

## **Eighth-graders excel in WKCE tests**

Written by CAROL POMEDAY  
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### **But younger students struggled in language arts, reading on state exam**

Cedar Grove-Belgium middle and high school students, especially eighth-graders, scored well above the state average on the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE), but elementary students were closer to the state average and below it in one instance.

Students in third, fifth, sixth, seventh and 10th grades were tested in reading and math. Fourth and eighth-graders were tested in six areas — reading, language arts, math, science, social studies and a writing component.

Math was a strong point for all students, who scored well above the state average for the number of students in advanced and proficient levels.

Principals were scheduled to present the results to the School Board Wednesday, May 9.

Eighth-graders at Cedar Grove-Belgium Middle School excelled in the exam, with more than 94% performing at the advanced or proficient levels in reading, math, science and social studies, and 80%, compared to 63% statewide, achieving those levels in language arts.

On the writing test, eighth-graders scored slightly above the state average. Four eighth-graders scored 8 out of 9 points on the writing task. Eighth-graders met the annual measurable objectives in reading and math as defined by the state.

Fourth-graders scored below the state average (74% compared to 77%) in language arts, struggling with finding the best ways to combine sentences in a story, finding the sentence that best completes the story and research-related questions.

Fourth-graders did very well in reading, math and science, were at the state average in social studies and above average in the writing task.

Third-graders did well in math with 83% at advanced or proficient levels compared to 77% statewide, but only slightly above the state average (80.3% to 79.7%) in reading.

“All areas represent growth needs,” Elementary Principal Craig Gunderson said in his report. “Scores have been trending as a decline since 2002.”

Work on common core standards in the curriculum will be done over the summer, he said, in addition to next school year when early release days on the third Wednesdays of each month will be devoted to curriculum work at all grade levels.

Elementary teachers will also schedule what they call PIE (prevention, intervention and enrichment) time for all students of 30 to 50 minutes, with students receiving help or challenges according to their skill levels.

“Instructional aides and intervention specialists will partner with grade-level teachers to

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provide smaller group sizes and intensive support to all students,” Gunderson said in his report.

In the middle school, fifth, sixth and seventh-graders were well above the state average with 85% to 95% scoring in the advanced or proficient levels in math and reading compared to 78% to 85% statewide.

Sophomores also excelled, with 90%, compared to 77% statewide, scoring at advanced and proficient levels in reading and 84% achieving those levels in math compared to 71% statewide.

On the writing task, the average score was also above the state average.

Although pleased with her students’ scores, Middle School Principal Jeanne Courneene said in her report that “language arts continues to have fewer students in the advanced and proficient performance levels in comparison to other content areas,” something her staff is working on.

At the April School Board meeting, Sara Ketterhagen explained the intervention she does with fifth-graders and her desire to expand that to more grades.

Courneene reported that 25 students for whom English is not their primary language, took the Access test for English language learners (ELL). They were tested on listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Last year, 14 students took the test.

“Seven of the 14 showed growth in comparison to last year and five students took the next grade level tests,” Courneene said in her report.

Two students achieved a composite score of 6, the highest proficiency level for ELL students and will take the regular WKCE test next year.

Courneene praised Dori Schmitt, ELL coordinator, for the work she does with all students learning English.