

Holyoke third grade reading CSAP scores increase significantly in 2009

Written by April Peregoy

For the first time since 2006, Holyoke third grade reading scores have increased dramatically to pass the 73 percent proficiency mark in Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP).

A significant increase to 76 percent passing from last year's 58 percent leaves Holyoke's third graders three percent above the state average—and 18 percent higher than last year's scores.

The percentage of Holyoke students who scored unsatisfactory on this year's assessment was 10 percent, a decrease from last year's 12 percent.

There was also an increase in the percentage of students earning advanced scores, from six to 10 percent.

Jennifer Kral, principal at Holyoke Elementary, said she is very pleased the Holyoke scores are now back above the state average.

"This group of students was more prepared," she added.

Kral cited this year's third graders are in their fourth year of the Reading First curriculum, which is allowing educators to do what they need to meet each child's needs.

She also credits the school's new literary coach Nancy Kennedy and a new approach that places students in smaller reading groups.

Another big help has been Jackie Williams, who has hosted vocabulary professional development workshops for the Holyoke schools. A former employee of BOCES, she now works independently hosting reading workshops.

"She saw the need to push the vocabulary and worked with the staff on ways to build vocabulary skills," said Kral.

As a result, Holyoke's third graders performed very well in the vocabulary category of the CSAPs, with 83 percent of students at proficiency or above. In each of the other categories of Fiction/Poetry and Non-fiction, 76 percent of students passed the proficiency mark.

This year's CSAPs were calculated differently from the past, using a longitudinal growth model that compares individual student growth over the year, rather than comparing this year's class to last year's. According to Kral, this gives the school a more accurate picture of how students are improving over time.

Of the 41 Holyoke third grade students who took this year's CSAP test, results indicated 10 percent were advanced, 66 percent proficient, 15 percent partially proficient and 10 percent unsatisfactory.