

In NEPA, 95 of 181 schools meet expectations

By Sarah Hofius Hall / Published: October 14, 2016

Of the 181 schools in Northeast Pennsylvania, 95 met state expectations in a scoring system that examines student achievement and growth.

After a one-year moratorium for most schools, the Pennsylvania Department of Education released the 2016 School Performance Profile scores Thursday. In Lackawanna County, those scores range from 93.7 at Abington Heights High School to 56.6 at Carbondale Area Elementary School. A score of 100 is highest.

The state historically considered scores above 70 acceptable, though state officials advised this year to look at each school's score as a "snapshot" and cautioned against comparing scores to previous years, when standardized tests were based on a different set of standards. Fifty-two percent of schools in Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne and Wyoming counties surpassed 70.

"The process of transitioning to the new, more rigorous PA Core Standards is ongoing, and schools, administrators and teachers have been working diligently to design curriculum, update lesson plans and align learning tools to the new standards," Education Secretary Pedro A. Rivera said in a news release.

This is the first year elementary and middle schools received SPP scores under the new test. Scores on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment dropped dramatically across the state in 2015 because of a more rigorous test aligned to new standards. The U.S. Department of Education granted a one-year moratorium from SPP scores to schools that administer the PSSA. Third- through eighth-graders take the PSSA. In high schools, students take end-of-course Keystone Exams in algebra I, literature and biology.

The system, in its fourth year, replaced the Adequate Yearly Progress measure of achievement. Scores are calculated the following way:

- 40 percent academic achievement, including scores on PSSA math, reading and science tests, the end-of-course Keystone Exams and SATs.
- 40 percent academic growth, which looks at gains students make year-to-year.
- 5 percent for closing the achievement gap for all students. The achievement gap is determined by comparing the percent of students who score at proficient and above with 100 percent.
- 5 percent for closing the achievement gap of historically underperforming students, including students who are economically disadvantaged.
- 10 percent for other factors, including graduation rates, attendance rates and whether Advanced Placement courses are offered. Seven extra credit points are also available for the percent of students who score at advanced levels.

Though the state advises not to compare scores from year-to-year, many Scranton schools received scores significantly higher than two years ago — even with a more rigorous test. Superintendent Alexis Kirijan, Ed.D., attributed part of that success to a strategic plan that strengthens curriculum, offers more professional development and increases instructional leadership.

"It's really encouraging for all of us," she said. "We've seen the needle move, and we know we can move the needle. That's what's significant for us."

Carbondale Area plans to evaluate its math series and is developing a rigorous curriculum to focus on problem solving after receiving a score of 56.6 for the elementary school, said David Cerra, acting superintendent.

The district also waits for the impact of a grant to be seen. With the grant, the district purchased new books, teachers attended professional development and differentiated instruction was put into place to meet the needs of students, he said.

While other districts struggled with funding the last five years, the cuts were even deeper in Carbondale.

“I feel that the scores do not resemble the quality of the kid that we are putting out or any effort by our educators. To me the scores resemble some of our branches that are falling off from gutting things. With that being said, I firmly believe that our trunk is getting a lot stronger,” Superintendent Paul Brennan said. “In a short amount of time, we have had some key hirings, are injecting rigor, providing safety nets and aligning things with a strategy and a purpose.”

Abington Heights Superintendent Michael Mahon, Ph.D., attributed the high school’s score of 93.7 to “hard-working students and teachers,” but questioned whether the score is the best way to evaluate a school.

The state is examining that very issue now, and for the past year sought input to make the system more “holistic,” said Matt Stem, the state’s deputy secretary for elementary and secondary education.

North Pocono High School’s score, 93.4, is one of the highest in the region. Superintendent Bryan McGraw attributed part of the score to a strong faculty and a built-in remediation program for students who don’t do well the first time they take the Keystone exams.

“We have to continue to set the bar high,” Mr. McGraw said. “Why can’t we be 98 or 99?”

For more information, visit paschoolperformance.org.

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School performance profiles

Final results from the 2016 School Performance Profile system were released Thursday. The profiles look at results from the statewide assessments and incorporates other measures of student achievement, such as student academic growth from year to year. Scores are out of 100. For more information, visit paschoolperformance.org.

School	Score	School	Score	School	Score	School	Score	School	Score
Lackawanna County									
ABINGTON HEIGHTS		Scranton HS	61	Ross El Sch	75.6	Middle Smithfield El Sch	65.1	MONROSE AREA	
Abington Heights HS	93.7	South Scranton Intrmd Sch	70.4	NORTHWEST AREA		Resica El Sch	70.5	Choconut Valley El Sch	67.2
Abington Heights MS	74.6	West Scranton HS	57.3	Northwest Area HS	72.2	Smithfield El Sch	74.1	Lathrop Street El Sch	61.9
Clarks Summit El Sch	75.7	West Scranton Intrmd Sch	68.5	Northwest Area Intermediate Sch	70.2	PLEASANT VALLEY			
Newton-Ransom Sch	76.8	William Prescott #38	71.3	Northwest Area Primary Sch	56	Pleasant Valley El Sch	68	Montrose Area JSHS	72.7
South Abington Sch	75.9	VALLEY VIEW		PITTSSTON AREA		Pleasant Valley HS	76.3	MOUNTAIN VIEW	
Waverly Sch	78.4	Valley View El Ctr	71.3	Pittston Area MS	73.6	Pleasant Valley Intrmd Sch	86	Mountain View El Sch	75.5
CARBONDALE AREA		Valley View HS	87.5	Pittston Area Pri Ctr	N/A	Pleasant Valley MS	70.6	Mountain View JSHS	80
Carbondale Area JSHS	66.8	Valley View Intrmd Sch	73.9	Pittston Area SHS	79.3	SUSQUEHANNA COMMUNITY			
Carbondale El Sch	56.6	Valley View MS	73	Pittston City Intrmd Ctr	62	Susquehanna Community El Sch	77	Susquehanna Community JSHS	81.1
Luzerne County									
DUNMORE		CRESTWOOD		WEST SIDE CTC		POCONO MOUNTAIN			
Dunmore El Ctr	66.9	Crestwood HS	90	West Side CTC	60.3	Clear Run El Ctr	63.6	Wayne County	
Dunmore JSHS	70.7	Crestwood MS	76.3	WILKES-BARRE AREA		Pocono Mountain East HS	77.5	WALLENPAUPACK AREA	
LAKELAND		Fairview El Sch	83.4	Daniel J Flood El Sch	58.9	Pocono Mountain East JHS	76.7	Wallenpaupack Area HS	82.3
Lakeland El Sch	65.1	Rice El Sch	86.3	Dodson El Sch	53.4	Pocono Mountain West HS	65.3	Wallenpaupack Area MS	79.9
Lakeland JSHS	69.9	DALLAS		Dr David W Kistler El Sch	73.6	Pocono Mountain West JHS	61.4	Wallenpaupack North Intrmd Sch	71.5
Mayfield El Sch	69.1	Dallas El Sch	83.7	Elmer L Meyers JSHS	53.1	Swiftwater El Ctr	65.6	Wallenpaupack Pri Sch	N/A
MID VALLEY		Dallas MS	66.3	G A R Memorial JSHS	47.8	Swiftwater Interm Sch	81.6	Wallenpaupack South El Sch	61.2
Mid Valley El Ctr	65.4	Dallas SHS	90.3	Heights/Murray El Sch	49.4	Tobyhanna El Ctr	71.7	WAYNE HIGHLANDS	
Mid Valley Secondary Center	68.6	Dallas El Sch	83.7	James M Coughlin JSHS	63.5	STROUDSBURG AREA			
NORTH POCONO		Wycallis El Sch	82.4	Solomon/Plains El Sch	62.1	Arlington Heights El Sch	70.8	B F Morey El Sch	64.6
Jefferson El Sch	82.3	GREATER NANTICOKE		Solomon/Plains JHS	59.2	B F Morey El Sch	64.6	Hamilton Twp El Sch	69.6
Moscow El Sch	71.7	GNA El Ctr	68.1	WYOMING AREA		Stroudsburg HS	93.9	Stroudsburg HS	93.9
North Pocono HS	93.4	Greater Nanticoke Area Ed Ctr	47.8	Kennedy El Ctr	67.6	Stroudsburg Intrmd El Sch	82.3	Stroudsburg Intrmd El Sch	82.3
North Pocono Intrmd Sch	77	Greater Nanticoke Area SHS	61.9	Montgomery Avenue El Sch	75.4	Stroudsburg JHS	77.8	Stroudsburg JHS	77.8
North Pocono MS	73.2	J F Kennedy El Sch	57.2	Sara J Dymond El Sch	76.2	Stroudsburg MS	81.7	Stroudsburg MS	81.7
OLD FORGE		K M Smith El Sch	56.9	Tenth Street El Sch	65.5	Pike County			
Old Forge El Sch	68.1	HANOVER AREA		Wyoming Area Sec Ctr	71.9	DELAWARE VALLEY			
Old Forge JSHS	68.2	Hanover Area JSHS	65.2	WYOMING VALLEY WEST		Delaware Valley El Sch	88.1	Wyoming County	
RIVERSIDE		Hanover Area Memorial El Sch	56.9	Chester Street El Sch	71.8	Delaware Valley HS	85.7	LACKAWANNA TRAIL	
Riverside El Sch East	59.3	Hanover Green El Sch	57.4	Dana El Ctr	70.6	Delaware Valley MS	N/A	Lackawanna Trail El Ctr	78.3
Riverside El Sch West	63.2	Lee Park El Sch	58	Schuyler Avenue El Sch	49.1	Dingman-Delaware El Sch	84.8	Lackawanna Trail JSHS	62.4
Riverside JSHS	56.8	HAZLETON AREA		State El Ctr	58	Dingman-Delaware MS	N/A	TUNKHANNOCK AREA	
SCRANTON		Drums El/MS	72.3	Third Avenue El Sch	62.1	Dingman-Delaware Primary Sch	84.8	Evans Falls El Sch	78.3
Charles Sumner #18	65.5	Freeland El/MS	57.1	Wyoming Valley West MS	71.9	Shohola El Sch	79.5	Mehoopary El Sch	69.2
Frances Willard #32	71.9	Hazleton Area HS	60.1	Wyoming Valley West SHS	66.8	Susquehanna County			
George Bancroft #34	74.1	Hazleton El/MS	43.7	Monroe County		BLUE RIDGE			
Isaac Tripp El Sch	68.6	Heights Terrace El/MS	49.4	EAST STROUDSBURG AREA		Blue Ridge El Sch	83.4	Blue Ridge HS	78.9
John Adams #4	63.7	Maple Manor El/MS	57.3	Bushkill El Sch	63.6	Blue Ridge MS	62.8	Charter schools	
John F. Kennedy #7	76.2	McAdoo-Kelayres El/MS	57.7	East Stroudsburg El Sch	65.4	ELK LAKE			
John G Whittier #2	60.1	Valley El/MS	61.3	East Stroudsburg SHS North	70.1	Elk Lake El Sch	82.4	Fell CS	72
McNichols Plaza	59	West Hazleton El/MS	53.8	East Stroudsburg SHS South	82.7	Elk Lake JSHS	64.2	Bear Creek Community CS	78.6
Neil Armstrong #40	64.3	LAKE-LEHMAN		J M Hill El Sch	76.4	FOREST CITY REGIONAL			
Northeast Intrmd Sch	72.9	Lake-Lehman JSHS	72.5	J T Lambert Intermediate Sch	61.3	Forest City Regional El Sch	68	Evergreen Community CS	75.4
Robert Morris #27	75.2	Lake-Noxen El Sch	71.6	Lehman Intermediate Sch	67	Forest City Regional HS	71.9	Howard Gardner	
		Lehman-Jackson El Sch	77					Multiple Intelligence CS	68

N/A means the score is under review by PDE