

School district fails to show growth or improvement in 2012-13

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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WAUNETA-PALISADE NeSA RESULTS BY THE NUMBERS										
Reading										
Average Scale Score: Range 0-200	Grade 03	Grade 04	Grade 05	Grade 06	Grade 07	Grade 08	Grade 10	Grade 11		
2012-2013	106.84 (101.87)	106.33 (103.84)	144.80 (141.00)	128.87 (129.26)	9 (104.20)	110.08 (102.43)	96.71 (108.81)	88.32 (108.81)		
2011-2012	105.37 (104.80)	105.00 (104.02)	142.01 (140.42)	124.21 (129.83)	11.20 (110.20)	103.01 (100.88)	85.32 (100.98)	85.32 (100.98)		
2010-2011	117.00 (114.04)	108.91 (114.70)	94.80 (116.10)	100.08 (111.00)	95.18 (121.77)	96.38 (115.20)	105.08 (101.70)			
Percent Proficient By Grade										
2012-2013	15%	23%	61%	52%	2%	21%	16%	18%		
2011-2012	15%	21%	57%	49%	1%	18%	14%	15%		
2010-2011	28%	27%	47%	57%	7%	42%	45%	37%		
Math										
Average Scale Score: Range 0-200	Grade 03	Grade 04	Grade 05	Grade 06	Grade 07	Grade 08	Grade 10	Grade 11		
2012-2013	106.84 (101.87)	106.33 (103.84)	144.80 (141.00)	128.87 (129.26)	9 (104.20)	110.08 (102.43)	96.71 (108.81)	88.32 (108.81)		
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2010-2011	28%	27%	47%	57%	7%	42%	45%	37%		
Writing										
Average Scale Score: Range 0-25	Grade 04	Grade 05	Grade 06	Grade 08	Grade 10	Grade 11				
2012-2013	41.00 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)				
2011-2012	41.00 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)				
2010-2011	41.00 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)	48.40 (44.10)				
Science										
Average Scale Score: Range 0-200	Grade 05	Grade 08	Grade 10	Grade 11						
2012-2013	81.00 (84.10)	81.00 (84.10)	81.00 (84.10)	81.00 (84.10)						
2011-2012	81.00 (84.10)	81.00 (84.10)	81.00 (84.10)	81.00 (84.10)						
2010-2011	81.00 (84.10)	81.00 (84.10)	81.00 (84.10)	81.00 (84.10)						

By Diane Stamm

The Wauneta Breeze

According to the recently released Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) test results, Wauneta-Palisade Schools is not keeping up with the state average.

In addition to providing average scale scores for each district, the Department of Education also provides rankings of the state's school districts.

“Education is a very complex process that involves using a variety of sources of information to determine paths the school chooses for providing the best education possible for all students,” explains Roger Reikofski, Elementary Principal at W-P. “We use the NeSA scores as one of several indicators to help us determine what the best educational track is for our students.”

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Local educators state that the NeSA test scores are just one of many measures that can be used within a district.

“This is, in essence, one example of an assessment OF learning and the instrument is given primarily to evaluate and rate, or rank, students and schools,” Reikofski explains.

“Many educational experts agree, assessments FOR learning are much more conducive to improving education and are much more beneficial for enhancing student learning.”

Reikofski goes on to say, “In essence, the best measures are those that will help each student grow individually and compares that student to himself or herself.”

W-P rankings

Thirty students are needed for each statistical analysis. In a small school, such as W-P, this may mean combining consecutive year’s students.

An example would be the fifth grade. In the spring of 2012, 16 students were tested in the fifth grade. There were 15 fifth grade students tested in 2013.

In the elementary grade-level group, W-P ranked 200 out of 249 districts in reading, 188 out of 249 in math, 204 out of 225 in science and 209 out of 223 in writing.

W-P’s middle grade level students were ranked 236 of 249 in reading, 233 of 249 in math and 211 of 228 in science.

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The school's junior class fared better. The group was 150 out of 229 in reading, 34 of 228 in math and 55 of 228 in science.

Comparing tests of the same students from the spring of 2012 to the spring of 2013, W-P's elementary scores are second to last in growth in reading and math.

State scores show districts averaging an increase of 6.5 points in reading while W-P elementary students decreased by 13.56 points. The same is true in math. Across the state, districts increased scores by 1.66. W-P was down 20.48 points.

Over the same period, middle-school students increased their reading scores 2.08 points, ranking them 154 out of 248 schools. The average growth across the state was 3.47.

In math, middle-school students' test scores were down 5.54, ranking W-P 192 out of 248. Statewide results were down 1.13.

Across all students, reading growth decreased 3.92, ranking W-P 235 out of 248. Math scores were down 11.27, ranking W-P 244 out of 248.

While the preceding results follow the same groups of students, results are also given comparing the same grade from 2012 to 2013.

Elementary students were down in both reading and math, scoring -1.92 and 3.09 respectively.

Elementary science increased 8.40 points, ranking the school 68 out of 212.

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Reading, math and science were all down for middle-school students. Reading decreased 0.41, science was down 4.54 and math was down 11.21.

Last year's junior class showed improvement compared to their 2012 counterparts. Reading scores were up 6.22, math up 15.93 and science up 6.27, ranking the school 88, 36 and 72, respectively, out of 214 schools.

Local comparisons

While Wauneta-Palisade administrators say NeSA test results may be complicated in a district the size of Wauneta-Palisade, results vary at area schools.

Wallace tested 98 students in 2012 and 110 in 2013 compared to W-P's 97 students in 2012 and 91 in 2013.

While both schools failed to show across the board improvement and growth, Wallace's test scores from the past year rank them in the top 121 in reading, math and science, while W-P finished ranked below 200 in all categories.

Hayes Center, meanwhile, tested 61 students in 2012 and 54 in 2013.

In 2013, the school finished with higher test scores than W-P and showed dramatic increases in improvement and growth.

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School board reviews results

At Monday afternoon's school board meeting, Reikofski informed the board that the high school will be placed on the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) list as needing improvement.

Even though the junior class finished with a score 10 points higher than the state average, good for 34th out of 228 districts, the score did not meet the state guidelines.

Superintendent Randy Geier commented, "The baseline has gone up every year, which sets you up as a school to look like you're failing."

Though the Nebraska Department of Education says being on the AYP list "does NOT mean a 'failing school', but it does mean that schools must address the needs of the group of students or subject area that is not showing progress."

District urges caution in use of numbers

"We recognize there are some areas where it appears we are doing well, and other areas we would like to see better numbers...however, we keep in mind this is one data source and we are very careful not to over react to the data. We remember this is one data source, and only one, showing how our children are doing," said Reikofski.

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Reikofski explained that there are many factors that may cause concern with the NeSA system.

He explained that the instrument is given in different formats (online or paper) in different schools and that it is a “one-time” event that provides a snapshot of the entire picture.

He also notes the way NeSA scores are reported has changed over time, especially in the ways that scores from small districts are reported. He said the system currently used for reporting scores is “flawed to such a degree that the Nebraska Department of Education is dispensing with the very small districts system at this time.”

“As a parent, administrator, and educator with over 25 years of experience in many aspects of education, I would encourage others to use this data, but use it with caution,” said Reikofski.

He added, “I would encourage you to determine how well your child is doing through a variety of indicators including other test scores, daily work, and through educational discussions with your child and with the people involved with your child’s education.”

	Hopewell Center 54 Students tested Score Range	MP 91 Students tested Score Range	Walter 110 Students tested Score Range
209 districts			
Average NeSA Reading	96.20000	102.30208	110.40708
Average NeSA Math	102.25776	89.24028	108.72121
Average NeSA Science	102.42183	95.30229	108.50713
Improvement from 2012 (Different Students)			
209 districts			
Average NeSA Reading	12.60175	-5.35210	-3.31280
Average NeSA Math	10.40502	-4.45226	-3.62221
Average NeSA Science	12.37176	3.27110	-14.36246
60 schools with 2012 (Same Students)			
209 districts			
NeSA Reading	10.30132	-1.53235	-2.85025
NeSA Math	4.86100	-11.27044	-2.66787

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Data Services, The Nebraska Data