

## For Immediate Release

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## **Kindergarten-Readiness Scores Increase for JCPS Early Childhood**

*Overall JCPS Kindergarten Readiness Still Outpaces State*

Louisville, KY (January 21, 2015)—More Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) students taking part in Early Childhood Programs are entering kindergarten prepared than in prior years, according to data from the Kentucky Department of Education's (KDE's) kindergarten-readiness evaluation.

The percentage of JCPS students who participated in Head Start and who were considered prepared for kindergarten increased from 47.3 to 53.6 from the fall of 2013 to the fall of 2014, according to results released from the BRIGANCE Kindergarten Screen. Of the nearly 2,300 students who took part in the state-funded prekindergarten, 49.3 percent were deemed kindergarten-ready this year, compared to 48.6 percent last year.

"The BRIGANCE results show the importance of Early Childhood Programs and why state and federal funding for them is crucial to student success." said JCPS Superintendent Donna Hargens. "I applaud the Jefferson County Board of Education for funding an expansion of Early Childhood, and I encourage families to seek out learning opportunities as soon as possible and to invest time in working to improve academic readiness."

The percentage of JCPS students considered prepared for kindergarten has grown 17.3 percent from the fall of 2012 to the fall of 2014. The data show that this year, 51.9 percent of students are prepared for kindergarten, compared with just 34.6 percent from the original assessment in the fall 2012. However, that number is slightly down from 52.3 percent in the fall of 2013. Throughout the state of Kentucky, 50 percent of students were considered kindergarten ready.

JCPS also saw increases in kindergarten readiness for African-American students over three years (30.0 to 48.8 percent) as well as Limited English Proficiency students (18.7 to 29.1 percent) and students eligible for free or reduced lunch (24.5 to 42.1 percent).

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BRIGANCE measures the skills of new kindergartners in five developmental areas. JCPS educators administer the screenings for physical well-being, language, and cognitive skills, and parents complete a survey evaluating their child's self-help and social-emotional skills and behaviors.

Hargens has led an effort to improve kindergarten readiness since she arrived at JCPS. Early Childhood lesson plans are now more focused than ever on academic preparedness while also including such components as social and emotional well-being, which have long been staples of such programs.

Last year, JCPS began its push to increase kindergarten readiness. The central focus of that effort is a new student-readiness chart and checklist for parents, which can be found at [www.jefferson.kyschools.us/Departments/EarlyChildhood/StudentReadiness.pdf](http://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/Departments/EarlyChildhood/StudentReadiness.pdf) and at many area community centers, churches, and professional offices. The chart is broken down into five childhood-development areas with recommended goals that parents should work toward with their child. JCPS Early Childhood educators have been out in the community to meet with groups of parents, sharing information about academic preparedness and how to facilitate that at home.

For more information about the Early Childhood Program, visit <http://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/Departments/EarlyChildhood/index.html> or call **485-3919**.