller and all our schools should be air conditioned, according to a recent independent survey of district voters.

The survey was mailed last summer to 3,400 randomly selected frequent voters in district school elections. Results can be found under "Quick Links" at www.springfieldpublicschoolsmo.org.

Among the results:

- Citizens strongly agree district employees are courteous, knowledgeable, professional and helpful.
- Citizens strongly support developing schools with curriculum that focus on science, math and technology as well as on vocational skills and work ethic.
- Citizens strongly support the idea of renovating and improving existing older school sites, even if they have limitations such as age, design or available surrounding property for expansion.

Strategic planning – rolling out the future

Where will you be in five years? In 10 years? In 15 years? At Springfield Public Schools, we're planning aggressively for the future with our 15-year strategic plan. We call it "SP5" because it's designed to focus on accomplishing key education goals and priorities in 5-year increments.



The district has identified three goals to guide the planning process:

- To increase academic achievement.
- To improve graduation rates.
- To effectively and efficiently use district resources.

Beginning this fall, district leaders began reaching into all segments of the community to get a feel for what constituents want in their public schools. We've formed a school choice research team. We're holding focus groups with students, parents, teachers, and others in the community to help establish our priorities. In March, we'll hold a community-wide event to seek consensus and begin setting priorities on facilities, school choice options, activities and other issues.

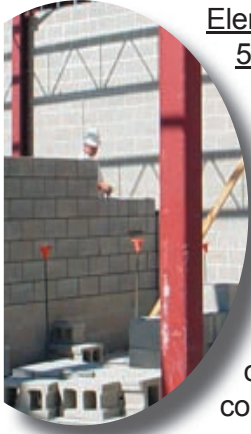
"We want to build community schools that reflect the values and needs of Springfield," said district Superintendent Dr. Norm Ridder. "The best way to do that is to ask the community for input, listen to their needs and develop a plan to achieve the priorities they set."

So get involved. Take the SP5 survey at www.springfieldpublicschoolsmo.org. There are a number of opportunities for public input between now and March. For information contact Marc Maness at 523-0021.



Bond projects – let the building begin

Construction is underway at Weller Elementary School and Wilson's Creek 5-6 School. The projects are funded by voter approval in April of a \$96.5 million bond initiative.



The Wilson's Creek base construction bid of \$774,000, came in more than \$280,000 under the original estimated construction bid of about \$1 million. The addition of eight new classrooms should be completed by early next summer.

The Weller base construction bid of \$3,267,000 was on budget. The Weller project includes an expansion and upgrade of the school with more

classrooms, a new multi-purpose room and restrooms, minor remodeling of the kitchen, and adjustments to playground space and parking. The project should be completed by the start of the 2007-08 school year.

The Weaver Elementary School renovation project will be re-bid in January or February after initial bids came in 20 percent higher than the original base construction bid of \$4.4 million.

The bond initiative will, over the next three to four years, fund the installation of air conditioning in 18 elementary and middle schools and renovations and additional classroom space at eight schools. Twenty-four district schools will undergo construction work. A new elementary school will also be built in the southwest part of the district.

For more information on all projects funded by the April bond, click "Bond Projects" under "Quick Links" at www.springfieldpublicschools.org.

Celebrating academic success!

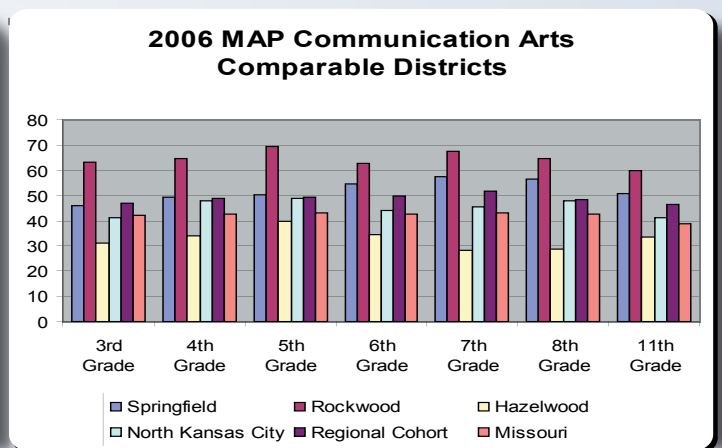
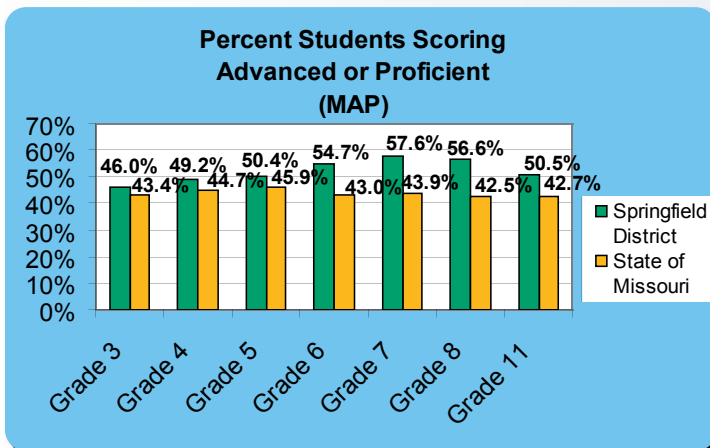
Students in Central High School's Middle Years Scholars Program were among few in the state to score 100 percent Proficient and Advanced as a group on this year's Missouri Assessment Program (MAP).

The sixth grade class scored 100 percent in both communication arts and mathematics. Seventh-graders scored 100 percent in communication arts and eighth-graders scored 100 percent in math.

The Middle Years Scholars Program is a full-time education intervention for academically gifted students in the Springfield Public School District.

On the whole, our MAP results compare favorably with statewide and comparable district scores:

Communication Arts



*Regional cohort = su



Keeping students safe

School security has once again become a topic of national discussion this fall. The district has a comprehensive safety plan in place to help keep students safe.

While each school employs safety and security measures unique to that particular site, some strategies are universal. For more information, click the "[Safe Schools](#)" "Quick Link" at www.springfieldpublicschools.org or for information on a particular school, call its principal.

It's also important that kids get to school safely each day. The district has worked for years with the [City of Springfield](#) and [Greene County](#) officials to share information that helps students travel safely to and from school. That partnership continues.

Earlier this school year the district established two committees to study our transportation system. The first

committee is collecting data to determine how the existing bus system could be improved. The second committee is analyzing attendance areas and major traffic barriers on routes used by students.

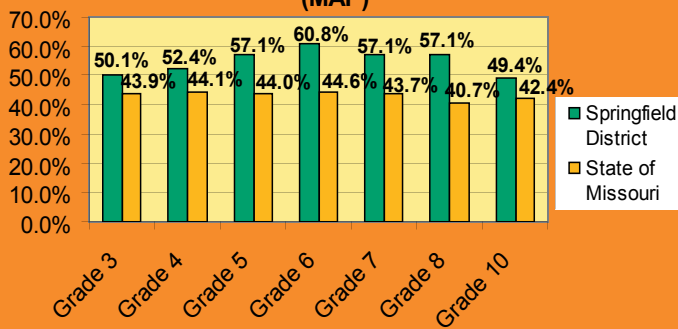
A public meeting will likely be held around Feb. 1 to review the committees' findings and discuss ways to improve getting children to school safely.

Meanwhile, a [Traffic Control Manual for School Crossing Protection](#) has helpful information - including walking maps for students - that parents, pedestrians and drivers can use to help everyone share the road.

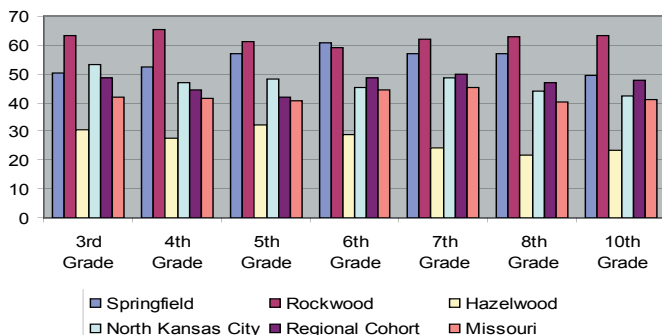
View the manual at our Web site. Click "[Safe Schools](#)" under "Quick Links," then click the "[City of Springfield Bicycle/Pedestrian Information](#)" link and "[School Info](#)."

Mathematics

Percent Students Scoring Advanced or Proficient (MAP)



2006 MAP Mathematics Comparable Districts



Surrounding districts

All about wellness

Last summer the district adopted a new [wellness policy](#) formulated by a broad-based community group including individuals representing the school district, health care, parents and nutrition educators. Our mandate was to assess current district nutrition and physical education standards and identify needed improvements.

Today, the wellness committee continues to seek ways of increasing community awareness and participation in the program.

In September, 489 district employees walked about 2,388 extra steps per day as part of a community-wide "America on the Move, Appetite for Life" program. The district challenged employees to add more physical activity to their daily schedules to demonstrate to students that exercise is an important part of being healthy.

For more wellness updates click on "[Wellness](#)" under the "Quick Links" at www.springfieldpublicschools.org.





A message from Dr. Ridder

We have great kids in Springfield Public Schools. At every grade tested last year, students outperformed Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) state test averages in math and communication arts.

But as a school district and a community, we need to do more to keep our young people engaged in learning and coming to school everyday.

Last year, 501 of our students dropped out. That's unacceptable. Clearly, this city cares about kids. But how strong are our relationships with young people? In our classrooms and throughout the community, we must work together to practice "four R's" that will help assure we stay close to young people in their education and in their everyday lives.

We need to make sure there is adequate **rigor** in their learning experience. Students must understand what they need to learn and why they need to learn it. That's **relativity**. **Relationships** must be strong in school, among peers and at home. Finally, we must help our young people understand that their education and success in life is their **responsibility**.

The job of building strong, healthy relationships with our kids lies with every one of us. When we embrace that responsibility, we will see the positive results both in and outside of school.

Norm Ridder, Ed.D
Superintendent