

# Coventry schools come out above benchmarks

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COVENTRY — With overall scores above the state averages in the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), Assistant Superintendent Michael Convery said he is encouraged by the initial data released to the district by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) two weeks ago.

Students in grades three through eight scored 79 percent proficient in reading, 67 percent proficient in mathematics and 65 percent proficient in writing. Statewide reading was at 68 percent, mathematics at 57 percent and writing at 53 percent.

Eleventh grade students were 66 percent proficient in reading, 30 percent in mathematics and 47 percent in writing — compared with state averages of 69 percent in reading, 26 percent in mathematics and 53 percent in writing.

When meeting with the Commissioner of Education Peter McWalters on Monday, Convery said that Walters noted that the gains are impressive overall in Coventry. Although in order to determine where Coventry can improve, the school department will have to wait for school rankings to come out in May, Convery said.

The test results show that the curriculum

on Coventry is definitely aligned to state grade level expectations, Convery said. “Since the introduction of the test in 2005 we’ve made progressive gains across the board which shows that the students are familiar with this test and the teachers work hard to prepare them.”

The NECAP, Convery noted, is a measure of a whole district, school, or grouping of kids — not a measure of an individual student on a given day. Students are not graded on this test and it is administered in October to measure their learning in all previous years.

“Overall the results are encouraging,” Convery said. “The middle school had some gains, which was nice to see, and in the future we’ll be focusing on math. In the past we added some reading teachers to grades and in the scores that is paying off. Now we’re going to do the same thing with math.”

Since 2005 Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School of Coventry has gone from 61 percent proficiency in reading to this year’s 80 percent; in math it jumped from 57 percent to 64 percent; in reading from 54 percent to 64 percent. These are different groups of students tested each time, Convery said, but it shows the progression of the school as a whole.

See SCORES, Page A-4



Daily Times File Photo

Students at Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School of Coventry may not have known it when the school year started back in August, but they were poised to make a dramatic improvement in their school’s scores on the New England Common Assessment Program, which was administered across the state in October.

## HOW THEY MEASURE UP

The New England Common Assessment Program was developed and administered in partnership with New Hampshire and Vermont, the only multistate testing initiative in the nation. Maine will join in October of this year. The test measures grade level and grade span expectations for third through eighth grades and eleventh grade, according to the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE).

### Proficiency Results for Grades 3-8\*

#### Reading

Statewide: 68%  
Coventry: 78%  
West Warwick: 65%

#### Math

Statewide: 57%  
Coventry: 67%  
West Warwick: 54%

#### Writing

Statewide: 53%  
Coventry: 65%  
West Warwick: 46%

### Proficiency Results for Grade 11\*

#### Reading

Statewide: 69%  
Coventry: 66%  
West Warwick: 64%

#### Math

Statewide: 26%  
Coventry: 30%  
West Warwick: 22%

#### Writing

Statewide: 53%  
Coventry: 47%  
West Warwick: 39%

\*Data provided by Rhode Island Department of Education.



# Officials react to school scores

*Continued from Page A-1*

Math at Coventry High School will be a particular focus area, Convery said. 2008 was only the second year that the test was administered and the scores are

above the state average, Convery said, but they're not great. With the state average at 26 percent, Coventry was 26 percent proficient last year and rose to 30 percent proficient in 2008.

Superintendent Kenneth DiPietro says that he is "very pleased with the overall performance and with our curriculum. It obviously

matches with state's expectations because my students are over performing."

Before making any specific claims about the scores, DiPietro said, he would like to see the subgroup data to understand where the district has been successful not just in general but also in specifics.

*Continued from Page A-1*

The statewide comparison also might not be fair given some of West Warwick's demographic, Sheehan said. "In Rhode Island you get compared with everyone else no matter how many free and reduced lunches, no matter how many special education students, no matter how many individual education plans you have."

With each district choosing its own curriculum to meet the statewide grade level expectations, sometimes the curriculum needs to

be adjusted for better scores, Sheehan said.

But regardless of fair or unfair classification, he plans to get to work, Sheehan said. "We take [the NECAP] very seriously and we will improve our scores. This data will be shared with staff, grade level leaders and the principals will be involved in this. This is where we are; these are the reasons for it, we will determine where the curriculum is not aligned, where [subjects are misplaced in] scope and sequence, or maybe we're not teaching it at all."

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