Parish Students Score Above Average On Tests

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This year’s competency test scores among Lafayette Parish second and third graders rose over last year’s results in language arts, and all parish scores compare favorably with state averages.

Lafayette Parish School Board Information Officer Cherrie Fisher said that the higher scores in the area of language arts are due in a large part to the fact that teachers are stressing basic skills more in the classrooms, and a new reading series has been instituted in the parish that is geared more toward basics like phonetics.

Above Average

In language arts, 97 percent of parish second graders got passing scores of 75, as compared with 96 percent in the parish who passed the test last year. These scores compare favorably with state averages in which 94 percent of Louisiana second graders passed the language arts test.

In mathematics, 97 percent of parish second graders passed the test—the same percentage that passed last year. This also compares well with the state average in math of 96 percent.

Although only second-graders were tested last year, both second and third graders took the competency tests this year.

Parish Students Score Above State Average

averages were 89.6 in language, and 87.75 in math.

DeSoto Parish second graders had the highest average score in language — 97.2 percent — and Union Parish second graders had the highest in math — 97.3 percent.

Among third graders, DeSoto Parish students again had the highest average scores in language — 94.0 percent — and Winn Parish had the highest average scores in math — 93.76 percent.

Orleans Parish had the lowest scores in both areas at both grade levels. Second graders had an 88.9 percent average in language and an 88.5 percent average in math. Third graders averaged 81.7 percent in language and 81.8 percent in math.

Use Of Scores

Each student’s individual scores are provided for use by the student’s homeroom teacher. The teacher then has an academic profile of each student and can determine the most appropriate way to deal with them on an individual basis.

For those students who failed the basic skills test, the state provides approximately $300 per child for remedial teaching. This money can be used for whatever type of remedial program is deemed best by the parish.

Fisher said Lafayette has been using a co-teacher program in which a teacher comes in to help the homeroom teacher deal with the children who need extra help.

This year, however, summer school will be offered to help students who failed the basic skills test bring their skills up to the necessary level. Fisher said the parish is trying to encourage students to use the summer school program to work on their skills.

Although summer school will cost $60 per subject for students in grades 2-6, the $300 state allocation can be used toward tuition. And transportation to the summer school location — J.W. Faulk Elementary — is provided free of charge.

This year’s statewide testing of the two grades was handled by contract through a private company. It cost the state $319,000, according to Nix.

The students who failed the tests were required to participate in remedial courses at a cost of $3.2 million. This year, Nix said his department will ask for $5 million for remedial teaching.

The testing was done the week of March 21-25. It was the second year in which a program was continued to establish competency tests for grades 2-12, adding one grade per year. Next year, students in second through fourth grades will be tested.

(Continued on Page 5, Col. 7)