

Chippewa pleased with M-STEP and SAT scores

C AND G NEWSPAPERS

By Thomas Franz✉

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CLINTON TOWNSHIP/MACOMB TOWNSHIP — Chippewa Valley Schools administrators came away pleased with the results of the district's scores on the M-STEP and SAT exams administered late last spring.

Overall, test data shows the district outperformed county and state averages in every grade and every content area.

"I think overall we're doing really well comparatively to other districts, but we always want to do better," said Pam Jones, the director of curriculum and assessment.

The district's scores in math stood out most to Jones, as fifth- and eighth- grade math scores were among the top three in Macomb County.

For ninth-grade PSAT math results, nearly 60 percent of district students met or surpassed the state benchmark, compared to a state average of just more than 40 percent of students.

Jones credited the district's new math program, "CMP3," as a significant reason why Chippewa students excelled in the subject. The test results also provided the first tangible evidence that the new program is working.

"We were very pleased with how our students did in fourth and fifth grades especially, but I think our trend data is upward from fourth through eighth grade so we're very pleased with that," Jones said. "We think that this year as students will have had three years of CMP3, we will do even better on the ninth-grade PSAT."

In the M-STEP English and Language Arts section, district students outperformed county and state averages at each grade level, with fifth- and eighth-grade students having the highest percentage of test takers to meet the state benchmark.

Similar to most years, science and social studies scores were low across the board for elementary and middle school students, but Chippewa students again outperformed local and state averages.

"When you talk about elementary school, the focus is so heavily on ELA, reading and math, that science and social studies may not get equal time that reading and math get because we want to make sure kids don't go to middle

school not able to read or not able to do mathematics,” Jones said. “I think that’s probably common statewide, the focus on elementary school is on reading and math.”

On the SAT, the district’s total mean score was 1044, which was 43 points above the state’s mean score of 1001.

Chippewa had a higher percentage of students than county or state averages meet benchmarks for college readiness, which is a test result that reflects that a student would have a 75 percent chance or better of achieving at least a C in a first-semester college course.

Just more than 40 percent of district students met the college readiness benchmark in both English, reading and writing, as well as math. More than 60 percent of Chippewa students passed English, reading and writing, while about 45 percent did so in math.

The spring SAT exam was the first time that it was the state-mandated exam for college applications in Michigan, as opposed to the ACT previously.

“There is a lot more application, problem solving and statistics in mathematics, so that’s why we’re now going to look at our high school mathematics, because we have a great program K-8, and we want to continue that improvement in high school,” Jones said.

Jones said greater analysis for reading is also necessary for the SAT.

“It has much higher-level thinking skills, and much more analysis in ELA. There’s much more analysis between two different texts, having to restate things right out of the text and pull evidence from the text,” Jones said. “I think one of the biggest challenges was mostly informing parents and teachers, making sure that everyone knew that the test was a very different type of test.”

While reviewing which areas the district will focus on for improvement in the near future, ELA for K-8 students will be on the top of the list, Jones said.

“The reading level is much higher on the SAT than it was on the ACT, so our previous reading materials in middle school were not high enough, so that’s why we’re looking into a new program,” Jones said.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Staff Writer Thomas Franz covers Macomb Township, Chippewa Valley Schools and the Macomb County Board of Commissioners for the Macomb Township Chronicle. He also covers sports primarily for the Shelby-Utica News. He has worked for C & G Newspapers since 2013 and attended Michigan State University.
