

Test scores reveal highs and lows at Trail

C. J. MARSHALL / Published: November 22, 2017

School administrators on Monday (Nov. 13) provided the Lackawanna Trail School Board with a detailed report on the standardized test scores for all grades throughout the district.

Curriculum Supervisor Tania Stoker began the presentation, explaining that the test scores are from Spring to Fall 2017, and are compared to the previous test scores from 2015-16.

According to figures provided by Stoker, two particular areas where Trail students have been falling short at the high school level are math - specifically algebra - and biology.

Later during the presentation, high school principal Mark Murphy explained the reason for the shortfall. He said that elementary students often have double periods of instruction - 86 minutes - in math and other areas. When students reach the seventh grade, this is cut down to a single period of instruction. Teachers at the secondary level have suggested going to double periods of instruction to give them more time to go over materials and lessons, he said.

Also, Murphy continued, its Algebra curriculum is being revamped. At the present, students in Algebra I were actually receiving advanced information that should be taught in Algebra II, he said.

Other information provided by Stoker indicated that students in the fourth and eighth grades are doing strongest overall.

As reported by Stoker: "Of the 49 elementary schools in NEIU 19 and Wyoming County, in 2016-2017, LTEC scored the eighth highest with a School Performance Profile score of 78.7. Highest score was 91.4, lowest was 52.9"

Also: "Of the 33 intermediate and/or high schools in NEIU 19 and Wyoming County, in 2016-2017, LTHS scored the 11th highest overall and second highest compared to other junior-senior high schools, with a School Performance Profile score of 76.0. Highest score was 93.3, lowest was 59.9."

Focus on improvement in Special Education included putting together a comprehensive plan, utilizing research based interventions in order to increase academic achievement; and utilizing assessment data and progress monitoring data to determine the need for interventions.

At the elementary level, focus on improvement includes expanded School Wide Positive Behavior Support to Tier 3 interventions; formation of math committee grades K-6; math intervention support in grade K and 1; and increased professional development for faculty.

For both the junior and senior high school, improvements include three rounds of classroom diagnostic testing; targeted professional development series for all faculty; tiered interventions and Robust Student Process for grades seven to 12. At the junior high school, double periods of instruction for ELA and math; homogeneous grouping of students; co-taught sections of ELA and Math; targeted supplemental instruction in ELA, Math, and Science, eighth grade; and focused faculty science.

During public discussion, one woman who declined to be identified asked why remedial classes were only being given during regular school hours, requiring students to be pulled out of regular classes.

Murphy contested this, saying that there are remedial classes offered from 7 to 7:45 a.m. on school days. Other remedial classes are offered during the eighth and ninth periods, he said - times when students are normally taking electives. While these classes are important, he said that remedial schedules are set up so that students would not miss any new information being taught during their regular sessions.

In other business, led by President Phil Stark, the board offered congratulations and farewell to Ned Clarke, who decided not to seek re-election after 13 years of service.

Clarke thanked everyone, saying that the move for him was bittersweet.

"We do the best we can," Clarke said, explaining that it was a pleasure to serve with the rest of the board. "I feel good about stepping back and letting someone else take a turn."