

## Claiborne County Department of Education Prepares for 2009 Report Card Results

The Tennessee Department of Education has provided an explanation of the method of calculating scores and the scale used to determine letter grades for Tennessee School Systems. New standards and assessments have necessitated a change in the method of calculating scores and the scale used to determine letter grades. Any comparison of the 2009 Report Card with previous years' scores is not possible or valid.

The baseline for comparing student achievement has been reset using 2009 test scores rather than the previous baseline of 1998. Prior to this year student scores in Claiborne County and other counties in the state were compared to students who took state tests in 1998. Claiborne County students as well as students across the state have made good gains compared to the 1998 baseline. The increased rigor of new standards adopted by the state of Tennessee required the use of a new baseline for determining letter grades for school systems across the state.

In addition, a new grade scale will be used to determine all grades for system report cards. This grade scale to determine all grades "A" through "F" has been revised dramatically. Previously Tennessee defined proficiency as a very basic understanding of the knowledge required. With the Tennessee Diploma Project the state requires that we realistically assess proficiency of skills. From this point forward Tennessee students will be expected to master a concept in order to be deemed proficient. With the new grade scale scores that were considered to be an "A" or proficient in past years may now be "B"s or "C"s. This does not mean that the student has not continued to learn but it reflects a change in the grade scale. Schools and parents need to compare the child's score to the state average to determine how well their children are learning and performing. Comparing last year's scores to this year's scores would be like comparing apples to oranges. Again, this comparison is not possible or valid.

The State of Tennessee has set higher expectations for Tennessee students. Claiborne County must do the same. As we move toward the age of higher standards and greater levels of proficiency Claiborne County will strive to do an even better job of educating our students.