

Test scores released by the School District

By David Lawrence
LO'T News Editor

The results are in! Drum roll please... Who am I kidding? Seeing those long awaited test scores might not make your weekend, but they sure are important. With the implementation of "No Child Left Behind," school test scores are now more important than ever.

Each school in the state is evaluated based on their performance on the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE). The cumulative scores of the ACT and the WorkKeys will determine whether or not the school meets Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). If the school does not meet AYP, it is then placed on the Academic Warning List. Last year at Moline, 55% of students were required to meet standards, but this goal was not met.

Each year the requirements will increase. According to No Child Left Behind, by the year 2014, 100% of

the students in each high school will be expected to meet state standards in reading and math in order to meet AYP. Dr. Burrus, principal did see some light at the end of the tunnel, although the 100% plateau is highly improbable. "We have seen some growth and improvement in our scores, but we are still below the state average in most subjects. The good thing is that we are closing the gap." Large improvements were shown in several subgroups. The most improvement was shown in students with disabilities, doubling the reading and math scores from 2006.

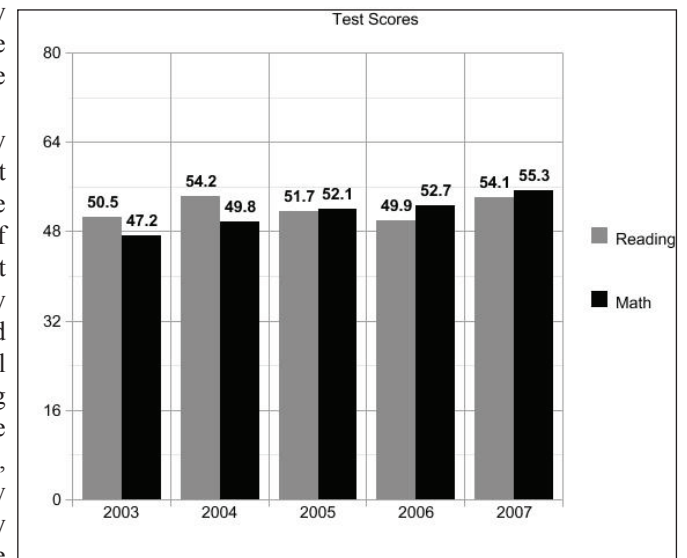
Although the school is still on the warning list, this is not the only thing we should look at. Dr. Burrus acknowledged the fact that, "The staff is working very hard to help students meet AYP, and with even more zeal to make the state goal, students get a great overall education."

Teaching to the test may be a way to improve test scores, but the test itself is merely a 'small snapshot' and not the full

picture of a student's education. "Not all students are college bound," stated Dr. Burrus. "We need to teach our students all the right tools and skills they will need to use in their respective careers."

The tests may not be the perfect way to measure the progress of students, but there is really no way around it. Everyone will continue working hard to meet state and national goals, no matter how improbable they may seem. The great disparity of demographics between schools

is staggering. One size does not fit all, and one test doesn't necessarily fit all students. As a school, Moline will continue to work hard to meet AYP.



The PSAE test scores from 2003-2007 for math and reading are shown here. The school is continuing to make changes to improve these standardized testing scores.

Restructuring our education

David Ballard
L'OT News Editor

Restructuring - the word itself brings shivers to almost all who hear it.

In 2001 President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act for education reform. The goal of No Child Left Behind is to make sure every student can pass standardized tests and not be left behind.

If the school is on the academic warning list for more than 2 years, the school must begin to "restructure" the district.

Starting this year, Moline High School began making plans to restructure the district for an April 30th deadline. Some of the plans are already being implemented and are showing some improvement throughout the high school, specifically with the freshmen class.

The biggest restructuring plan of this year was the implementation of the Freshmen Academy. The goal of the academy is to

make freshmen more accustomed to high school and this will in turn make test scores rise in the coming years.

Another program initiated was student-led parent conferences. The conferences were brought forward to help increase parent involvement. Last year in the spring only 15% of parents showed up for the conferences. Dr. Burrus wants to change all that by making sure that all parents will be involved in the education of their children.

"The results we've seen so far are very encouraging with the reduction in freshmen failures. We hope that this trend will continue," says Dr. Burrus. In the next few years, it is hoped that all parents and students will attend conferences.

The state has organized a committee, which includes top educators from around the state, to improve districts. Dr. Burrus is a member of this committee, and he hopes that being on this committee will help give the district

many new ideas and spawn considerable improvement.

Some of the ideas that have been proposed by the committee have spurred controversy among parents. Much of the controversy centers around plans for district overhaul.

The boldest idea is the creation of a single middle school, which will include grades 5-8. Currently Moline's middle schools only go through grades 7 and 8.

"Having fifth graders go to middle school would allow the district to prepare the kids better and have the teachers communicate with each other to make sure the kids are on par with the standards," said one member of the committee after proposing the plan to the district.

Restructuring can be a touchy subject to some but it is vital for the district to create new life and new ideas to meet the goals of the state and the goals for No Child Left Behind.

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