

Coventry science NECAPs on rise

Scores throughout the district are above the state average; all but 3 show increase

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COVENTRY — Results from the science NECAP are in and it shows that six schools in Coventry are above the state average and all but three schools showed an increase in scores.

Science teacher Teresa Medeiros explained that of the five elementary schools, Blackrock Elementary School scored the lowest percentile — 36 percent for 2013- 2014 — while the past two years Blackrock was over the state average, along with the other district's elementary schools.

Hopkins Hill Elementary School scored 61 percent, Tiogue Elementary School scored 68 percent, Washington Oak scored 52 percent and Western Coventry scored 64 percent compared to the state average of 41 percent.

SCIENCE SCORES A PLUS

• Four Coventry elementary schools were well above the state average score on the science NECAP test (41 percent):

Tiogue Elementary — 68%	Hopkins Hill — 61%
Western Coventry — 64%	Washington Oak — 52%

• Feinstein Middle School and Coventry High School were also above the Rhode Island average in constructed response questions.

Middle School:	RI average: 8.2 (out of 18 points)
	Feinstein: 10.2
High School:	RI average: 7.6 (out of 18 points)
	Coventry HS: 10.1

Medeiros said some of the questions were asking students to draw conclusions after reading a statement, which sets up an experiment.

In one example she used in her presentation, the question/experiment was asking students what happens to sand on a hill when it rains.

Although there was a lot of background information offered, kids struggle with those types of questions.

“A lot more inquiry and constructive explanation needs to be continued to work through,” she said.

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NECAP scores in Coventry mostly above RI average

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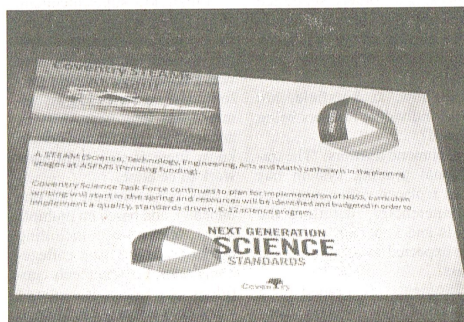
The elementary inquiry slide demonstrated how, again, Blackrock's percentage was lower than the other elementary schools at 4.6 percent while the other schools fell in between 6.6 to 7.8 percent with the state average being 5.6 percent with 18 possible points, total.

"The inquiry questions were where the students underperformed," she said. "They're pretty intense and connect various aspects of the inquiry process including organizing, representing and manipulating data and using evidence to support and justify interpretations and conclusions, as well as explaining how evidence reflects the hypothesis."

Another important thing she pointed out is how the district is in need of resources that are better aligned with science standards.

"We need to upgrade on a large scale because science changes every day and it becomes so advanced, so we need to consider these things as we transition to the Next Generation Science Standards," Medeiros said.

For Feinstein Middle School, in their constructed response questions, the middle school surpassed the state over the past three years with scores between 35 and 48 percent. The state



range was between 23 and 30 percent.

Similar to the high school's question, the challenge to middle school students was to read a question then devise a hypothesis to go and work the problem out.

Out of the possible 18 points, the middle school average was 10.2 with a state average of 8.2.

On the high school side, Coventry High School students were just about equal with the state three years ago with 32 percent and the state with 33 percent in their constructed responses, where they answer questions from a main statement, but has passed the state average over the last two years.

According to the slides from her presentation, high school students passed the state, 10.1 percent to the state's 7.6 per-

cent, again, with 18 possible points total.

However, there were some questions where they underperformed.

"When it comes to analyzing the data, they can analyze the information from observations, research or experimental data to formulate the hypothesis," she explained.

The example question she offered in her presentation was a question about throwing an object using a catapult and measuring distances.

"We need to see, do they know how to interpret a reference sheet to answer the questions and if so, will they use it? Do they think to go there and pull that information?" she asked.

Medeiros explained how the inquiry is also about writing hy-

pothesis and reviewing the different variables such as ratio and what will happen to the object if that changes.

Coventry School Committee member James Pierson was interested in seeing more data about what needs to be done.

"We can't improve until we know where the gaps lie," he said.

"We're going to start mirroring the types of questions that are a part of the testing because that's the knowledge they'll need for their careers, not just college," Medeiros said.

"We noted the amount of questions that were left unanswered were more than possibly should have been, therefore I, along with Assistant Coventry School Superintendent Mike Convery, contacted the state, she said, adding that it took a couple months to finish a review but according to a letter from the Rhode Island Department of Education Commissioner Deborah Gist agreed some may have been misleading but said the effect, had things been different, would have been minimal.

"A portion of the wording of some items, students were not clear about the question and did not provide the required response," Gist said in her response to the school district. "This lack of clarity led some

students to receive no credit on an item even though their response included some accurate, scientific information. We concluded, however, that only a small percentage of students who received zero points on one of these test items could have received partial credit

based on the information they included in their response."

Medeiros said while she's glad the state acknowledged the question, the district is still planning to go forward with the Next Generation Science Standards.



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