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## MAP scores on the rise

By Jessica Oliver [jessicao@bolivarmonews.com](mailto:jessicao@bolivarmonews.com) Aug 10, 2011

Preliminary MAP scores released Aug. 4 by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education show Polk County students are making gains in end-of-year testing.

Students in grades three through eight are tested each spring in communication arts and mathematics. Students in grades five and eight also are tested in science. Districts can choose to test students in additional testing categories.

DESE's report indicates that Polk County's school districts have made some gains in different testing areas, some by as much as 20 percent.

### **Fair Play R-2**

Improved communication arts and math scores were reported at the Fair Play district, according to Superintendent Renee Sagaser.

"We had some highlights and some lowlights," Sagaser said. "When I first looked at our scores I was disappointed to see some areas where we had decreased; however, when I plotted the scores to see how each student has progressed (over their third-, fourth- and fifth-grade years) we improved scores in communication arts and math."

Seventh-grade communication arts scores improved from 33.3 percent in 2010 to 38.7 percent in 2011. Fourth-grade math scores increased more than 10 percent, from 18.4-percent proficient in 2010 to 30.8-percent proficient in 2011.

Sagaser said she believes looking at scores in progression is a "true measure of how a school district is performing ..."

The phase-in of Singapore Math at the elementary school has contributed to the increase in scores at the elementary level, according to Sagaser.

"[I] believe we will see continued improvement as we get further into the phase-in," Sagaser said. "We need to focus on getting the students ready for school by the time they come to kindergarten."

Third-grade MAP testers at Fair Play last spring were the first to participate in the district's preschool program. Third-grade scores showed improvements.

"We anticipate this will really show gains in our testing since more students will start kindergarten ready for the program," Sagaser said.

Sagaser said she looks for continued focus to get high-school students ready for life after K-12.

"We want our students not to be proficient on a test but to be proficient in life after high school," she said. "It takes a lot to meet that goal. We want people to know what a great job public schools are doing. The challenge and the discourse comes from how do you hold districts accountable. Testing is a great measure. ... I hope patrons realize it is a single measure. Until we look at a district and see how each individual student has improved over the years, we won't really have a true picture."

### **Half Way R-3**

Superintendent Dr. Tim Boatwright said he is pleased to see continued growth at the Half Way R-3 School District.

"Although nearly 60 percent of our students scored proficient and advanced in communication arts, we would like to see continued improvement to meet the state target," he said.

Boatwright said the district saw big gains in high school math (29.1 to 54.2 percent at proficient or advanced). He also said elementary math scores continued to improve, this year exceeding the state's target of 72.5 percent (using a growth model).

"We will continue with strategic planning and comprehensive instruction in all areas," Boatwright said of how the district will continue to help students improve scores.

**Humansville R-4**

Humansville Superintendent Dr. Ryan Nowlin said the district will continue to focus on communication arts as a whole and look into ways to improve elementary math scores.

Nowlin said the district saw “tremendous gains” in high school math scores.

Algebra 2 scores increased from 12.5-percent proficient in 2010 to 50 percent in 2011. Algebra 1 scores increased from 19.4-percent proficient in 2010 to 33.3 percent in 2011. Geometry scores increased from 34.8-percent proficient in 2010 to 40 percent in 2011.

“The low scores in high school math the past two years put our high school in improvement status through next year, and with the improved scores this year and continued progress, we should be able to get out of ‘improvement’ in this area,” Nowlin said.

“The Humansville School District is no different than any other school district across the country,” Nowlin said. “We will need to continually review and evaluate our instructional programs to find a way to make adequate yearly progress as a component of the No Child Left Behind requirements. We have been, and always will be, doing whatever it takes to make our students successful. No excuses. Whatever it takes.”

**Marion C. Early R-5**

Students in Morrisville made a 24.18-percent increase in math and a 19.47-percent increase in communication arts from 2010-11, according to Superintendent Eric Kurre.

“In the past three years, Marion C. Early’s math scores have risen 83.44 percent and the communication arts scores have risen 60.71 percent,” Kurre said.

Kurre said the district made gains in high school math and communication arts, moving students from basic to proficient and advanced.

“Last year was the first year for full implementation of RTI in the elementary and the middle school/high school’s advisory designed to help students become more successful,” Kurre said. “We will tweak both our RTI and advisory systems to improving the tracking of student growth to help all students reach their potential.”

**Pleasant Hope R-6**

Information about MAP scores from the Pleasant Hope R-6 School District was not available at press time.

Find out more about Bolivar’s MAP scores in the Friday edition. For more information about Polk County schools’ MAP scores, visit [www.dese.mo.gov](http://www.dese.mo.gov).

