

# PORTSMOUTH PARTNERSHIP

Promoting economic growth, leadership and education within the City of Portsmouth

Newsletter No. 12

www.portsmouthpartnership.org

October 2008

## INVESTMENT IN PORTSMOUTH SCHOOLS PAYS GREAT RETURN

**School systems** are not simple investments. Schools require money, of course, but money alone does not provide purpose or direction. On the other hand, good direction and innovative plans, without funding, are like precious seeds without water. A successful school superintendent's plans require both city management's commitment **and** city council's financial support. For the past six years, Portsmouth Schools have enjoyed both – and have reaped the benefits in exciting ways.

The Portsmouth Partnership's **David Tynch** asked **Dr. David Stuckwisch**, on his arrival in 2003 as Schools Superintendent and ex-officio Portsmouth Partnership board member, what the Partnership could do to assist our schools. Dr. Stuckwisch's immediate reply was, simply, "generate tax dollars." If the city would supply dollars, he would supply innovation and human capital.

**They did, and he did.** The results are summed up by contrasting 2001-02 SOL test score results with the 2007-08 results, shown below. **Red ink** indicates below-passing scores; **green** indicates passing scores:

Past Accreditation Ratings Division Summary 2002-03 Accreditation Based on 2001-02 SOL Test Scores								PRELIMINARY: 2008-09 Accreditation Ratings Based on 2007-08 Standards of Learning Results							
Schools	English	Math	Science	History	2002-03	2007-08	CHANGE	Schools	English	Math	Science	History	2008-09	2007-08	CHANGE
Churchland Elementary	85.5	88.6	85.5	85.5	FA	FA	No Change	Churchland Academy Elementary	80.3	78.6	81.9	77.5	FA	FA	No change
John Tyler	78.0	77.5	81.2	82.8	FA	FA	No Change	Churchland Elementary	82.6	83.2	86.8	86.1	FA	FA	No change
Olive Branch	89.8	78.8	85.5	85.2	FA	FA	No Change	Churchland Primary Elementary	89.0	90.5	92.4	86.5	FA	FA	No change
Seaside	88.2	76.4	83.8	85.9	NFA	FA	-	Hodges Manor Elementary	88.3	82.0	86.9	78.7	FA	FA	No change
Shiloh	82.6	83.8	84.5	82.1	NFA	NFA	No Change	James Hurst Elementary	85.7	83.8	84.2	81.1	FA	FA	No change
Churchland Academy	71.9	66.8	80.2	85.2	NFA	NFA	No Change	John Tyler Elementary	86.9	79.7	90.1	84.0	FA	FA	No change
Churchland Primary	73.5	88.8	87.7	89.5	NFA	NFA	No Change	Olive Branch Elementary	85.6	84.8	92.6	87.1	FA	FA	No change
Hartwood Manor	85.8	86.8	80.4	85.3	NFA	NFA	No Change	Simonsdale Elementary	88.8	82.8	85.4	85.4	FA	FA	No change
James Hurst	79.0	64.1	65.4	88.2	NFA	NFA	No Change	Lakeview Elementary	81.2	80.7	81.2	78.5	FA	FA	No change
Packwood	83.8	81.1	82.7	88.8	NFA	NFA	No Change	Douglass Park Elementary	88.8	87.5	87.2	81.0	FA	FA	No change
Lafayette	82.6	82.8	83.9	83.1	NFA	NFA	No Change	Westhaven Elementary	82.1	70.5	76.1	71.7	FA	FA	No change
Douglass Park	82.7	86.8	86.5	86.8	NFA	NFA	No Change	Park View Elementary	84.1	81.0	74.9	88.4	FA	NFA	+
Glennon B. Steele	88.8	88.8	81.6	81.4	NFA	NFA	No Change	Victory Elementary	79.7	83.5	76.2	74.5	FA	NFA	+
Midway	88.2	85.9	78.8	88.8	NFA	NFA	No Change	<b>Brighton Elementary</b>	<b>74.8</b>	<b>78.0</b>	<b>78.0</b>	<b>77.6</b>	<b>NFA</b>	<b>NFA</b>	<b>No change</b>
Churchland Middle	82.7	80.5	80.8	88.8	NFA	NFA	No Change	Churchland Middle	84.3	80.1	81.8	79.3	FA	FA	No change
Goodwood Middle	82.8	82.8	82.8	82.8	NFA	NFA	No Change	Waters Middle	84.4	80.2	85.6	78.6	FA	FA	No change
James Mingo Middle	80.4	81.8	82.8	85.8	NFA	NFA	No Change	<b>Cradock Middle</b>	<b>70.1</b>	<b>87.8</b>	<b>78.3</b>	<b>70.2</b>	<b>NFA</b>	<b>NFA</b>	<b>No change</b>
Midway Middle	84.5	83.7	85.8	84.8	NFA	NFA	No Change	Churchland High	88.3	82.6	86.3	80.8	FA	FA	No change
Glenwood High	85.8	84.1	86.1	86.2	NFA	NFA	No Change	J. C. Norcom High	78.8	78.8	76.1	80.8	FA	FA	No change
L.C. Norcom High	85.0	88.2	86.1	85.6	NFA	NFA	No Change	Woodrow Wilson High	78.3	70.0	88.8	80.5	FA	FA	No change
Woodrow Wilson High	78.5	85.1	85.1	84.4	NFA	NFA	No Change								

Date Source: YOGS. Note: (\*) Refers to test scores reported as three-year rolling average. For YOGS ratings are still considered preliminary as they were certified on September 18, 2008 based on data received from the testing vendor on September 08, 2008.

2002 – 2003 : non- passing scores in red

2007 – 2008 : passing scores in green

A closer look shows individual test scores, by school, to be equally impressive:

- 100 % of Portsmouth's schools met the **Science** SOL pass rate
- 100 % of Portsmouth's schools met the **History** SOL pass rate
- 16 schools obtained an **English** SOL pass rate of 80 % or higher
- 99.5 % of Middle School students passed Algebra I
- 1,308 students obtained a perfect score

**What drove this success? Essentially, great teachers**, who have their Superintendent's leadership and support. The **Lefcoe Alumni Association** and the **Portsmouth** Division of the **Chamber of Commerce** have long advanced the belief that great schools require great teachers, and that **teacher salaries, teacher retention rates**

and **school accreditation** are closely linked. They began tracking these measures in 2004, and the results bear them out:

<b><i>Portsmouth Teacher Pay Increase</i></b> <b><i>2004 – 2007</i></b>		<b><i>Portsmouth New Teachers Hired</i></b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> year	13.8 %	2004	194
5 <sup>th</sup> year	22.7 %	2005	209
10 <sup>th</sup> year	23.0 %	2006	201
15 <sup>th</sup> year	28.6 %	2007	176
20 <sup>th</sup> year	32.0 %	2008	110

By 2007 a first-year Portsmouth teacher’s pay was 2.5 % **above the average** for Chesapeake, Norfolk and Suffolk. And, while a 20<sup>th</sup> year teacher’s pay was 7.9 % below the three-city average, it had improved from a 2004 deficit of 18 %. The trend is good.

**Competitive teacher pay** has done more than simply reduce turnover, though: it has also served to attract teachers with the energy and ability to develop exciting new programs that are uniquely Portsmouth’s own. As **Laura Nelson**, Portsmouth’s Director of Science Education, says, Portsmouth is now able to “shoot beyond” past methods and expectations with such initiatives as: **Starbase Victory** ([www.starbasevictory.org](http://www.starbasevictory.org)), a hands-on, interdisciplinary science program for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders, which has become the core of Portsmouth’s **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Program; the **First College** program, which utilizes dual enrollment classes to enable qualifying students to enroll as **TCC** freshmen in the spring semester of their senior year of high school; and the **A/C-13** program, a Career and Technical initiative which provides specialized training, available to all students, at each of the city’s high schools.

**Portsmouth has also been committed** to providing better places for teachers to work – and for kids to learn. To accommodate the increased student population promised by the nearby New Port development, Highland Biltmore Elementary School was renovated and renamed – as **Victory Elementary** – and expanded to include a new gym, offices and media center, and to serve as the home of **Starbase’s** 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade programs. In addition to the school system’s **\$3 million** investment, the city kicked in **\$5 million**.

**Portsmouth’s newest school, Park View Elementary**, held its dedication ceremony on September 30, with former Governor **Mark Warner** serving as keynote speaker. The **\$18 million** facility accommodates 700 students.



Portsmouth Schools Superintendent Dr. David Stuckwisch (r)  
and former Virginia Governor Mark Warner (l)



Park View Elementary School

**Ben Franklin** said that “an investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” Portsmouth got the message—and our kids are reaping the benefits.



**GPDC 10 years 1,000 jobs \$8,000,000 tax revenue**

