


Brady school officials use state report differently

Written by Deb Egenberger

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BRADY SCHOOL REPORT CARD

READING SCORES			MATH SCORES		
Grade	State Ave.	District Ave.	Grade	State Ave.	District Ave.
Fourth	94.82%	100%	Fourth	85.56%	100%
Eighth	85.24%	100%	Eighth	91.66%	100%
Eleventh	87.54%	83.75%	Eleventh	88.97%	77.78%

WRITING SCORES			SCIENCE SCORES		
Grade	State Ave.	District Ave.	Grade	State Ave.	District Ave.
Fourth	90.63%	100%	Fourth	88.25%	100%
Eighth	84.57%	100%	Eighth	89.31%	84.12%
Eleventh	93.86%	88.24%	Eleventh	87.89%	100%

Source: Nebraska Department of Education <http://reportcard.nde.state.ne.us>

Small schools look at individual performance.

In a small school with 20 or fewer students in each grade, looking at a combined class test score in any area is likely to provide distorted results.

Brady Public School principal Jerry Wallace said a couple of poor scores on a standardized test can make a huge difference in a class with just 15-20 students.

That's why the Brady district will use results from last year's statewide reading, writing, math and science tests more to measure individual knowledge than classwide proficiency.

Test results in the four subjects were released last week by the Nebraska Department of Education in its annual State of the Schools Report.

"In a school our size, these results have less to do with overall percentages and more to do with individual scores," Wallace said. "Because we have smaller class sizes, we can take a look at how individual students are doing and target specific areas. That's something a much larger school wouldn't be able to do."

And because teachers and administrators know the particular characteristics of each student being tested, they can gauge results with that in mind.

For instance, Wallace said, special education students in Brady either do not receive alternative assessment tests or are too few to report.

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One grade level, he said, may include two or three students who fit that profile while another grade may have none.

Basically, he said, teachers and administrators scrutinize individual test scores more than the grade results.

Still, much of Brady's report card shows 100% proficiency in areas tested.

In reading, writing and math, all students in last year's fourth and eighth grades were 100% proficient. Fourth graders scored 100% in science as well.

Last year's 11th graders who will graduate this spring showed scores below the state average in writing and math but Wallace is quick to remind others that characteristics of the grade have to be taken into account.

As a whole, 15.7% of Brady's students receive some kind of special education service.

"We will target those students not meeting the benchmarks," he said, "but it certainly doesn't mean they aren't ready to graduate."

As a district, the state gave Brady exemplary ratings in all areas of reading assessments and standards. The district received five exemplary and one very good rating in math.

"Two-thirds or greater of our students are above the national averages and in most cases three-quarters are above," Wallace said. "That's what is used to determine federal accountability and annual progress and we more than pass in that area."