

CSAP test results provide data to drive improvement

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Results from 27 Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) tests taken by students in grades 3-10 were released for all Colorado school districts last Friday, Aug. 7.

“While the summary results are important, we will know much more about what these results mean in terms of adjusting instruction after our teachers and administrators dig into the data together on Aug. 13 in a process called Data Driven Dialogue,” said Supt. Bret Miles.

He added the data driven dialogue process is designed to help make the numbers meaningful and will result in plans of action for the upcoming year to improve achievement.

Additionally, this year the State of Colorado is releasing a new look at CSAP called the Colorado Growth Model. Rather than just looking at static CSAP scores, the growth model looks at how much students learn each year.

This will give schools the opportunity to measure the effectiveness of the program in regard to how many students are achieving a year’s worth of growth over the course of a school year.

For 12 years, CSAP results have been the main measurement for showing the previous year’s student performance in math, writing, reading and science.

CSAPs will still be an important guage, but the data will become part of the growth model that expands the information.

Growth data for Holyoke School District Re-1J will be explained further in next week’s Enterprise.

Miles noted a comprehensive report on the 2009 CSAP results, including growth data, will be given at the Aug. 18 meeting of the Board of Education.

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CSAPs summarized

CSAP is a set of tests created by the State of Colorado and given to all students in the state from grades 3-10 in the areas of math, reading and writing. Students also take a science test in grades 5, 8 and 10. Tests are conducted in February and March, with results released in August each year.

Students in each school district are generally compared to the state average in two ways: the percent scoring proficient and advanced, as well as the percent scoring unsatisfactory, explained Miles.

Holyoke School District scored above the state average in proficient and advanced on eight of the 27 tests, and marked the same percentage as the state on one more test.

Holyoke's percentage of students ranking proficient and above was higher than the state's in 3rd grade reading, writing and math; 9th grade reading and writing; 5th grade reading; 7th grade math; and 10th grade math. This district matched the state average in 9th grade math.

Holyoke students had better marks than the majority of the state in the unsatisfactory category, beating the state in 15 of the 27 tests, said Miles.

Only 10 of the Holyoke tests had a higher percentage of proficient and advanced students from last year's results. However, when comparing tests in this way, the same students are not being compared.

Eight tests were one or two students away from meeting the state averages. "When there are only 40-50 kids in a class, two to five percent means one or two students," explained Miles.

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“We expect to meet or exceed state averages. Pointing this out is not an excuse, but a message to our staff and students about how close we are now. When we continue to refine our practices, focus our curriculum and involve students, we will be able to close these gaps,” added Miles.

Further investigation will take place by the teachers, added the superintendent. “It is obvious a primary focus will continue to be our achievement gap between White and Hispanic students.”

In most cases there is about a 30 percent gap in proficient and advanced scores when comparing the two ethnicities, Miles pointed out. “Our ethnic achievement gap is obvious, and will continue to be a priority to address in the upcoming school year.”

CSAP celebrations

Supt. Miles highlighted specific celebrations from the 2009 CSAP data as follows:

—Writing—7 of 8 tests resulted in a lower number of unsatisfactory writers than the state average. The district was one student away from beating the state average on the eighth test.

—Writing—9th grade had 67 percent proficient and advanced, which is an all-time best score.

—Math—3rd grade and 7th grade beat the state on both marks— higher proficient and advanced score and lower unsatisfactory score.

—Math—4th grade had 0 percent unsatisfactory. While they did not beat the state average for proficient and advanced, the class scored six percent higher than they did as third graders.

—Reading—5th grade and 9th grade beat the state on both marks—higher proficient and

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advanced score and lower unsatisfactory score.

—Reading—8th grade scores were down in comparison to last year's 8th graders. However, there was two percent less unsatisfactory and the same level of proficient and advanced scores than the same group scored as 7th graders.