

TCAP shows consistent progress toward goals

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Holyoke School District's 2012 TCAP (Transitional Colorado Assessment Program) results have been released.

The district met or exceeded the state average of proficient and advanced students on nine of the 27 tests. According to growth measures, the district exceeded the median growth percentile for the state in 10 tests.

TCAP is the new name for what has been known as CSAP since its inception in 1997. The statewide mandatory assessment was renamed this year as the test began to transition into the newly adopted state standards.

Results from TCAP come in two forms: status and growth.

Status results for all TCAP tests are classified into one of four categories: advanced, proficient, partially proficient and unsatisfactory. Typically, students who fall into the advanced or proficient categories are considered to be meeting the state standards.

Growth scores are calculated by taking all the students in the state who scored the same in one year, and then determining how the same are distributed the next year. Being at the 50th percentile is the state average.

Holyoke School District has set its own targets for student achievement, outlined by the Standard of Excellence team and included in the district's strategic plan, Destination 2016.

The goals of the district are clear: to have students achieving in the top 25 percent in the state. Each test has a target for proficient and advanced which will equal the top quartile in the state. The 2016 goal for growth is to have each test at the 67th percentile.

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Times are tough in public education. State funding per pupil has been reduced 16 percent in three years. Holyoke has lost \$769,009 of funding during this time that the state has not kept up with minimum funding in the School Finance Act as required by the Constitution.

Holyoke, like other schools in the state, has been faced with the task of increasing student achievement with fewer people and fewer resources.

“To see our school stay on track with our ambitious 2016 goals is a testament to the focus on achievement and tireless effort of our teachers,” said Superintendent Bret Miles.

“We are very fortunate to have a staff dedicated to increasing achievement regardless of the challenges,” he added.

Celebrations in this year’s TCAP status results include:

—15 of the 27 tested areas had higher scores than one year ago.

—9 of 27 tests exceeded the state average.

—4 tests were the best scores in the last five years: 5th grade reading, 6th grade reading, 6th grade writing and 6th grade math.

—District continues to show positive results in addressing the needs of the lowest scoring students with a wide variety of interventions.

—15 of 27 tests have the same or fewer unsatisfactory students than the state and five other tests are within one student of being at the state average. Very close.

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Celebrations in this year's growth results include:

—10 of the 21 tests with growth data exceeded the state average.

—8 tests tied or exceeded all-time high growth marks.

—3 tests are already within one student of hitting the 2016 goal of 67 percentile growth.

"Having many tests so close to meeting our target or meeting the state average is very encouraging," said Miles. "We know that we will not change student achievement overnight or meet our 2016 goals this year or next.

"However, we do use this data to check to see that our changes to instruction and curriculum are working. This year's data shows that changes by our staff have us headed in the right direction," said Miles.

Holyoke School District has identified its challenges and has developed improvement plans that address each area. Professional development for teachers is targeted. Teachers continue to receive training in the areas of instruction targeting second language learners.

Teachers are also being trained how to use tools to break down test data, which will help teachers adjust instruction throughout the year and meet high goals.

The district also implemented a new writing curriculum a year ago and is now entering year two, full implementation. Each year teachers are involved in the process of identifying needs and proposing solutions in the improvement plans which go before the Board of Education for final approval each spring.

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“The administration is very pleased with our results this year. While we are not at our five-year goals yet, nor did we expect to be, we are showing the kind of progress it will take to close achievement gaps and reach our long-term goals,” said Miles.

A six-year look at status results and a four-year look at growth results is available. Further questions can be directed to Superintendent Miles by contacting the Holyoke School District Administration Building at 854-3634.

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