



Office of the Mayor  
**Richard M. Daley**  
Mayor

## News Release

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### **MAYOR DALEY CHALLENGES EDUCATION LEADERS TO TAKE SCHOOLS TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

*Says that Even with Ongoing Improvements in State Test Scores,  
'More Must Be Accomplished'*

Mayor Richard M. Daley today joined Chicago Public Schools CEO Ron Huberman and Chicago Public Schools Chief Education Officer Barbara Eason-Watkins to announce another year of progress on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). Even with additional student improvements Daley challenged school leaders to "take our schools to the next level."

"My commitment will always be to give a good education to every child in every school," Mayor Daley said during a news conference at John P. Altgeld School, 1340 W. 71<sup>st</sup> St., where the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards increased 10.2 percent.

"The bottom line is that we have to both give our students credit for the progress they've made, but also accept the reality that more must be done before we have the best school system in the nation," he said.

"Today, we are pleased to report that our students continued their steady upward progress this year as shown by the results of the 2009 ISAT exam which measures grades three through eight," Daley said.

The Mayor and Huberman reported that:

- The composite score of students meeting or exceeding state standards is up two points from last year to 69.8 percent;
- Reading scores are up 1.1 points to 67.8 percent;
- Math is up 3 points to 73.5 percent, and
- Science is up 1.7 points to 64.3 percent.

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Daley went on to say that the achievement gap among racial groups is decreasing, with the composite scores for African-American students increasing by 2.2 points and for Hispanic students by 1.2 points. More than 60 percent of schools improved their composite score over last year.

At the elementary school level, ISAT scores have increased twice as much as the state's overall scores and attendance has improved. Eighth graders showed the largest gain of any grade level, up a full 3 percentage points to 76.2 percent.

Gains in specific grades were reported as follows:

- Grade 3 – up 2.2 points to 66.9 percent
- Grade 4 – up 2.3 points to 68.0 percent
- Grade 5 – up 2.3 points to 66.8 percent
- Grade 6 – up 1.3 points to 70.8 percent
- Grade 7 – up 1.6 points to 69.9 percent
- Grade 8 – up 3.0 points to 76.2 percent

Daley said that there is a broader context for progress that Chicago's students can be proud of. At the high school level, ACT scores are up, while attendance and graduation are as well. The dropout rate is down.

The numbers of students taking advanced placement tests as well as passing them are both up. In addition, more and more students are going on to college.

Still, “even with another year of progress, I’m the first to acknowledge that we have a long way to go,” Daley said. “In order to have the best education system in the nation, we must raise the bar, set higher expectations and demand more from every student.”

Daley said that:

- Not enough elementary students graduate into high school ready for more demanding course work.
- Too many students still don’t graduate high school and go on to college. The number of high school juniors who are on the right track for higher education needs to increase.
- Even though a majority of African-Americans graduate high school, far too many drop out.
- Not enough high school graduates who go on to college actually get their diploma.

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Daley went on to say that he is "increasingly concerned that the state tests that are required to be taken by every student are easier to pass and less strict in their standards than they used to be."

"I believe there needs to be a full discussion about implementing new state tests to assure that we have confidence in them and that their results better reflect how a student might succeed in the real world," he said.

Daley went on to say that to take CPS schools to the next level he's challenged school leaders to focus on several equally important goals. Among them:

- Expand new charter schools and schools of choice, but also make it a priority to improve traditional neighborhood schools.

"We must never forget that the majority of our students attend neighborhood schools and we owe them the same quality education," Daley said. "That's why we must stay focused on teaching the basics in the classroom. Learning basic subjects -- reading, math and science are more important than ever to success in modern life."

- Boost efforts to turnaround troubled schools, especially high schools. In the modern economy a high school diploma is no longer the bare minimum students need for success.

"We've got to get more minority male students to stay in high school and graduate. We can't write off much of a generation of young people," said Daley. "Overall, more of our students must graduate high school, go on to college and achieve their higher education diploma."

- Train and recruit better teachers and evaluate their performance thoughtfully, but fairly in order to help them succeed.

"We need more mentoring of our teachers and new efforts to reduce teacher burnout and turnover," he said.

- Increase the number of schools in session year-round. Data shows that year around schools work because students retain more of what they've learned.
- Investigate what it would cost to execute a pilot program for longer school days.
- Implement new higher standards throughout the system to make schools even more accountable.

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- Provide even more after school programs year-round, create a more organized and stable learning environment and step up efforts to provide safe passage to and from school in order to help keep students safe.
- Offer needed social services to children in school by providing breakfast for every child.

“Our students are yet again demonstrating how much can be accomplished when we believe in them and when we invest our time, energy and resources in them,” Daley said. “Now, it's up to us to take the next steps.”

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