

# Why education researchers want to focus on academic growth, instead of just achievement



In a new report, education researchers are highlighting schools that have seen an impressive rate of academic improvement, despite having a high concentration of students from low-income backgrounds.

The report lists schools that are “[beating the odds](#)” by showing high growth in math and English skills, according to St. Louis University’s Policy Research in Missouri Education Center.

This is part of [a broader push](#) to focus on student progress, which the researchers say is an important measure for how effective a school is. The schools on the list are often overlooked when considering more traditional achievement marks, according to Evan Rhinesmith, executive director of the PRiME center.

Barbara C. Jordan Elementary School in the University City School District is one of the schools that was highlighted on the list, earning a PRiME growth score of 93 in English Language Arts. Superintendent Sharonica Hardin-Bartley said the school and the district focus on giving students confidence and a love for school.

“We know that children of color perform at a significant lower rate than their peers,” she said. “I think it allows us to look at amazing students through a deficit lens, and I don’t think that is a fair representation of the significant work that students are doing under some pretty dire circumstances, or the work that the adults and teachers are doing.”

In the St. Louis region, the report also highlighted the following schools:

St. Louis Public Schools:

Froebel Elementary, Mallinckrodt Elementary, Oak Hill Elementary, Buder Elementary and Long Middle Community Education Center.

KIPP:

Victory, Triumph, and Inspire Academies

[Hazelwood school district:](#)

[Larimore Elementary and Central Middle](#)