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Local students show improvement on state's high school test

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 The Holland Sentinel

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Ottawa County, MI — Local students showed some improvement on the state's high school test, the Michigan Merit Exam, according to scores released by the Michigan Department of Education Thursday, Aug. 7. High school juniors were tested in the spring on the merit exam, which includes the college entrance exam, the ACT.

Students who do well can qualify for up to \$4,000 in state college scholarships.

Holland Public Schools increased its percentage of students passing the writing portion of the test slightly, from 45 percent to 46 percent.

"All of the Holland scores in all of the areas, we had higher scores than the state average and that was very encouraging," said David Harwell, assistant superintendent for instruction at Holland.

Math and writing remain the hardest subjects for high schools across the state. The percentage of students passing the writing section of the test increased from 40 percent to 41 percent, while the percentage of those passing math remained at 46 percent.

Statewide, the percentage of Michigan public school 11th-graders who scored at proficient or advanced levels improved slightly in the subjects of reading and science, compared to the results from spring 2007. The percentage of students who passed social studies declined.

At Zeeland East High School, the percentage of students passing social studies jumped to 94 percent from 90 percent last year.

"We are analyzing the data closely to find ways to improve the delivery of core lessons in our classrooms," said Zeeland Public Schools Superintendent Gary Feenstra. "Generally, we're pleased to see our scores hold steady or improve from last year, particularly in light of the state's tougher curriculum standards and budget constraints."

Hamilton Community Schools Superintendent Scott Korpak said that he was pleased with his scores and expected it would result in his school receiving a higher letter grades from the state department of education later in the year.

"That just shows the good things that have happened at the high school," Korpak said. "We're showing continuous improvement."

This is the second year the Michigan Merit Exam has been administered — previously high school juniors took different version of the test, the Michigan Educational Assessment Program.

In addition to enabling students to earn the \$4,000 scholarship, the merit exam provides students with a free college-reportable ACT score, accepted by a majority of colleges in the United States. On average, Michigan students who took the ACT as part of this state test had the same composite score — 18.8 — as last year's students on this test.

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Percentage of students passing sections of the 2008 Michigan Merit Examination.					
	Math	Writing	Reading	Science	Social Studies
State Average	46	41	62	57	80
West Ottawa High School	62	45	66	65	87
Holland High School	52	47	68	61	87
Zeeland East High School	63	52	72	73	94
Zeeland West High School	60	44	66	65	86
Hamilton High School	67	62	75	75	94
Fennville High School	38	19	47	37	74
Saugatuck High School	63	53	72	71	90
Holland Christian High School	75	75	87	85	98
Black River Public School	72	72	89	83	98
Wavecrest Career Academy	3	4	10	6	49
Calvary Schools of Holland	67	87	100	80	100

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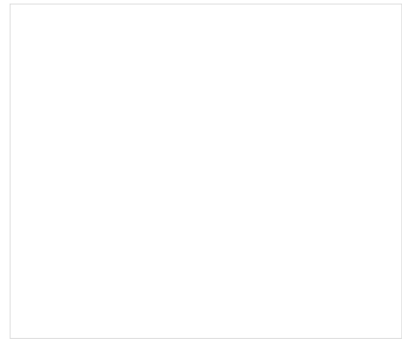
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