

Test scores

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In the past, they weren't even required to put their names on the answer sheets. You know how that is, if a kid doesn't have to put their name to something they aren't going to make a concerted effort to do well."

This year, Lake-Lehman gave students calculators to use for the math portion of the standardized test administered to seventh grade students across the state. "The district took our recommendation to provide the kids with calculators so this year's test was a better reflection of their skills than it was in the past," said Roberts.

PSSA results provide educators and administrators with valuable information about each school's curriculum. "In math, we have been breaking down the previous year's scores and seeing where the deficiencies are, then putting an emphasis on them," said Roberts.

Molly Malpass, Bill Kvashay, and Helen Frank, the school's math teachers, were credited with working hard to prepare the students for the testing process.

Teaching to the test may not be the ideal educationally but it is not done solely for the purpose of looking good. "I think it's a little of both," said Roberts. "The Governor has put his incentive money out there. If you don't make the grade, people wonder what's wrong."

A flaw in the PSSA process is schools are not rewarded for consistency, only for score increases of 50 points or more. "We are constantly asking what's there for

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John Oliver
High School Principal

schools to maintain scores," said Roberts, who is a member of the state organization of secondary school principals, a group which frequently discusses educational issues including testing programs.

Withholding financial incentives from schools which regularly score high marks indirectly punishes the best educational facilities. "The higher your scores are, the smaller the window of opportunity for improvement becomes," said John Oliver, Lake-Lehman High School Principal. "We look at these tests as a reflection of the fact that we do a pretty good job year in and year out."

Oliver said scores at the high school level rarely vary significantly from one year to the next. "The overall number doesn't really tell you much, but we take a look at the comparisons within each of the state sub-tests which measure a variety of specific skill areas," he said.

Pennsylvania's new standards based education requires schools to achieve a certain level of proficiency in key subject areas. The PSSA program is used to measure each district's compliance. "The sub-tests allow us to identify any weaknesses," said Oliver. "Then we sit down with a group of math

teachers, for example, and say, 'Our geometry scores were low, how can we improve them?' The tests are useful in determining changes that should be made curricularly."

A writing exam is administered to ninth grade students throughout the state. "Because of the writing test given to freshman, we do some intensive instruction in that area earlier in the year so that the students are not caught off guard," said Oliver. "The only other thing we do in the way of test preparation, is that we try to create a comfortable environment for the testing process. I don't herd the kids into the auditorium to take the tests. We keep them in small groups, at comfortable desks and we break up the tests into manageable sections."

Elementary school students are tested in reading and math as fifth graders. "We scored 1290 in math and 1330 in reading," said Robert Kunkle, principal, who reported the scores for all three of Lake-Lehman School District's elementary schools. "Off the top of my head, I'd say those scores are pretty close to last year. I think math is up 10 points and reading is up 20 points."

PSSA reports include variables used to form groups of schools with similar characteristics. In addition to providing a raw score, where 1600 is perfect, the assessment results include comparisons of all state schools and similar schools across Pennsylvania.

Socioeconomic status and community type are the two variables used to categorize schools. Lake-

Lehman schools are classified as rural. The number of low-income high school students as reported to the Department of Education is 9 percent of the student body. On the band of similar schools scores, Lake-Lehman High School scored above the statewide average in math, reading and writing.

Differences of less than 50 points are not considered educationally significant. In math, Lake-Lehman juniors scored 1330, which is 30 points higher than the average of similar schools. In reading, the same class scored 1350, which is 50 points above the average of similar schools. Ninth grade students, who were tested in writing only, scored 1420 which was 80 points higher than the state average for similar schools.

While scores were available from the district's elementary and middle level schools, comparisons of those schools and similar schools throughout the state were not provided.

The PSSA award presented to the Middle Level Education Building must be used according to the following guidelines: 50 percent of the money must be spent on planning and implementing the PSSA testing program; 25 percent can be used for staff awards, and 25 percent can be used to supplement existing programs and resources. A committee of parents, teachers and community members will meet to decide how to spend the money.

A summary of Dallas School District's test results will appear in the next issue of the Dallas Post.

Nearly-New Kids Shop plans going-out-of-business sale

The Nearly-New Kids Shop which operated as a public service for 10 years by the United Methodist Women of the Truckville United Methodist Church, will cease operations on December 4. Selected merchandise will be shipped to the Four Corners Native American Ministries in Shiprock, New Mexico which is one of the many mission projects of the United Methodist Women. All other merchandise

will be offered to our many faithful customers at no charge.

The shop will be open on December 4 from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. Anyone in need of good quality children's clothing, can bring their shopping bags and load up. Merchandise includes jeans, sweat shirts, T-shirts, dresses, blouses, sweaters, shoes, jackets and sleep wear ranging in size from infant through size 16.

Women's Club visits NY Public Library

In keeping with the General Federation of Women's Club's theme: "Keep Library Doors Open," the Dallas Area Federated Women's Club recently took a bus trip to New York City to tour the New York Public Library. The structure, which holds 50 million books, manuscripts and maps, was built in the Beaux Arts style of architecture and is a national historic landmark. The main reading room recently underwent a \$15 million restoration and now features the stained glass ceiling covered in World War II. Club members and friends also had time to catch a Broadway show, shop on Fifth Avenue, and sample the cuisine of the city before heading home.

DHS Class of 1988 planning reunion

A reunion is being planned for the Dallas High School Class of 1988 and efforts to contact all of the graduates are underway.

In order to obtain accurate addresses, 1988 DHS graduates - or their families are requested to contact former classmate Kimberly Hall at 674-6012.

Specifics for the reunion are being finalized and graduates will be notified by mail of the time and location.

Tubists needed for holiday performance

Area tubists and euphoniumists of all ages are invited to participate in Wilkes University's Second Annual Tuba Christmas performance on Sunday, Dec. 12, at 5 p.m. for shoppers and passerby in the Wyoming Valley Mall.

Chuck Turner and Phil Ioanna, Wilkes faculty members, will conduct participants in performing traditional tuba carols such as "Hark the Herald Angels," "Silent Night," and "Jingle Bells."

The 45-minute performance will include the large Bass tubas and smaller Tenor tubas, also known as Euphoniums. For more information or to register call 408-4437.

Holiday deadlines

The office of The Dallas Post at 607 Main Rd., Dallas, will be closed Thursday and Friday, Nov. 25 and 26 in observance of Thanksgiving. The deadline for all contributed copy, such as press releases, photos and letters to the editor for the Dec. 1 issue is Wed., Nov. 24. The office will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday, Nov. 29.

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