



Education Consumers Foundation

Some of Tennessee's most effective schools are in Nashville—but they may not be the ones you'd expect...

July 23, 2008

Dear Nashville Parent,

Recently we have read so much about the quality of Nashville Schools, but which ones are really best?

Most people would automatically picture a school like Meigs Middle Magnet School: very low poverty (just 15% of students participating in the free/reduced lunch plan), and 100% of students scoring at or above grade level on the TCAP. Far fewer would picture a school like Amqui Elementary, with nearly every student participating in the free and reduced lunch plan, and TCAP scores below the state average.

But the fact is that both of these Nashville schools are among the most effective in the state of Tennessee. That's because these schools are doing the job that we all want our public schools to do—taking students, no matter their starting point, and pushing them to reach their academic potential.

Meigs and Amqui are not alone: our organization, the Education Consumers Foundation, is pleased to recognize 14 Nashville elementary and middle schools as being among the most effective in the state. The enclosed brochure lists these schools, and provides information on the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS), which provides a true measure of the contribution that each school is making to student achievement.

Why is school effectiveness important?

School effectiveness is a critical factor in your child achieving more than the minimums required for high school graduation. For talented students, an effective school can prepare them to enter a selective college or excel in any postsecondary setting, while an ineffective school may make college success a struggle. Talented but poorly prepared students often have to take remedial courses. Many never complete their intended major. Over 1/3 of Tennessee's entering college students require some remedial or developmental work.

For disadvantaged students, attending an ineffective school makes it much more likely that they will not receive an academic diploma, or that they will drop out of school entirely.

How can I learn more?

If you're a parent who would like to learn about Nashville's most effective schools and what they're doing that other schools can learn from, you can:

- Visit the ECF website—www.education-consumers.org—and take advantage of the information and resources available through our Tennessee Project.
- Look at our campaign website—www.mosteffectiveschools.org—to learn more about Nashville's most effective schools and about the principles of effective schooling, and to exchange questions and comments with other Nashville parents on our bulletin board.
- Talk to school leaders at our Most Effective Schools (listed on the front of the enclosed brochure) and to district officials to learn more about how these schools are achieving such impressive results.

While superior schooling may be found in unexpected places, its outcomes deserve to be recognized and commended. I hope you will join me in thanking Nashville's Most Effective Schools for the great work they are doing.

Best regards,



J. E. Stone, Ed.D.
President, Education Consumers Foundation

enc.

PS Parents across Nashville are welcome to exchange ideas on our website bulletin board:
www.mosteffectiveschools.org.

About the Education Consumers Foundation

ECF is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the interests of education's consumers. The foundation helps parents, parent groups, school boards, legislative committees, and all others who seek to obtain independent, consumer-friendly assessments of education policy and practice.