



St. Johns schools again earn an ‘A’ in state grades

By Colleen Michele Jones
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The St. Johns County School District is once again at the head of the class with its 12th consecutive year earning an overall rating of “A” by the Florida Department of Education.

The DOE issued school grades for the 2016-17 school year on Wednesday. Individual schools in the county scored high as well, with St. Johns raising the total number of schools receiving an “A” from 24 to 25. In addition, the district was awarded seven “B”s and five “C”s. None of the district’s schools received a grade of “D” or “F.”

In a phone interview with *The Record* Thursday, Superintendent of Schools Tim Forson said, “We’re obviously very proud of our students, teachers, parents and staff — it’s all the stakeholders that lead the schools to the success we’ve had.”

The only school given a grade of “D” in 2016 was The Webster School. The elementary school on North Orange Street jumped to a score of “B” this year.

Forson said Webster administrators and faculty had worked hard to implement an improvement plan for the school and he applauded them for “moving forward at a very high rate.”

The criteria the DOE considers in its annual school grading evaluations includes test scores, performance increases, graduation rates and student participation in advanced-level offerings such as Advanced Placement and dual enrollment courses.

St. Johns Virtual School, an online and blended learning program for K-12 students, also increased its ranking, from a “C” grade last year to an “A” this year. Also raising their level of achievement were Title I schools Osceola Elementary School and Otis Mason Elementary School, which each received a “B.”

Across the state, the percentage of schools earning an “A” or “B” increased to 57 percent, up from 46 percent. Elementary schools saw the largest percentage point increase in “A” schools, with 30 percent of elementary schools earning the top grade, up from 21 percent the previous year. In Florida, 71 percent of schools graded “D” or “F” in 2016 improved their grade in 2017.

While Forson said the district was satisfied with its school grades, he noted that there was always room for improvement.

“We are are very pleased with our scores and the data, but our mission is to support all children and we know there are still places where we can grow,” Forson said. “We’re not just comparing ourselves statewide, but we’re comparing our district to ourself.”

For a full listing of the Florida Department of Education’s school grades, go to schoolgrades.fldoe.org.

Editor's note: Due to a reporter's error, this story has been updated with correct information