

Highest past ITBS scores

GRADE	COURSE				
	READING YEAR	MATH YEAR	LANGUAGE YEAR	SCIENCE YEAR	SOCIAL SCIENCE YEAR
3RD					
5TH	6.5 (02-03)	6.6 (02-03)	6.5 (02-03/02-03)	7.0 (02-03)	6.5 (02-03)
8TH					

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Scores

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learn skills.

In order to get a better idea of their students' skill level, the administration is contemplating giving the ITBS earlier in the year, Mr. Marino said. If teachers get results in mid-September as opposed to mid-February, they have more time to assess their students' needs and work on areas that need improvement.

Students in schools on the state board's Academic Early Warning or Watch Lists — Edison Junior High, Hawthorne-Irving, Lincoln and Grant elementaries — increased their ITBS scores in reading and math.

Mr. Loy said that's especially important for the community to know because those schools have been "lambasted" because of low ISAT scores.

"Those people are working hard," he said. "No district works harder."

School officials also gathered "cohort data," which tracks scores on classes of students as they progressed through the district from the third through eighth grades. Third-grade math students from 1998 gained 10 percentile points to reach the 61st percentile, meaning they performed better than 61 percent of students who took the test. Reading students gained four percentile points from 1998 to 2001, but the scores remained flat this year.

"If they start with us, they're getting consistent instruction," Mr. Marino said of the students that remain in the district.

While score disparities still exist between the minority and white populations, minority scores have increased during the past four years.

Mr. Marino said that improvement is due to more reading, tutoring, and increased professional development that the district

didn't have or use as intensely four years ago.

One of the district's goals for next year's results is more growth from Hispanics and African-Americans.

Some of the major points and trends of the ITBS results include:

■ The highest scores since 1996 were recorded in sixth-grade reading, math, science and social studies, and eighth-grade math. Scores tied for the highest achieved in sixth-grade language, third-grade reading, language and science, and eighth-grade language and science.

■ Eighth-grade Edison students performed at grade level in all areas and nearly a full grade level higher in math.

■ Third-grade scores increased or stayed the same in every subject at Denkmann, Earl Hanson, Frances Willard, Ridge-wood and Thomas Jefferson elementaries. All scores in sixth grade went up at Denkmann, Earl Hanson, Frances Willard, Grant and Horace Mann elementaries. Washington Junior High reported increases across-the-board as well.

■ Even though there has been a steady decline in third-grade reading scores at Eugene Field since 2000, all students still scored above their grade level. Sixth-graders at that same school, however, scored at an eighth-grade level in math and social studies.

■ Eighth-graders scored above their grade level in every subject. For the first time at both junior highs, students had reading coaches last year, which could have impacted those scores, Mr. Marino said.

■ All Hispanic third-graders scored above their grade level in every subject area. Sixth-grade reading, language and social studies, and eighth-grade science scores, however, were the only scores to measure above or at those grade levels.

Rock Island test scores applauded

Basic skills report highest in 7 years

By Robin J. Youngblood
Staff writer

On average, Rock Island and Milan students achieved their highest scores in seven years when they took the Iowa Test of Basic Skills last November.

District officials presented the scores to the school board Tuesday and, upon hearing the results, the audience and board members cheered and clapped.

Scores from every category — except third-grade math and social studies — increased from last year.

Third-, sixth- and eighth-graders take the test annually in language, science, social studies, math and reading.

Rick Loy, principal at Thomas Jefferson Elementary, said during his 17 years of being



an administrator, he never has seen scores from the test this positive. "We're definitely seeing an upswing," he said. "I believe the level of effective instruction is the best it's ever been."

Jay Marino, assistant superintendent of curriculum, said one test cannot accurately measure a student's achievement. "No one assessment gives an accurate and complete picture of student performance," he said.

Students take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, or ITBS, in the fall and the Illinois Standards Achievement Test in the spring.

"What we are finding is that students who perform well on the ISAT tend to also perform well on ITBS, and vice versa," Mr. Marino said.

The difference between the tests is that the ITBS scores are based on norms. "It allows us to compare our students to other students in the nation," he said. The ISAT is a standards-based test that is used by the Illinois State Board of Education to measure how well students