



District meets, exceeds state averages on state tests

Results of state tests released today by the Florida Department of Education show that local students continue to outperform their peers in most subjects and grade levels.

The percentage of Alachua County Public School students who passed the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) in English Language Arts (ELA) in 2017 rose from 54% to 56%. That tops the state average of 54%. In fact, the local passing rate beat the state passing rate in every grade except 3rd grade.

In math, the passing rate for local students matched the state rate of 59%. In science, the 5th grade passing rate was 55% compared to the state rate of 51%, while in 8th grade both the local and state rates were 50%.

The state also released the results of end-of-course exams in biology, civics and history. In biology, local students and their Florida peers had a 63% passing rate. In Civics and U.S. History, Alachua County Public Schools' passing rates were above the state rate.

Students in the district's highest-needs schools saw some significant gains in their reading scores. Those are the scores the state uses each year to determine which schools must provide an extended school day, with the extra hour devoted to reading instruction.

During the past academic year those schools included Rawlings, Lake Forest, Alachua, Shell and Terwilliger elementary schools. Passing rates in grades 3, 4 and 5 at all five schools were up almost across the board, and in some cases the gains were dramatic. For example, Lake Forest's passing rate in 4th grade shot up from 15% last year to 45% this year. At Rawlings, the 4th grade rate nearly doubled, from 16% to 30%. At Shell, the 5th grade passing rate jumped from 25% to 46%.

"We set some very aggressive, very specific targets for each of our schools this year, especially for those students who struggle most with reading," said Deputy Superintendent Karen Clarke. "We also implemented some new programs, including a collaborative literacy program with the University of Florida, that appear to be producing good results."

The test scores released today are the primary basis for school grades, which will be released by the state later this summer.

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