Cause varies, recently

implemented programs

hope to fix trend

By Diane Stamm

The Wauneta Breeze

The Nebraska Department of Education released its annual NeSA (Nebraska State Accountability) test results Nov. 20.

Testing was held last spring for grades three through eight and juniors in high school.

In reading, three classes rank ahead of the state average while two are very close to the average. Two classes are well below average.

Math shows a similar trend. Five classes are above or near average, while two classes are low.

Writing scores, which test the areas of content/ideas, organization, voice/word choice and sentence fluency/conventions, are close to state averages.

Results are listed on page eight.

W-P teacher, Jill Hurtt and two fellow teachers have worked to prepare the data for a teacher data retreat held Wednesday, Nov. 28.

Teachers reviewed the information to identify areas needing improvement.

Hurtt and Superintendent Randy Geier say that the NeSA test can't be used as the gold standard of a school's success.

Low enrollment numbers are part of the problem.

"Our numbers compared to the state are not satistically significant," said Hurtt.

Geier and Hurtt also said the fluctuation in the number of students effects the scores, as an example, three students have left in the past month.

Both said the school is trying to focus more on the core groups of students who remain constant in each class.

They used the example of the sixth grade class. The class has 10 consistent students, but has had 12-14 students. Geier and Hurtt said two students can make a big difference in test results.

Another factor is the number of SPED students taking the tests. Wauneta-Palisade has up to 17 percent of its students in the SPED program. These students in the SPED program take the test just like their fellow students which can skew results.

“Last spring our NDE mandated external visitation received rave reviews and we are working very hard on continuous school improvement,” said Geier.

Though he added, “As a school, we have set goals to improve test scores. This is an ongoing process.”

Prior Superintendent Dr. Stan Sibley began the school’s move to the Reading Street program based on test results.

The school also implemented a new writing program, Write Tools, last year and has held professional development days to make sure teachers are getting the most out of the Reading Street and Write Tools programs.

“In the past year we have also incorporated Title I and RTI (Response to Intervention) to improve student acheivement.”

Wauneta-Palisade is in its second year as a Title I school. The program provides federal funds to schools with more than 40 percent of its students taking advantage of the free and reduced meal program. WP has used those funds to hire two teachers to use for one-on-one time with students.

Teachers have also attended RTI training. The program teaches how to sift through data to identify students that need help.

NeSA is not the only standardized test taken by W-P students.

Student also take a Terra Nova test in March.

The Nebraska Department of Education has mandated future NeSA testing be done online.

Hurtt says she worries online testing will have negative effects on test scores, but time will tell.

Science

Range (0-200)		Grade 05	Grade 08	Grade 11
State	2011-2012	101.12	99.80	98.81
District	2011-2012	80.94	93.45	106.40

Writing

Grade 4
Overall Performance Percentages for All Students Meeting or Exceeding Standards

2010-2011	81.25 %	2011-2012	92.31 %

Grade 08			**Grade 11**		
Content/Ideas			**Content/Ideas**		
State	2011-2012	5.71	State	2011-2012	5.75
District	2011-2012	6.00	District	2011-2012	5.40
Organization			**Organization**		
State	2011-2012	5.54	State	2011-2012	5.72
District	2011-2012	5.45	District	2011-2012	5.53
Voice/Word Choice			**Voice/Word Choice**		
State	2011-2012	5.67	State	2011-2012	5.93
District	2011-2012	6.09	District	2011-2012	5.80
Sentence Fluency/ Conventions			**Sentence Fluency/ Conventions**		
State	2011-2012	5.54	State	2011-2012	5.84
District	2011-2012	5.27	District	2011-2012	5.67

Reading

Range (0-200)		Grade 03	Grade 04	Grade 05	Grade 06	Grade 07	Grade 08	G
State	2009-2010	101.01	103.84	101.08	101.38	104.30	102.43	
State	2010-2011	104.41	109.01	107.65	108.81	110.38	106.08	
State	2011-2012	108.66	111.62	114.26	112.59	115.94	108.89	
District	2009-2010	91.64	106.33	144.00	128.67	*	118.00	
District	2010-2011	126.57	99.00	122.62	121.15	113.36	103.00	
District	2011-2012	117.31	119.36	90.00	116.23	80.20	107.45	

Mathematics

Range (0-200)		Grade 03	Grade 04	Grade 05	Grade 06	Grade 07	Grade 08	G
State	2010-2011	103.49	102.64	102.67	100.35	98.68	97.89	
State	2011-2012	107.84	106.36	108.48	106.09	103.91	99.25	
District	2010-2011	126.71	114.35	134.77	128.85	101.73	101.09	
District	2011-2012	138.54	105.86	79.44	119.15	84.07	100.82	