PRiME CENTER
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

Beating the Odds: Student Growth in Missouri's High Poverty Schools

By: Misti Jeffers, Ph.D., Molly Beck, Ph.D., Andrew Diemer, Ashley Donaldson Burle, & Evan Rhinesmith, Ph.D.

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Introduction

In this report, we highlight the schools that are "beating the odds" across the state by moving student learning forward the fastest while serving high concentrations of low-income students as measured by the percentage of students identified as eligible for the Federal Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) program. In our first report on growth, Missouri Statewide Student Growth, we focused on overall statewide student growth in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for schoolwide and subgroup achievement. We divided the rankings by elementary, eleMiddle, and middle schools and showed the wide range in the types of schools across the state with outstanding student growth. In our second report on growth, Missouri Regional Student Growth, we highlighted the highest growth schools for ELA and mathematics for each of the nine DESE supervisory regions. In both reports, we found that some schools with low proficiency rates were helping students improve in their learning at incredible rates. We also found that the top schools vary by socio-demographic background of the students served. With this in mind, this Beating the Odds Report is the Policy Research in Missouri Education (PRiME) Center's third publication on student growth in Missouri.

The PRiME Center asserts that policymakers, educators, and parents need to know and understand the progress students and schools are making from year to year. Examining student growth scores on the MAP is one way to do that. The PRiME Growth Score indicates which schools are moving students toward or beyond proficiency even if some students at these schools start the year far behind their peers when examining proficiency rates.

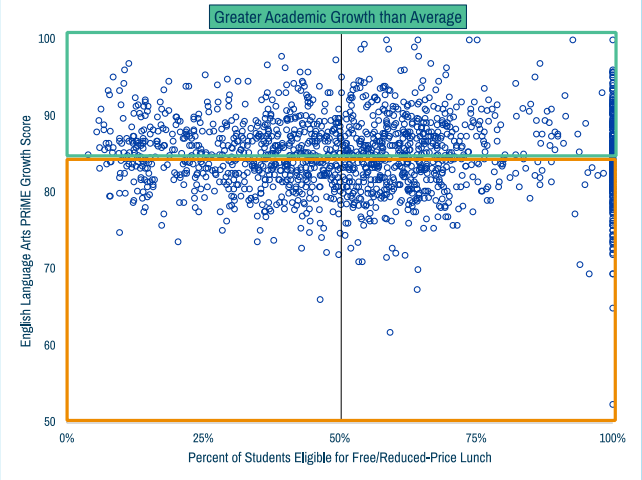
In our first publication, we explained that the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) is the standardized assessment in Missouri that measures the extent to which students have learned what is expected at specific grade levels in elementary and middle school and for end-of-course exams in high school. School-level results are most often publicly reported as the fraction of students that earn scores of proficient or advanced on these assessments. The results are a useful measure of student achievement at a single point in time but fail to adequately communicate how much (or little) students learn over time. For educators and policymakers to understand students' progress toward learning goals, a measure of progress over time—known as a **student growth score**—is more helpful.

Performance on standardized tests is greatly influenced by out-of-school factors, particularly family income and parent

educational attainment (Berliner, 2009; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Cunha & Heckman, 2009; Hegedus, 2018; McLoyd, 1998; Sirin, 2005; Tienken et al., 2017; White, 1982). Thus, the importance of examining student growth for a more full picture of school effectiveness is even more apparent when looking at the performance of schools that serve high concentrations of low-income students. Single point-in-time proficiency scores can undersell the performance of schools serving high concentrations of students in poverty. For this "beating the odds" report, we focus on the schools across the state that achieve high student growth scores while serving high concentrations of students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch (FRL) program. We believe that it is especially important to recognize these schools as they face many unique barriers to succeed at moving students forward at incredible rates.

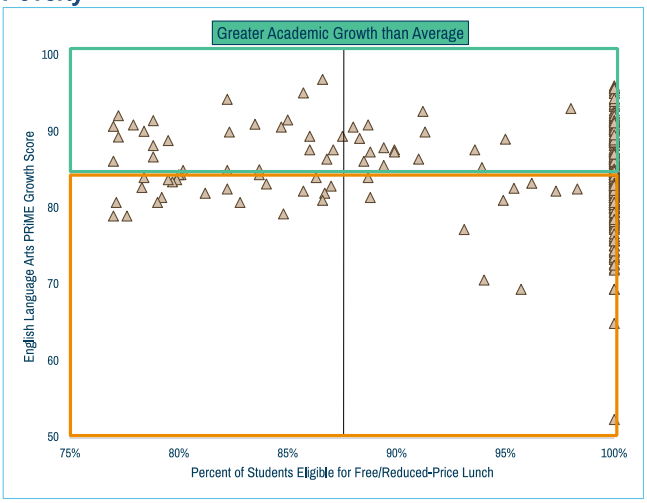
As shown in Figure 1 below, there is almost no relationship between the percentage of students participating in the FRL program and a school's growth score (correlation = -0.037). This means that schools serving high concentrations of students in poverty and those serving very low concentrations of students in poverty are essentially equally as likely to demonstrate levels of growth that are higher than predicted.

Figure 1:
English Language Arts PRiME Growth Score by School FRL %, Missouri Public Schools



When we examine growth only for those schools with the highest percentages (77% and higher) of students participating in FRL (Figure 2), the relationship is slightly stronger (correlation = -0.105). This means that schools serving the highest concentrations of students in poverty—such as schools participating in the Community Eligibility Provision—are slightly less likely to exhibit greater than average expected growth. All these schools are serving high concentrations of students in poverty, but there is wide variation in the amount of academic growth students are experiencing at these schools. While we have shown the relationship between the percentage of students participating in FRL and growth in English Language Arts, the relationship is nearly identical when examining growth in math.

Figure 2:
English Language Arts PRiME Growth Score by School FRL %, **Schools Serving High Concentrations of Students in Poverty**



Single point-in-time proficiency scores can undersell the performance of schools serving high concentrations of students in poverty.

In our series of student growth reports, we report the 2019 PRiME Growth Scores for schools across the state. The PRiME Growth Score is a translation of DESE's 2019 Missouri Growth Model score, which reflects average annual student growth between the 2015-2016 school year and the 2016-2017 school year, the 2016-2017 school year and the 2017-2018 school year, and the 2017-2018 school year and the 2018-2019 school year. Any schools for which 2019 PRiME Growth Scores are unavailable or yet to be attained—such as schools with untested grades—are excluded from this report. **This transformation of scores does not alter the ordering of the Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) growth scores provided by DESE; rather, it places the same scores on a scale that widens the distribution and is more like a percentage score that one might see on a report card.** That is, growth scores in the high 90s are very

good and scores in the low 70s are quite low. We believe that this new PRiME Growth Score makes the existing DESE growth measure more familiar and thus understandable to education stakeholders.

To better understand how the PRiME Center used the Missouri Growth Model measure and translated the state's scale to help educators and the public better understand its significance, please refer to the Missouri Statewide Student Growth report.

Definitions

- **Elementary schools** - schools that serve students no older than the sixth grade.
- **EleMiddle schools** - schools with grades in both elementary and middle schools ranges. For example, a K-8 school would be included in the rankings of eleMiddle schools with top student growth scores.
- **MAP** - the Missouri Assessment Program is used to measure how well students acquire the skills and knowledge described in Missouri's Learning Standards (MLS) (DESE, 2021). MAP tests are administered in Grades 3-8 and as end-of-course (EOC) assessments in high school.
- **MAP Performance Index (MPI)** - the MPI is calculated by multiplying the percent of students in each achievement level by a point value set by DESE to produce a single score. Scores range from 100-500.
- **Middle schools** - schools that range from sixth grade through twelfth grade. These schools have three years of tests included in the Growth Scores in sixth, seventh and eighth grades.
- **Missouri Learning Standards** - DESE defines these as "the knowledge and skills students need in each grade level and course for success in college, other post-secondary training and careers" (DESE, 2016).
- **Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE)** - NCE scores, or Normal Curve Equivalent scores, are a method of reporting test scores created for the U.S. Department of Education. They range from 1-99 with a mean of 50, similar to percentiles.
- **Proficiency levels** - on the MAP tests, proficiency levels include advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic. Scoring proficient or advanced indicates that a student has mastered learning standards for their grade level at that point in time.
- **Student growth** - the change in achievement (as measured by the Missouri Assessment Program English language arts and mathematics assessments) for an individual student between two or more points in time (DESE, 2013).
- **Subgroup achievement** - subgroup includes students receiving free or reduced-price lunch, Black and Hispanic students, English language learners, and students with disabilities (DESE, 2015).

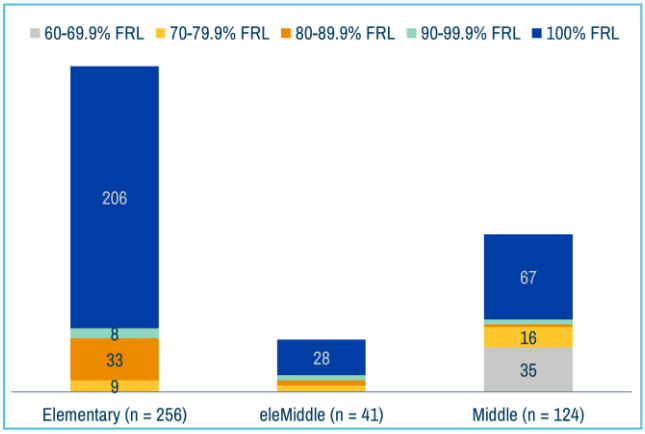
Overall Results

This particular publication (publication three in a series of three reports) highlights the schools achieving top student growth **while serving high concentrations of low-income students**. We define these "high poverty" schools as schools where the student body eligible for FRL is in the fourth quartile, meaning at levels that are higher than the remaining 75% of schools statewide. Essentially, these schools serve the highest proportion of students eligible for the FRL program.

We divide our results into three sections according to school type: elementary, eleMiddle, and middle. We intend to group schools based on similarity in grade levels tested to avoid comparing dissimilar schools. For the purposes of this report, we rely on DESE's categorization of schools for the basis of our groups. Therefore, elementary schools are defined as schools that serve students no older than the sixth grade. Middle schools are defined as schools that range from sixth grade through twelfth grade. These schools have three years of tests included in the PRiME Growth Scores in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. We want to note that there are a few schools that overlap, in which case we rely on the DESE categorization of schools and the school's name to place it into a school type. Schools that serve grades spanning across the elementary and middle school categories are designated as eleMiddle schools. For example, this category includes PreK-8, K-8, PreK-7, K-7, 4-12, and Grade 3-8 schools.

For each school type, the threshold for being considered a school serving high concentrations of students in poverty is calculated based on the distribution of the percentage of FRL-eligible students in each school. The percentage of students eligible for FRL ranges from 3.9% to 100% in elementary schools; 15.1% to 100% in eleMiddle schools; and 8% to 100% in middle schools. We consider schools to be "high poverty" schools if they fall within the top quartile of this range, making the threshold 77.9% for elementary schools, 77.0% for eleMiddle schools, and 64.6% for middle schools. We present the number of schools included in the fourth quartile based on the above mentioned thresholds and school FRL percentage in Figure 3. Of note, we do include schools that participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which allows schools and districts to provide breakfast and lunch free of charge to all students if over 40% of students are enrolled in other means-tested food assistance programs (e.g., SNAP, TANF). For more details of the CEP in Missouri, see PRiME's evidence primer on "The Community Eligibility Provision and Student Outcomes" (Shelton, 2020).

Figure 3:
Number of Schools in Fourth Quartile, by School FRL%



In each section, we present the PRiME Growth Scores for schools for each of the two main MAP tests (ELA and mathematics) for all tested students. This results in six total categories of top schools featured in this report. Because there is variability in the total number of schools in each school type category statewide (1,026 elementary schools, 164 eleMiddle schools, and 504 middle schools), the number of schools observed in this report varies as well. For this report, our sample of elementary schools covers 256 schools, 124 middle schools, and 41 eleMiddle schools that each fall into the top-quartile of the percentage of students participating in the FRL program. Over the coming pages, we highlight the top 30 elementary schools, top 10 eleMiddle schools, and top 20 middle schools in each category. These differences in the number of schools highlighted are based solely on the differing sample sizes for the three groups.

These rankings show the schools across the state that are going above and beyond to foster student learning as demonstrated by each school's PRiME Growth Score. These tables indicate the percentage of students eligible for FRL. In this column, higher percentages are generally associated with higher poverty schools. To offer more context of the school, we also include the school enrollment (Enroll), the percent of students who score proficient and advanced on MAP tests (MAP Prof. & Adv.), and the district and region in which the school is located.

Many schools on the top ranked lists have proficiency rates lower than 50%. Thus, the PRiME Growth Score can reveal excellent academic growth in schools that may have been otherwise overlooked.

Statewide, 1,694 schools (across 546 districts and nine regions) have 2019 PRiME Growth Scores. Schoolwide ELA Growth Scores range from 52.4 - 109.8 while schoolwide math PRiME Growth Scores range from 57.0 - 108.2. While a very small number of schools earned scores above 100, we do cap our PRiME Growth Scores at 100 in the following tables in keeping with our objective to present these scores on a scale that is familiar to most readers.

The schools on the top ranked lists have varying starting points (in terms of proficiency levels) on state assessments. However, many schools on the top ranked lists have proficiency rates lower than 50%. Thus, this PRiME Growth Score can reveal excellent academic growth in schools that may have been otherwise overlooked.

Section A. Elementary Schools Beating the Odds

In this section, we describe trends and present two tables highlighting the Missouri elementary schools that are "beating the odds," achieving the highest PRiME Growth Scores while serving high concentrations of low-income students. We present the PRiME Growth Scores for ELA in Table 1 and math in Table 2.

Our rankings highlight 46 different elementary schools with the highest PRiME Growth Scores. Fifteen schools received top Growth Scores in both ELA and math and appear on both lists in this section. The schools that appear on both lists include: Academy for Integrated Arts (Kansas City), Blanchard Elementary (Cape Girardeau 63), Bosworth Elementary (Bosworth R-V), Callaway Hills Elementary (Jefferson City), Central Elementary (Neosho), Froebel Elementary (St. Louis Public Schools), George Melcher Elementary (Kansas City 33), Humansville Elementary (Humansville R-IV), John T. Hartman Elementary (Kansas City 33), Marion Elementary (Ritenour), Matthews Elementary (New Madrid Co. R-I), Pitcher Elementary (Kansas City 33), Santa Fe Elementary (Hickman Mills C-1), Trojan Intermediate (Potosi R-III), and York Elementary (Springfield R-XII).

For this report, we focus on the 256 elementary schools with a FRL percentage in the fourth quartile (higher than 77.9%). Across these elementary schools serving high concentrations of students in poverty, schoolwide ELA Growth Scores range from 52.4 to 100.2 and schoolwide math Growth Scores range from 56.9 to 100.9. Statewide, there are 1,026 elementary schools with PRiME Growth Scores located in 451 districts and nine regions across Missouri. Schoolwide ELA Growth Scores range from 52.4 to 109.8 and math Growth Scores range from 57.0 to 108.2. For simplicity and clarity in the tables that follow, we cap the growth scores at 100. As there is such a large number of elementary schools in the state, we're only capturing a tiny slice of schools that are performing well in terms of growth in the top 30 lists. To check out other schools who are top performing, refer to our downloadable data file available at www.sluprime.org/education-reports.

Many schools appearing on the following two lists are also among the top achieving schools in the state, regardless of student demographics. However, many elementary schools serving high concentrations of students in poverty highlighted in this section (33) were not among the Top 20 statewide. These schools include: Grovespring Elementary (Hartville R-II), Central Elementary (Neosho), Marion Elementary (Ritenour), Sante Fe Elementary, Warford Elementary, Whittier Elementary, and Dobbs Elementary (Hickman Mills C-1), Academy for Integrated Arts, Fair Play Elementary (Fair Play R-II), Barbara Jordan Elementary (University City), Matthews Elementary (Sikeston R-6), Hope Leadership Academy, Larimore Elementary (Hazelwood), Buder Elementary, Mallinckrodt A.B.I. Elementary, and Oak Hill Elementary (St. Louis Public Schools), Pitcher Elementary, Faxon Elementary, Garfield Elementary, Holliday Montessori, John T. Hartman Elementary, George Melcher Elementary, and James Elementary (Kansas City 33), David Barton Elementary (Boonville R-I), Doniphan Intermediate (Doniphan R-I), Lee Hamilton Elementary (Ferguson-Florissant R-II), Thomas Hart Benton Elementary and Sante Fe Trail Elementary (Independence 30), Callaway Hills Elementary (Jefferson City), New Madrid Elementary (New Madrid Co. R-I), Bowerman Elementary and Robberson Elementary (Springfield R-XII), and West Blvd. Elementary (Columbia Public Schools).

Notably, the top-growth elementary schools in each category vary widely in their proficiency rates. While several schools have both high PRiME Growth Scores and high proficiency rates, many top-growth schools have low proficiency rates. For example, as shown in Table 1, Grovespring Elementary in the Hartville R-II School District achieved the No. 8 ELA PRiME Growth Score for elementary schools with high percentages of FRL-participating students (95.1) with most (86%) of their students performing at proficient or advanced levels. Meanwhile, only 13% of the students at George Melcher Elementary in the Kansas City 33 School District are proficient or advanced. Yet, this school achieved a Growth Score of 92.4. Indeed, the George Melcher Elementary example represents a very important reason for highlighting growth. This is a school where the data reveal a great deal of student growth; thus, good things are happening that would not be apparent from a simple review of proficiency rates.

For each of the two tables in this section, we note a few key points:

- **Table 1** highlights the top 30 (we show 31 schools due to ties) elementary schools serving high concentrations of students in poverty in ELA by schoolwide achievement. Blanchard Elementary is the top elementary school beating

the odds, with a PRiME Growth Score of 100. This school was also among the top growth scores in the state (No. 3 in ELA, schoolwide achievement and No. 2 in ELA, subgroup achievement). Proficiency rates vary from 13% to 94%.

- **Table 2** focuses on the top 30 elementary school serving high concentrations of students in poverty math scores. Froebel Elementary in the St. Louis Public Schools District has the highest PRiME Growth Score at 100, and also appeared on the statewide student growth rankings (No. 2 for math, schoolwide achievement and No. 1 for math, subgroup achievement). The ninth ranked school, Hope Leadership Academy in Kansas City, achieved a PRiME Growth Score of 94.4, but only 7% of students are performing at proficient or advanced levels.

Table 1: *Beating the Odds – Top Growth Elementary Schools in* ***English Language Arts***

Rank	School	Prime Growth Score	F/R Lunch	Enroll.	Map Prof. & Adv.	District	Region
1	**Blanchard Elem.***	**100**	100%	317	71%	Cape Girardeau 63	Bootheel
2	**York Elem.**	**96.9**	100%	230	53%	Springfield R-XII	Southwestern
3	**Matthews Elem.**	**96.0**	100%	133	82%	New Madrid Co. R-I	Bootheel
4	**Border Star Montessori**	**95.7**	100%	246	59%	Kansas City 33	Kansas City
4	**Humansville Elem.**	**95.7**	100%	162	32%	Humansville R-IV	Southwestern
4	**Trojan Intermediate**	**95.7**	100%	509	67%	Potosi R-III	Ozarks
7	**Wendell Phillips Elem.**	**95.4**	100%	281	27%	Kansas City 33	Kansas City
8	**Grovespring Elem.**	**95.1**	86%	81	82%	Hartville R-II	Southwestern
8	**KIPP Victory Academy**	**95.1**	100%	550	30%	KIPP St. Louis Public Schools	St. Louis
10	**Central Elem.**	**94.2**	82%	222	49%	Neosho School District	Southwestern
10	**Froebel Elem.**	**94.2**	100%	164	14%	St. Louis Public Schools	St. Louis
12	**Marion Elem.**	**93.6**	100%	501	44%	Ritenour	St. Louis
12	**Santa Fe Elem.**	**93.6**	100%	361	37%	Hickman Mills C-1	Kansas City
14	**Academy for Integrated Arts**	**93.3**	100%	219	31%	Academy for Integrated Arts	Kansas City
14	**Fair Play Elem.**	**93.3**	100%	169	51%	Fair Play R-II	Southwestern
16	**Barbara Jordan Elem.**	**93.0**	98%	349	38%	University City	St. Louis
17	**Matthews Elem.****	**92.7**	100%	326	45%	Sikeston R-6	Bootheel
18	**George Melcher Elem.**	**92.4**	100%	322	13%	Kansas City 33	Kansas City
19	**Larimore Elem.**	**92.1**	100%	368	29%	Hazelwood	St. Louis
19	**Mallinckrodt A.B.I. Elem.**	**92.1**	100%	251	94%	St. Louis Public Schools	St. Louis
20	**Bosworth Elem.**	**91.9**	100%	17	44%	Bosworth R-V	Western Plains
20	**Faxon Elementary**	**91.9**	100%	295	18%	Kansas City 33	Kansas City
20	**Holliday Montessori**	**91.9**	100%	180	33%	Kansas City 33	Kansas City
23	**David Barton Elem.**	**91.6**	100%	343	43%	Boonville R-I	Central
23	**Doniphan Intermediate**	**91.6**	100%	370	42%	Doniphan R-I	Bootheel
23	**Garfield Elem.**	**91.6**	100%	483	16%	Kansas City 33	Kansas City
23	**Lee Hamilton Elem.**	**91.6**	100%	299	26%	Ferguson-Florissant R-II	St. Louis
23	**Thomas Hart Benton Elem.**	**91.6**	85%	416	47%	Independence 30	Kansas City
28***	**Callaway Hills Elem.**	**91.3**	100%	251	48%	Jefferson City	Central
28***	**John T. Hartman Elem.**	**91.3**	100%	330	34%	Kansas City 33	Kansas City
28***	**Pitcher Elem.**	**91.3**	100%	294	36%	Kansas City 33	Kansas City

*For simplicity and clarity, PRiME caps growth scores at 100. In reality, some schools may have growth scores above 100. You can explore more in the downloadable data file available at www.sluprime.org/education-reports.

**We use this name as it appears in our dataset, but Matthews Elementary (Sikeston R-6) has since been replaced with Wing Elementary.

***The last three schools in this list are tied for the No. 28 score. As the tied scores result in 31 schools being featured, we do not include a No. 29 or No. 30 ranking.

Table 2: *Beating the Odds – Top Growth Elementary Schools in* ***Mathematics***

Rank	School	PRiME Growth Score	F/R Lunch	Enroll.	MAP Prof. & Adv.	District	Region
1	**Froebel Elem.***	**100**	100%	164	27%	St. Louis Public Schools	St. Louis
2	**Bosworth Elem.***	**100**	100%	17	67%	Bosworth R-V	Western Plains
3	**Blanchard Elem.***	**100**	100%	317	64%	Cape Girardeau 63	Bootheel
4	**Caruthersville Elementary***	**100**	100%	422	34%	Caruthersville 18	Bootheel
5	**John T. Hartman Elem.**	**98.9**	100%	330	51%	Kansas City 33	Kansas City
6	**Matthews Elem.**	**98.3**	100%	133	72%	New Madrid Co. R-I	Bootheel
7	**York Elem.**	**97.9**	87%	230	43%	Springfield R-XII	Southwestern
8	**Humansville Elem.**	**96.7**	100%	162	35%	Humansville R-IV	Southwestern
9	**Hope Leadership Academy**	**94.4**	100%	99	7%	Hope Leadership Academy	Kansas City
10	**Marion Elem.**	**93.9**	100%	501	51%	Ritenour	St. Louis
11	**Santa Fe Elem.**	**93.8**	100%	361	47%	Hickman Mills C-1	Kansas City
12	**Warford Elem.**	**93.7**	100%	305	36%	Hickman Mills C-1	Kansas City
13	**Whittier Elem.**	**93.6**	100%	414	27%	Kansas City 33	Kansas City
14	**Oak Hill Elem.**	**93.6**	100%	220	24%	St. Louis Public Schools	St. Louis
15	**Kingston Elem.**	**93.6**	100%	186	72%	Kingston K-14	Ozarks
16	**George Melcher Elem.**	**93.6**	100%	322	18%	Kansas City 33	Kansas City
17	**Pitcher Elem.**	**93.3**	100%	294	47%	Kansas City 33	Kansas City
18	**Buder Elem.**	**93.1**	100%	283	33%	St. Louis Public Schools	St. Louis
19	**Central Elem.**	**92.7**	82%	222	44%	Neosho School District	Southwestern
20	**Trojan Intermediate**	**92.6**	100%	509	67%	Potosi R-III	Ozarks
21	**Dobbs Elem.**	**92.5**	100%	368	29%	Hickman Mills C-1	Kansas City
22	**Central Elem.**	**92.3**	100%	216	18%	Ferguson-Florissant R-II	St. Louis
23	**Robberson Elem.**	**92.2**	90%	219	40%	Springfield R-XII	Southwestern
24	**Santa Fe Trail Elem.**	**92.1**	78%	334	52%	Independence 30	Kansas City
25	**New Madrid Elem.**	**91.7**	100%	230	64%	New Madrid Co. R-I	Bootheel
26	**Academy for Integrated Arts**	**91.6**	100%	219	26%	Academy for Integrated Arts	Kansas City
27	**Bowerman Elem.**	**91.5**	89%	225	16%	Springfield R-XII	Southwestern
28	**West Blvd. Elem.**	**91.4**	100%	329	28%	Columbia Public Schools	Central
29	**James Elem.**	**91.3**	100%	303	36%	Kansas City 33	Kansas City
30	**Callaway Hills Elem.**	**90.9**	100%	251	31%	Jefferson City	Central

*For simplicity and clarity, PRiME caps growth scores at 100. In reality, some schools may have growth scores above 100. You can explore more in the downloadable data file available at www.sluprime.org/education-reports.

Section B. EleMiddle Schools Beating the Odds

In this section, we describe trends and present two tables highlighting the Missouri eleMiddle schools that are "beating the odds," achieving the highest PRiME Growth Scores while serving high concentrations of low-income students. We present the PRiME Growth Scores for ELA in Table 3 and math in Table 4.

Our rankings highlight 16 different eleMiddle schools with the highest PRiME Growth Scores. Four schools received top Growth Scores in both ELA and math and appear on both lists in this section. The schools that appear on both lists include: Ewing Marion Kauffman Middle and KC International-Wallace in Kansas City, Shell Knob Elementary (Shell Knob 78), and Southwest City Elementary (McDonald Co. R-I).

There are 164 eleMiddle schools with PRiME Growth Scores located in 150 districts and nine regions across Missouri. Schoolwide ELA Growth Scores range from 66.1 to 97.4 and math Growth Scores range from 69.0 to 98.8. For this report, we focus on the 41 eleMiddle schools with a FRL percentage in the fourth quartile (higher than 77.0%). Across these eleMiddle schools with high percentages of FRL-eligible students, schoolwide ELA Growth Scores range from 69.4 to 95.0 and schoolwide math Growth Scores range from 69.0 to 98.8.

Many schools appearing on these lists are also among the top achieving schools in the state, regardless of student demographics. However, some eleMiddle schools highlighted in this section (4) were not among the Top 20 statewide. These schools include Phelps Co. Elementary (Phelps Co. R-III), Success Elementary (Success R-VI), and KIPP Triumph Academy and KIPP Inspire Academy (KIPP St. Louis Public Schools).

Notably, the top-growth eleMiddle schools in each category vary widely in their proficiency rates. The top ranked eleMiddle schools in this report have proficiency rates ranging from 15% to 65%. While several schools have proficiency rates at the higher end of this range, many top-growth schools have low proficiency rates. For example, as shown in Tables 1 and 2, KC International-Wallace achieved the No. 1 ELA PRiME Growth Score (95.0) with only 23% of students performing at proficient or advanced levels in ELA and the No. 6 math PRiME Growth Score (90.5) with only 15% of students scoring proficient or advanced in math. This is a school where the data reveal a great deal of student growth; thus, good things are happening that would not be apparent from a simple review of proficiency rates.

For each of the two tables in this section, we note a few key points:

- **Table 3** highlights the top 10 eleMiddle schools serving high percentages of students in poverty in ELA by schoolwide achievement. KC International-Wallace is the top eleMiddle school beating the odds, with a PRiME Growth Score of 95.0. This school was also among the top Growth Scores in the state (No. 5 in ELA, schoolwide achievement and No. 3 in ELA, subgroup achievement). Four schools on this list serve a student population where 100% of students are FRL-eligible. Proficiency rates vary from 21% to 65%.
- **Table 4** focuses on the top 10 eleMiddle school serving high percentages of students in poverty math scores. Ewing Marion Kauffman Middle School in Kansas City has the highest PRiME Growth Score at 98.8, and also topped the statewide student growth rankings (No. 1 for math, schoolwide achievement and No. 1 for math, subgroup achievement). In five schools on this list, 100% of students are FRL-eligible.

Table 3: *Beating the Odds – Top Growth EleMiddle Schools in **English Language Arts***

Rank	School	PRiME Growth Score	F/R Lunch	Enroll.	MAP Prof. & Adv.	District	Region
1	**KC International-Wallace**	**95.0**	100%	621	23%	KC International Academy	Kansas City
2	**Shell Knob Elem.**	**94.0**	100%	120	52%	Shell Knob 78	Southwestern
3	**Ewing Marion Kauffman Middle**	**92.7**	91%	785	45%	Ewing Marion Kauffman School	Kansas City
4	**Senath-Hornersville Middle School**	**91.4**	100%	241	41%	Senath-Hornersville C-8	Bootheel
5	**Koshkonong Elem.**	**91.0**	84%	150	28%	Oregon-Howell R-III	Ozarks
6	**Roscoe Elementary**	**90.7**	77%	65	21%	Roscoe C-1	Western Plains
7	**Noel Elem.**	**90.0**	91%	411	37%	McDonald Co. R-I	Southwestern
7	**Southwest City Elem.**	**90.0**	82%	326	47%	McDonald Co. R-I	Southwestern
9**	**Phelps Co. Elem.**	**89.4**	77%	161	65%	Phelps Co. R-III	Ozarks
9**	**South City**	**89.4**	100%	779	30%	Confluence Academies	St. Louis

**The last two schools in this list are tied for the No. 9 score. As the tied scores result in 10 schools being featured, we do not include a No. 10 ranking.

Table 4: *Beating the Odds – Top Growth EleMiddle Schools in **Mathematics***

Rank	School	PRiME Growth Score	F/R Lunch	Enroll.	MAP Prof. & Adv.	District	Region
1	**Ewing Marion Kauffman Middle**	**98.8**	91%	785	50%	Ewing Marion Kauffman School	Kansas City
2	**Shell Knob Elem.**	**93.8**	100%	120	40%	Shell Knob 78	Southwestern
3	**Manes Elem.**	**92.5**	86%	46	65%	Manes R-V	Southwestern
4	**Southwest City Elem.**	**92.1**	82%	326	52%	McDonald Co. R-I	Southwestern
5	**Scuola Vita Nuova Charter**	**90.6**	95%	279	40%	Scuola Vita Nuova	Kansas City
6	**KC International-Wallace**	**90.5**	100%	621	15%	KC International Academy	Kansas City
7	**Success Elem.**	**90.4**	100%	96	41%	Success R-VI	Ozarks
8	**Winona Elem.**	**90.0**	84%	301	51%	Winona R-III	Ozarks
9	**KIPP Triumph Academy**	**90.0**	100%	417	24%	KIPP St. Louis Public Schools	St. Louis
10	**KIPP Inspire Academy**	**89.3**	100%	393	19%	KIPP St. Louis Public Schools	St. Louis

Section C. Middle Schools Beating the Odds

In this section, we describe trends and present two tables highlighting the Missouri middle schools that are "beating the odds," achieving the highest PRiME Growth Scores while serving high concentrations of low-income students. We present the PRiME Growth Scores for ELA in Table 5 and math in Table 6.

Our rankings highlight 30 different middle schools with the highest PRiME Growth Scores. Ten schools received top Growth Scores in both ELA and math and appear on both lists in this section. The schools that appear on both lists include Allen Village Junior (Allen Village), Brookside Charter Middle School in Kansas City, Clarkton High (Clarkton C-4), Eminence High (Eminence R-I), Frontier School of Innovation (Frontier Schools), Humansville Middle School (Humansville R-IV), North Daviess High (North Daviess R-III), North Middle (Joplin Schools), Summersville High (Summersville R-II), and Tri-County High (Tri-County R-VII).

There are 504 middle schools with PRiME Growth Scores located in 399 districts and nine regions across Missouri. Schoolwide ELA Growth Scores range from 61.8 to 102.3 and math Growth Scores range from 68.9 to 105.2. For this report, we focus on the 124 middle schools with a FRL percentage in the fourth quartile (higher than 64.6%). Across these middle schools serving high percentages of FRL-participating students, schoolwide ELA Growth Scores range from 64.9 to 102.3 and schoolwide math Growth Scores range from 68.9 to 99.6.

Many schools appearing on these lists are also among the top achieving schools in the state, regardless of student demographics. However, some of the middle schools highlighted in this section (19) were not among the Top 20 in our statewide report. These schools include: North Middle (Joplin Schools), North Daviess High (North Daviess R-III), Tri-County High (Tri-County R-VII), Grandview Middle (Grandview C-4), John A. Evans Middle (Potosi R-III), Newtown-Harris High (Newtown-Harris R-III), East Middle (Joplin Schools), Bismarck R-V High (Bismarck R-V), Humansville Middle School (Humansville R-IV), Jennings Jr. High (Jennings), Reed Middle (Springfield R-XII), Sedalia Middle School (Sedalia 200), Long Middle Community Ed. Ctr. (St. Louis Public Schools), Ridgeway High (Ridgeway R-V), Oakland Middle School (Columbia Public Schools), Morgan Co. R-1 High (Morgan Co. R-1), Central Middle (Hazelwood), Westview Middle (Riverview Gardens), and Northgate Middle (North Kansas City 74).

Notably, the top-growth middle schools in each category vary widely in their proficiency rates. The top ranked middle schools shown here have proficiency rates ranging from 5% to 63%. While several schools have proficiency rates at the higher end of this range, many top-growth schools have low proficiency rates. For example, as shown in Table 6, Westview Middle in the Riverview Garden School District achieved the No. 18 math PRiME Growth Score (89.0) with only 10% of students performing at proficient or advanced levels. This is a school where the data reveal a great deal of student growth; thus, good things are happening that would not be apparent from a simple review of proficiency rates.

For each of the two tables in this section, we note a few key points:

- **Table 5** highlights the top 20 middle schools in ELA by schoolwide achievement. Allen Village Junior in Kansas City is the top middle school beating the odds, with a PRiME Growth Score of 100. This school also topped the statewide student growth rankings (No. 1 in both ELA, schoolwide achievement and ELA, subgroup achievement). Ten schools on this list serve a student population where 100% of students are FRL-eligible. Proficiency rates vary from 25% to 63%.
- **Table 6** focuses on the top 20 middle school math scores. Gilman City High in the Gilman City R-IV School District has the highest PRiME Growth Score at 99.6, and was also among the top Growth Scores in the state (No. 5 for math, schoolwide achievement and No. 4 for math, subgroup achievement). In ten schools on this list, 100% of students are FRL-eligible. Proficiency rates vary from 5% to 57%.

Table 5: *Beating the Odds – Top Growth Middle Schools in* ***English Language Arts***

Rank	School	PRiME Growth Score	F/R Lunch	Enroll.	MAP Prof. & Adv.	District	Region
1	**Allen Village Junior***	**100**	93%	159	52%	Allen Village	Kansas City
2	**Clarkton High**	**95.6**	100%	172	26%	Clarkton C-4	Bootheel
3	**Summersville High**	**94.7**	65%	189	59%	Summersville R-II	Ozarks
4	**Brookside Charter Middle Sch.**	**94.4**	100%	200	30%	Brookside Charter Sch.	Kansas City
5	**Anderson Middle**	**93.7**	65%	271	54%	McDonald Co. R-I	Southwestern
6	**East Prairie Jr. High**	**93.4**	68%	169	44%	East Prairie R-II	Bootheel
7	**North Middle**	**92.5**	70%	605	36%	Joplin Schools	Southwestern
7	**Spring Garden Middle**	**92.5**	100%	525	36%	St. Joseph	Northwestern
9	**North Daviess High**	**92.2**	100%	28	53%	North Daviess R-III	Northwestern
9	**Tri-County High**	**92.2**	66%	77	63%	Tri-County R-VII	Northwestern
11	**Frontier Sch. of Innovation**	**91.5**	100%	308	31%	Frontier Schools	Kansas City
11	**Grandview Middle**	**91.5**	79%	612	38%	Grandview C-4	Kansas City
13	**John A. Evans Middle**	**91.2**	100%	337	51%	Potosi R-III	Ozarks
13	**Newtown-Harris High**	**91.2**	71%	38	45%	Newtown-Harris R-III	Northeastern
15	**East Middle**	**90.9**	69%	599	45%	Joplin Schools	Southwestern
16	**Bismarck R-V High**	**90.6**	100%	277	41%	Bismarck R-V	Bootheel
17	**Eminence High**	**90.3**	100%	139	56%	Eminence R-I	Ozarks
17	**Humansville Middle School**	**90.3**	100%	87	51%	Humansville R-IV	Southwestern
17	**Jennings Jr. High**	**90.3**	100%	392	25%	Jennings	St. Louis
20	**Reed Middle**	**89.9**	71%	685	48%	Springfield R-XII	Southwestern

*For simplicity and clarity, PRiME caps growth scores at 100. In reality, some schools may have growth scores above 100. You can explore more in the downloadable data file available at www.sluprime.org/education-reports.

Table 6: Beating the Odds – Top Growth Middle Schools in **Mathematics**

Rank	School	PRiME Growth Score	F/R Lunch	Enroll.	MAP Prof. & Adv.	District	Region
1	**Gilman City High**	**99.6**	66%	56	43%	Gilman City R-IV	Northwestern
2	**Eminence High**	**96.9**	100%	139	37%	Eminence R-I	Ozarks
3	**Frontier Sch. of Innovation**	**94.1**	100%	308	31%	Frontier Schools	Kansas City
4	**Frontier Sch. of Excellence**	**93.5**	100%	99	30%	Frontier Schools	Kansas City
5	**North Middle**	**93.2**	70%	605	32%	Joplin Schools	Southwestern
6	**Allen Village Junior**	**92.7**	93%	159	34%	Allen Village	Kansas City
7	**Humansville Middle School**	**91.8**	100%	87	40%	Humansville R-IV	Southwestern
8	**Summersville High**	**91.5**	65%	189	43%	Summersville R-II	Ozarks
9	**Sedalia Middle School**	**91.1**	66%	384	57%	Sedalia 200	Western Plains
10	**Long Middle Community Ed. Ctr.⁺**	**90.5**	100%	232	5%	St. Louis Public Schools	St. Louis
11	**Ridgeway High**	**90.4**	65%	36	44%	Ridgeway R-V	Northwestern
12	**Oakland Middle School**	**90.2**	66%	542	28%	Columbia Public Schools	Central
13	**Morgan Co. R-I High**	**90.0**	100%	324	31%	Morgan Co. R-I	Central
14	**Clarkton High**	**90.0**	100%	172	19%	Clarkton C-4	Bootheel
15	**North Daviess High**	**89.8**	100%	28	21%	North Daviess R-III	Northwestern
16	**Central Middle**	**89.4**	65%	792	25%	Hazelwood	St. Louis
17	**Brookside Charter Middle Sch.**	**89.2**	100%	200	24%	Brookside Charter Sch.	Kansas City
18	**Tri-County High**	**89.0**	66%	77	49%	Tri-County R-VII	Northwestern
18	**Westview Middle**	**89.0**	100%	546	10%	Riverview Gardens	St. Louis
20	**Northgate Middle**	**88.7**	69%	613	44%	North Kansas City 74	Kansas City

⁺We use this name as it appears in our dataset, but Long Middle Community Education Center is now known as Long International Middle School.

Conclusion

In this third report in our series focused on PRiME Growth Scores, we highlight schools showing excellent academic growth in ELA and mathematics while serving high concentrations of historically underserved students who are often subjected to systemic academic and socioeconomic challenges. This allows us to recognize those schools that are "beating the odds" and best serving traditionally underserved students and shrinking achievement and opportunity gaps.

Similar to our statewide and regional reports, this report shows that schools earning high PRiME Growth Scores vary on a variety of characteristics, including proficiency levels, school size, and school location. As we narrow our focus to schools serving the highest concentrations of FRL-eligible students, we see a narrower range in the socioeconomic status of students served. Students at these schools are largely coming from lower income households whose families are less likely to have additional resources (e.g. time, money, etc.) to fill gaps in learning or support learning as much as many higher income households do. These schools exhibiting high growth are deserving of recognition, especially considering they are likely to have been overlooked in the past in evaluations that simply consider proficiency rates.

Recommendations

PRiME's intention with this series of reports is to encourage civic leaders, educators, and the public to **focus on student growth** (rather than point-in-time proficiency rates) when they consider the results of standardized assessments for Missouri students. We encourage school administrators to examine the PRiME Growth Scores closely for all schools in their districts. As seen in the data, there are many schools with high concentrations of students in poverty that are accelerating student learning regardless of their proficiency rates. It is important for us to learn what is happening in these high-growth schools, while simultaneously recognizing these schools' ability to move student learning forward.

Similar to our statewide and regional reports, this report uses only publicly available data. We would encourage school education leaders and school personnel to dig deeper than these results. While we only show school-level results here, **school leaders can more closely examine their own data at the student-level** to learn as much as they can about academic growth in various subjects and grade levels. By doing this, leaders might discover areas of excellence or opportunities for improvement that are simply not observable in the proficiency rates. In doing so, leaders and practitioners can more effectively identify what skills might need more attention and how to better meet students' needs in their unique learning environments.

This report focuses on schools serving some of the highest concentrations of FRL-eligible students only highlights those top growth schools serving high concentrations of FRL-eligible students. Superintendents and principals should also pay close attention to Growth Scores for the subgroup, which includes Black and Hispanic students, English language learners, and students with disabilities in addition to FRL-eligible students (DESE, 2015). Ensuring that classrooms serving traditionally underserved students are making good academic progress is critical to delivering an equitable education for all students.

To learn more about student growth in Missouri, you can also view some of our existing work on the Missouri growth model, in particular our "Unpacking the Missouri Growth Model" policy brief and our blog posts on the PRiME Growth Scores. As the state resumes standardized testing and reporting on student growth following the COVID-induced shutdown of 2020, we look forward to highlighting student growth more in the future and bringing this important metric into conversations on school quality in Missouri.

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Our Role at PRiME

Our role at PRiME is to communicate data and evidence to education stakeholders. DESE generates meaningful growth scores for schools in multiple subjects each year. It is our hope that this report helps to communicate these growth data to school leaders and educators; these are the experts who can make the best use of this information within Missouri's schools.

PRiME CENTER
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

SLU PRiME Center

3500 Lindell Boulevard
033 Fitzgerald Hall
St. Louis, MO 63103
Phone: (314) 977-5381
Fax: (314) 977-3290

E-mail: prime@slu.edu

www.sluprime.org

Twitter: @SLU_PRIME

Facebook: SLU_PRIME

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