

NECAP scores OK in Coventry

Most district schools above state averages in science

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COVENTRY — Despite the Coventry School District being above the state average for science NECAP test scores, school officials agree there's still room for improvement.

According to the data presented by Coventry Assistant Superintendent Mike Convery at Tuesday's Coventry School Committee meeting, all Coventry schools are above state average

"All Coventry schools showed increase in scores except four elementary schools," he

said.

With 40 percent, Coventry High School surpassed the state average by 10 points. At 48 percent, Feinstein Middle School surpassed the state by 18 points. Compared to the state's average of 41 percent for elementary schools, Blackrock scored a 42 percent, Hopkins Hill scored 52 percent, Tiogue scored a 54 percent, Washington Oak scored at 47 percent and Western Coventry scored a 68 percent.

Fourth, eighth, and 11th-graders in all of Rhode Island's school districts took the test.

While the schools collectively were above average Convery explained some of the results

from certain portions of the questions weren't scored so high.

"Some questions were multiple choice while others were what's called closed reading and constructive response," Convery said.

Different from reading comprehension, closed reading is about reading a passage, comprehending it and transferring that information to form a constructive response.

He said some of the lower scores in the multiple choice in the elementary schools could be just a matter of students reading the question too quickly and selecting an answer too

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quickly, while other questions really require the student to analyze a question by using deductive reasoning.

"It could be the way the question was read or could it be a matter of taking a look at what students are learning at what school," he said. "Teaching style may vary as well, therefore students may be exposed to the style of these questions."

Convery said one part of the three-part test is conducted in a way that students pair up to conduct an experiment, then go to their own desks after to analyze the data.

"The experiment part goes

fine but when they have to bring the data together, they don't do as well," he said.

The set-up of the test is the same for all grades that take it; the questions vary by grade level.

The next step, said the assistant superintendent, is to integrate English Language Arts into the science instruction so the language becomes common.

Coventry School Superintendent Mike Almeida agrees with Convery.

"We're ok, but can do better," he said. "We need to look at how we can best integrate language into subjects because there are not enough hours in the day, but it won't happen

overnight."

Almeida said as district officials review results, good or bad, they can look at if a certain topic was just covered in a classroom, which caused an increase in the scores, or vice versa.

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