Holyoke School District, along with close to 1,800 school programs in the state, received annual report cards from the State of Colorado on Tuesday, Dec. 9.

All three schools in the Re-1J District earned an "average" ranking in academic performance for the 2007-08 school year, scoring very close to what they did one year ago on the State Accountability Reports (SAR).

In the eighth year of receiving SAR scores, this is the second year in a row that none of the schools have ranked in the high category. Schools are ranked based on results from the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) tests. Rankings range from "excellent" to "unsatisfactory."

SAR reports also indicate academic growth of students, which are rated differently this year than in years past. Rating categories are now "low," "typical" and "high" versus "significant improvement," "improvement," "stable," "decline" and "significant decline." The rating is calculated using student percentile scores matched over two years.

Holyoke Elementary School ranked "high" in the academic growth category, while both the Jr. and Sr. High schools earned "low" ratings.

Re-1J School Supt. Stephen Bohrer, along with HES principal Jennifer Kral and JR/SR High principal Susan Ortner, admitted to being somewhat disappointed by the district's results. And all three were hesitant to offer explanations as to why, comparatively, their scores were not as high as some other neighboring schools, saying they were afraid everything would "just sound like an excuse."

However, they did offer some valid points. First, in comparison with other area schools, the Re-1J district has a significantly larger percentage of ESL students.

Also, they noted the schools are lumped into three percentage groups and compared against each other to come up with the "low," "average" and "high" rankings. So even if a school sees significant improvement over a year, if all the other schools show slightly more improvement, it can still hurt the ranking.

As Kral explained it, within the three groupings, there are sub-categories of low, average and high that each individual student is placed in. "We can have a student who receives an unsatisfactory-low rating one year, and then next year gets an unsatisfactory-high."

However, even though improvement was shown, because that student is still in the "unsatisfactory" grouping, the results are counted negatively against the school.

Kral and Ortner also said there are positives to be found in the results. They like the fact the SARs are beginning to show longitudinal growth of students, rather than comparing this year's grades to the year before. While there were some drops in proficiency scores, over time, many of the grades have shown improvement.

Ortner made the following observation as well: "When you look at the number of students performing at or above proficiency, we are on the same levels as the state average," said Ortner, "and in Math, we're doing very well."

Kral added the SAR results indicate 10 percent of the district's tests could not be counted because the students were either new or unable to due to language. Yet, the district does not know how that percentage compares with other schools. "Is that 10 percent close to the number of tests that weren't counted at the other schools?" she asked. "Would it have made a big difference if they had been counted? We don't know."

The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires states to track whether schools are making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward the goal of ensuring that all students know and are

able to do grade-level work in reading and math.

All three Holyoke schools made AYP in reading and math. The elementary met all 30 of its targets, while JH met its 14 and HS all 10.

Many changes have been made to the SARs this year as far as the type of data that is collected. They include the following:

- —school comparisons now include academic performance and growth rating by school (2006-07 only reported the Academic Performance Rating).
- —student performance pie charts have been replaced by bar charts for different subgroups of School, Economically Disadvantaged, ELL, Students with Disabilities, White, Hispanic, Black, Asian and American Indian.
- —teachers with tenure and no tenure are replaced with teachers with three years or more of teaching experience and teachers with less than three years of teaching experience, respectively.
 - —Non-CSAP Course Offerings have replaced Safe and Orderly School Features.

New additions to the SARs are:

- -program type.
- —school website provided.
- —bar graph of the "Percent Proficient and Advanced for Elementary Grades for All Content Areas," which includes a three-year history.
- —chart providing the "Student Test Scores Used for Calculating Overall Academic Performance."
 - —school pride and goals section.
 - —number of teachers with masters or doctoral degrees.
- —financial information that includes long term debt proceeds, total district revenue per pupil, district per pupil operating revenue, state average per pupil operating revenue, debt service, other expenditures and capital expenditures.

Length of school year, safety and discipline total incidents reported and teacher average days absent information have all been deleted from the SAR reports.

Other data in the SAR includes:

- —comparison of other schools within a 75-mile radius.
- -student/teacher ratios.
- —number of staff members.
- —average teacher and administration salaries.
- -student attendance.
- —student enrollment stability.
- -students eligible for free and reduced lunch.
- —district taxpayer's report.

The district taxpayer's report shows Re-1J's two main sources of funds are state (48 percent) and local (29 percent) tax contributions, followed by federal (10.5 percent) and state (5.9 percent) grants. Total district operating revenue amounted to \$5,756,092 in 2007.

Total district operating revenue per pupil equaled \$9,941. This is well above the state average per pupil operating revenue of \$6,080.

Most of the district use of funds in 2007 went into instruction and instructional support, with \$3,558,502 (65 percent) being spent in that category. Administration, operational expenditures and building and facilities maintenance costs followed at 8.7, 8.5 and 8.2 percents respectively. Debt service and other expenditures made up the rest of the expense categories.

Total district operating expenditures amounted to \$5,305,092. With the addition of capital expenditures of \$163,776, total district use of funds for 2007 was \$5,468,868. The district's total outstanding bonded debt in 2007 was \$2,175,000 with an average annual percentage interest rate at 3.91 percent. The amount raised from the most recent bond was \$2,125,000.

JR/SR High School

Much of the information for the junior and senior high schools accountability reports is the same since the schools have the same administrators and are located in the same building.

Both the senior and junior high schools earned an "average" ranking, the same one they received the year before. Attendance rates also remained the same as in 2006-07 at 95 percent.

A total of nine incidents were reported in the JR/SR high, four less than what was reported in 2006-07. Violations included three substance abuses (tobacco), two fights and four other violations of code of conduct.

The SAR report indicates an increase in student enrollment stability from 92.2 percent in 2006-07 to 96.2 percent this year. Students eligible for free and reduced lunch make up 24.8 percent of the schools' student populations.

Non-CSAP courses offered by Holyoke JR/SR High are art, theater, music, physical education, opportunity for civic or community engagement, internet safety program, extracurricular activities, athletics, career and technical education and advanced placement.

A comparison of Holyoke's Junior High ratings for overall academic performance to other area schools follows:

□□ □ Holyoke—Average, Low

Haxtun—Average, Typical

Revere—High, No Rating

Julesburg—Average, Low

Fleming—High, Typical

Lone Star-High, No Rating

Buchanan—Average, Typical

Caliche—Average, Typical

Yuma—Average, Typical

Otis—High, Typical

Sterling—Average, Typical

A comparison of Holyoke's Senior High ratings for overall academic performance to other area schools follows:

Holyoke—Average, Low

Haxtun—Average, Typical

Revere—Average, No Rating

Julesburg—High, Typical

Fleming—Average, No Rating

Lone Star—Average, No Rating

Wray—Average, Typical

Caliche—High, Typical

Yuma—Average, Typical

Otis—High, Typical

Sterling—Average, Low

Elementary School

Holyoke Elementary School's SAR rating for academic performance remained the same this year from last at "average." Attendance figures were up slightly from 95.5 percent in 2006-07 to 95.8 percent this year.

Only three safety and discipline incidents were reported, down significantly from the 11 reported in 2006-07. All three were listed under other violations code of conduct.

At the elementary school, student enrollment stability went up from 95.4 percent in 2006-07 to 97.3 percent in 2007-08. 46.3 percent of students qualify for free and reduced lunches.

Non-CSAP courses offered by the school include art, music, physical education, internet safety program, full-day kindergarten program and a before-and-after-school care program.

A comparison of Holyoke's ratings for overall academic performance and growth rating to other area schools follows:

☐ Holyoke—Average, Typical

Haxtun—High, Typical
Platte Valley—High, Typical
Julesburg—High, Typical
Fleming—High, Typical
Lone Star—High, High
Buchanan—Average, Low
Wray—High, Typical
Yuma—Average, Typical

Caliche—High, Typical

Kenneth P. Morris—Average, Typical