

Former local principal recognized for effective leadership in Nashville

By [Staff Reports](#)

Rick Wilson, former principal at West Side Elementary School and a teacher at Happy Valley, was recognized on May 18 in Nashville.

Mr. Rick, as he is known to the students at John Sevier Elementary in Maryville, Tenn., was honored in a ceremony at the Tennessee Supreme Court building. The school was named as one of Tennessee's most effective schools according to the Education Consumers Foundation. ECF presented first, second and third place awards in two categories: elementary and middle schools in each of Tennessee's three grand divisions: east, middle and west. Winning principals received a certificate, banner and a cash award. Wilson donated the \$1,000 third place prize back to John Sevier.

John Sevier's award was one of three finalists in the first State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) Prize's elementary division. The SCORE Prize honored schools that have most dramatically improved student achievement in spite of the challenges they face.

"Both recognitions validate the great teaching and leadership at John Sevier Elementary School," said Director of Schools Stephanie Thompson. "Rick (Wilson) is focused on the big picture and advancing the entire system. He stresses the importance of sharing best practices and resources, challenging each other, helping each other and improving our school system. Not to mention, he's a quality leader who has developed the skills of his teachers."

Thompson noted that John Sevier has a lot of less experienced teachers, and it takes



Rick Wilson

a good leader to move any staff to the next level.

“We congratulate the faculty, staff and students for their accomplishments,” she added.

Assistant Director of Schools Mike Winstead emphasized the school’s high scores in achievement and academic growth.

“This award is a great example of how you can show gains with high-achieving students,” Winstead said. “John Sevier is focused on producing results that show both student gains (with value-added scores) and outstanding student achievement (with straight-A’s on the school report card).”

John Sevier Elementary School was one of the fewer than 20 Tennessee elementary schools that received all A’s in achievement and value-added data this school year, according to the state Report Card. The state has 755 elementary schools.

Wilson wanted to publicly thank system-level administrators and his fellow principals for their support.

“We wouldn’t have been able to attain this award without the collegiality in our system,” he said. “We’re always sharing things with each other that ultimately make their way back into our classrooms. In many ways, this award is a reflection of our entire system.”

Wilson was also humbled to know the school’s success stories are posted on ECF’s website. “As a principal and educator, that’s what it’s all about for me. Educators from across the state can pick things up and learn new ways to help their children. If our success helps one child in another district then it’s all worth it.”