

13 area school districts earn Bright Star awards

Recipients recognized for achievement in spite of low per-student funding

CHILLICOTHE —

Thirteen area school districts are recipients of the 2011 Bright Star award, recognition given to districts that achieve academic success in spite of low funding.

The award is given annually by SchoolSearch, an educational research and consulting firm that publishes rankings of school systems in Illinois.

"We take great pride in earning this award. It means our students are getting a quality education at an affordable price," said Nick Polyak, superintendent of the Illinois Valley Central School District in Chillicothe, about IVC High School receiving the award. "We appreciate this award and will continue to provide the highest quality education possible for each student in the IVC District while ever mindful of the taxpayers' contribution to its cost."

The award is given to school districts that rank in the upper third of all of the 868 school districts in the state in academic achievement and in the bottom quarter in expenditures per pupil. This year 79 school districts in Illinois were given the Bright Star award, including Dunlap, Eureka, Princeville, Brimfield and Elmwood.

"Dunlap School District is honored to be included among the schools recognized with a Bright Star award. We're thankful for our dedicated teachers, visionary leaders, hard-working students and supportive families with high expectation whose efforts result in this kind of recognition," said Dunlap Superintendent Jay Marino.

Elmwood won the award for the second year in a row.

"It acknowledges the hard work of our faculty and staff and the community support that we receive all with an eye toward being as fiscally responsible as we can be," said Roger Alvey, superintendent of Elmwood District 322.

The award requires elementary schools to meet or exceed 88.54 percent on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test for reading and math. The state average is 81.11 percent. It requires high schools to meet or exceed an average ACT score of 20.8. The state average is 20.5.

The per pupil expenditure for the award elementary school recipients must be below \$8,374 and below \$8,505 for high schools. The state average for all pupils is \$11,197.

" Our Board of Education, administration, staff, students, and parents are proud each year we receive this award," said Dennis McNamara, superintendent of the Brimfield school district. "This award reflects the hard work that takes place in the classroom but also puts a value on how we are managing the public's tax dollars. The Bright Star award reminds us that we must continue to work hard each year to provide a quality education for all children in a fiscally responsible manner."

Winners

Bright Star awards in the Tri-County

Kindergarten through 12th grade: Brimfield 309, Dunlap 323, Elmwood 322, Princeville 326 and Eureka 140.

Elementary school districts: Central 51 (Washington), Limestone Walters 316, Oak Grove 68, Washington 52, Germantown Hills 69 and Metamora 1.

High school only: Farmington Central 265 and Illinois Valley Central 321.