

District's test scores show improvement

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Authors: hjones@thelancasternews.com

Byline: By Haley Jones
hjones@thelancasternews.com

Content

The S.C. Department of Education released results from state assessments for the 2022-23 school year, and Lancaster County School District student results show a significant bounce back in post-pandemic classrooms.

Local test results were presented to the Lancaster County school board at its Tuesday, Sept. 19, meeting.

“We’ve got some really great news with our assessments we wanted to share with you, and some more good news is coming out with our report cards next month,” said Dr. Linda Blackwell, the district’s director of elementary instruction.

SC Ready

The results for 2023 SC Ready were released Sept. 5 for students in grades three through eight in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, and science for grades four and six. These tests are statewide assessments that are required for every student.

Beginning in 2022-23, the former SC PASS science test was rolled into SC Ready. The SC PASS social studies test was not administered in 2022-23.

Every grade in the district improved its scores compared to last year’s data by several percentage points. Lancaster County School District’s overall SC Ready scores for students who met or exceeded expectations in ELA (55%), math (49%) and science (48%) are higher than the state averages of 54%, 41% and 45%, respectively.

Across the district, every single grade increased in the exceeds expectations category by several percentage points for both English and math. Fifth-grade English scores saw the biggest increase in the category, jumping from 26% in 2022 to 36% in 2023.

In grades four through eight, district students scored higher in English than in math. In third grade, the math score was slightly higher.

Grades three, four and five all have over 50% of students meeting or exceeding expectations in both English and math.

In grades six and seven, more than 50% of students are meeting or exceeding English expectations, but that falls to about 48% in grade eight.

In grade six, 45% of students are meeting or exceeding math expectations, with 34% in grade seven and 33% in grade eight.

In science, more than 46% of fourth-graders and almost 43% of sixth-graders met or exceeded expectations.

In a comparison of nine area school districts, LCSD came in third behind Clover and Fort Mill, which far exceeded every other district on the SC Ready test.

“Now that I see the data, I cannot say enough to the students, the teachers, the administrators and the families in this community,” said Lancaster County school board member Eddie Boykin. “We need to be celebrating this report, because for the last since I joined this board, all I’ve heard was all of this negative, but we have outdone ourselves.”

End of course

End of course (EOC) testing scores were released Sept. 18 for high schools in English 2, algebra 1, biology 1 and U.S. history.

Among district students, nearly 64% earned a passing grade (C or better) in English, 40% did so in U.S. history, 38% in algebra and 36% in biology.

District students did best on the English test, with 30% getting A’s and 19% B’s. On the history test, 17% got A’s and 10% B’s. On the algebra test, 14% got A’s and 12% B’s. On the biology test, 14% got A’s and 10% B’s.

The district’s percentage of failing grades (F) improved on all four tests this year, but all are still higher than the state averages. Only 16% of district students tested failed the English test, while 35% failed the algebra test, and 42% failed the history test. Almost 48% of district students failed the biology EOC.

In a comparison with the nine area school districts, LCSD came in third behind Fort Mill and Clover on the English EOC test, fourth on the algebra and biology tests and fifth on the U.S. history test.

Career Ready

Results of the S.C. Career Ready Test were also released Sept. 18. This test is given to all 11th-graders to measure the most common skills that employers define as foundational for career readiness — soft skills, math, reading and data.

This is the first year this particular career readiness assessment has been given, so there is no exact comparative data to results of previous years.

Sixty-five% of LCSD students were rated college or career ready, and 32% were rated college and career ready.

The district's on-time graduation rate is 83%.

In comparison with the nine area school districts, LCSD came in third for students being college and career ready and for on-time graduation, both behind Clover and Fort Mill. The district was ranked fourth for students being college or career ready.

"I just want to say thank you to our educators," school board member Courtney Green said. "I know how hard you're trying, I know that you have a lot to overcome. There are a lot more success stories all over the district, and so I really do appreciate the work that's getting put into this."

For more information on state test scores and specific school data, visit <https://ed.sc.gov/>.