

## Progress on Graduation Rate Among State's Successes



It has been three years since our state implemented the federally mandated four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. In that time we have seen our statewide graduation rate grow each year, from just over 80 percent in 2009-10 to nearly 85 percent in 2011-12.

While that growth is gratifying, it is not unexpected. When we first implemented the new calculation method, we knew that as schools were able to implement new data reporting guidelines, we would see improvement through better record keeping alone. What is more gratifying is the report recently released by the U.S. Department of Education showing 2010-11 graduation rates for each of the states. According to that report, only 11 states have a higher graduation rate than Kansas, ranking our state 12th in the nation for graduating students from high school.

The credit for those kinds of results belongs with our local school districts. It is at that level that the changes in programs and instruction are taking place that encourage more of our students to remain in school and receive their diploma. As we are able to provide them better data, they are able to make the changes that translate into improving graduation rates.

What I am seeing at the local level is a concerted effort to ensure that instruction is both engaging to students and relevant. Statewide efforts, such as our move to college and career ready standards and Gov. Brownback's Career and Technical Education initiative, help support those efforts, but it is through the dedication and effort of our local schools that the real progress is being made.

We face many challenges in education. While we continue to work to overcome those challenges, it is good to take time to reflect on our successes. In Kansas, we can count our progress on graduation rates among our successes.

Sincerely,



*Diane*

Dr. Diane DeBacker  
Kansas Commissioner of Education