



STATE OF TENNESSEE

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**Report finds low parental participation, high teacher turnover barriers to success in Fayette County Schools**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Fayette County school system must improve parental participation, reduce teacher turnover, and increase its graduation rate to improve its performance according to a new report from the Comptroller's Office of Education Accountability.

The report, titled "District Approaches to Improving Tennessee's High Priority Schools – Fayette County Schools," examines the district's response to two schools placed on the state High Priority List by state education officials for poor math performance.

The report found that parental participation rates in the two schools remain low despite opportunities for increased parental involvement. One school's principal indicated those parents who would benefit the most from parent teacher organization meetings and parent teacher conferences are the least likely to attend.

Teacher turnover remains a major problem for the district, according to the report. District staff indicated they hire roughly 50 new teachers each year, equivalent to an annual district-wide turnover rate of 20 percent. The report cites the system's low teacher salaries compared to surrounding counties as a contributing factor.

The report highlights the district's low graduation rate and criticizes officials for not attempting to obtain all available funding. District officials failed to submit an application for state dropout funding for the 2005-06 school year, which cost it \$6,000 in guaranteed funding.

The report also examines frequent principal turnover at the district's high school, the need to update and improve district planning documents, and the student participation rate in free tutoring services provided through the federal No Child Left Behind law for the 2005-06 school year.

The report recommends district officials take action in several areas, including:

- Establishing a specific goal for improving parental participation over the next two years and implementing research-based programs in this area
- Creating a monitoring system to ensure the district applies for and obtains more funding to reduce its dropout rate
- Revising planning documents to incorporate more explicit strategies and performance measures
- Increasing the amount of computer technical support available

The report is available on the Comptroller's Web site at [www.comptroller.state.tn.us](http://www.comptroller.state.tn.us).

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