
Wakefield School News

Volume 18 Issue 2

October 2011

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

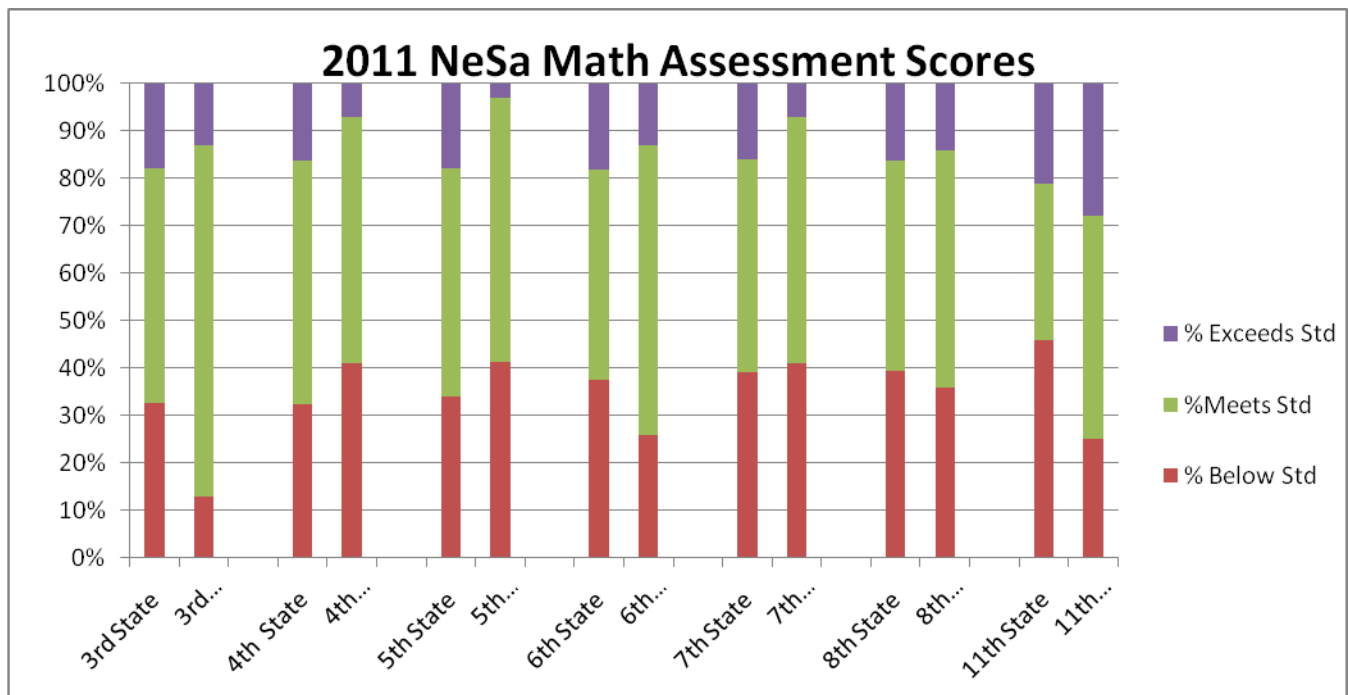
STUDENT LEARNING

Test scores reveal improvement

Each spring Wakefield students as well as their counterparts across the state of Nebraska participate in the Nebraska Student Assessment testing (more commonly called NeSA) in math, reading, writing and science. The NeSA exams replaced the Nebraska STAR system over the past several years.

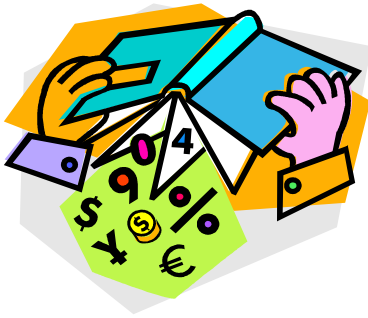
The NeSA Reading assessment has just finished the second year of testing, while the NeSA Math assessment was given to students for the first time in the spring of 2011. When administering any new test students commonly score lower than on previous assessments due to a lack of test familiarity. This was largely the case for the new math assessment given statewide last spring.

The NeSA Reading and NeSA Math assessments are given to students in grades 3 – 8 and grade 11. The first set of scores below reflects the NeSA Math assessment.



The first bar (left) graph in each group reveals how all the students in Nebraska scored on the math assessment. The second bar (right) graph reflects how students in Wakefield scored on the math assessment. Examining the graph as a whole, the bottom red colored section is the percentage of students scoring “below standard.” The green section of the chart represents students that scored in the “meet standard” range. The purple section of the graph represents the percentage of students at each grade level scoring in the “exceeds standard” range. The goal for students, teachers and parents is to “get the red out” of our students’ skills.

Examining the math scores reveals that 87% of Wakefield students testing in the **third grade** met the state math standard compared to the statewide percentage of 68% “meeting standard.” **Fourth grade** tests reveal 67% of students statewide scored a “meets standard” while 59% of Wakefield students scored a “meets standard,” which is 8% below the state as a whole in fourth grade. **Fifth grade** math scores reveal a statewide “meets standard” of 66%, while Wakefield student scores reveal 58% of students “meet standard,” which is 8% below the state score. **Sixth grade** students statewide scored a 62% “meets standard” rating



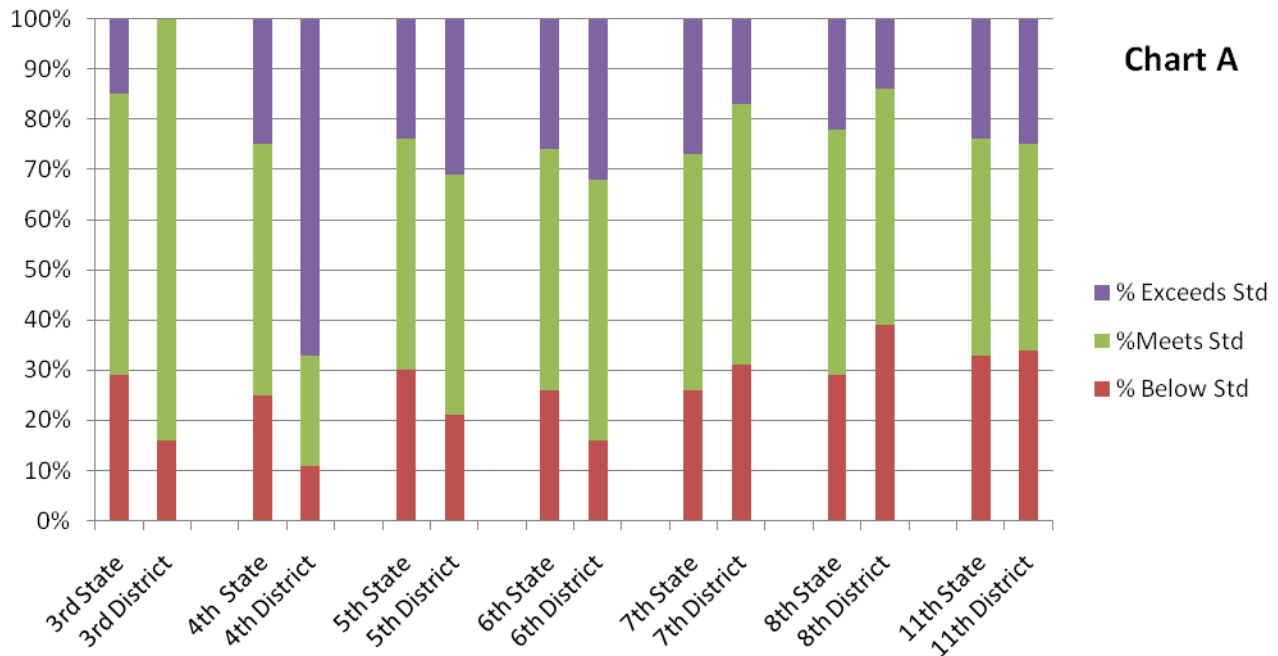
while 74% of Wakefield students scored “meets standard,” which is 12% above the state average.

The **7th grade** math students statewide “meeting standard” was 61% while Wakefield students scoring “meeting standard” was 59%, which is 2% below the state average. The **8th grade** math students statewide “meeting standard” was 60%. Wakefield students “meeting standard” was 64% which is 4% above the state score. **Eleventh grade** students statewide “meeting standard” was 54% while Wakefield juniors “meeting standard” was 75%. The junior class “meeting standard” is 21% higher than the statewide score.

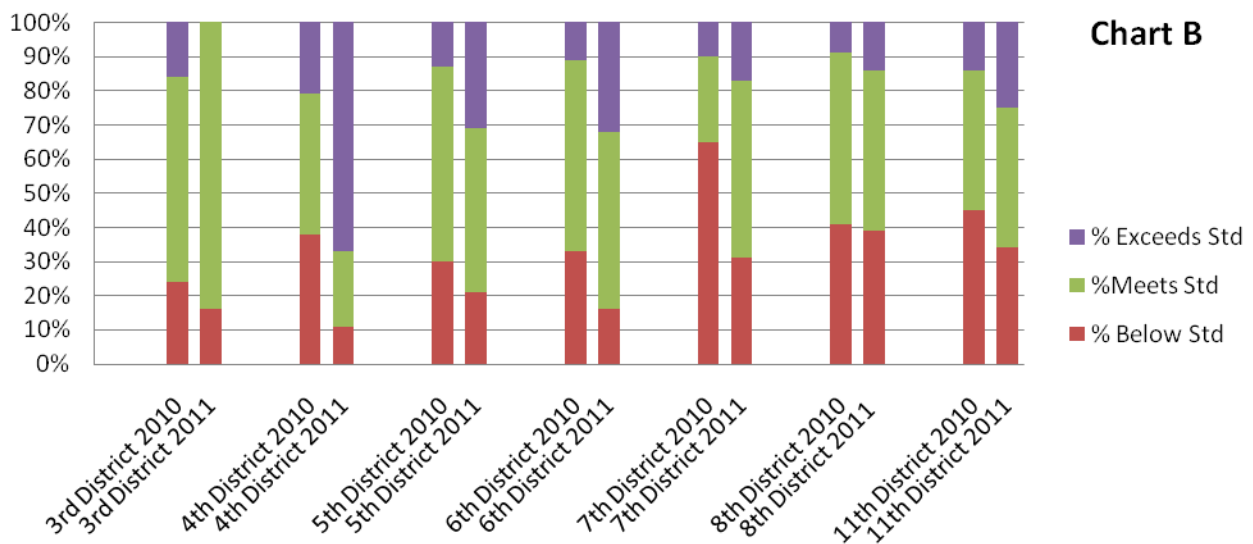
The elementary school improvement team decided to focus school improvement strategies on mathematics for the upcoming school year after examining state assessments and MAP assessment data. The PK-6 school improvement goal addresses math reasoning and problem solving skills. The school improvement team noted that individual student intervention is needed at the high school, as well as a continued focus on vocabulary development and monitoring mathematics.

Chart “A” of the Nebraska Student Assessment in Reading data (next page) reflects spring 2011 testing. **Chart “B”** reveals Wakefield’s progress over the past two years of taking the exam.

2011 NeSA Reading Assessment Scores



Wakefield NeSA Reading Comparison 2009-10 and 2010-11



Examining Chart A reveals the reading scores of Wakefield students in grades three through six all exceed the state reading assessment in 2011. The third grade class exceeded the state by 13% in “meets standard.” Fourth graders exceeded the state by 14% in “meets standard.” Fifth grade students performed 9% above the state average and

sixth grade reading proficiency exceeded the state by 10%. Students scoring in the “exceeds standards” represented a higher percentage of students in grades 4 through 11.

Chart A also reveals that students in grades 7 and 8 did not meet the state average. Chart B, comparing the classes over the last two years, reflects a 26% improvement in reading scores from when they were 7th graders in 2010 and when they took the tests as 8th graders in 2011. Chart B also reflects improvement in each grade level from 3-11 when you examine prior year’s test scores to current year’s test scores.

The elementary school improvement efforts by teachers and staff clearly had a significant impact on student reading performance across all grade levels. The reading strategies and interventions are having their desired effect. The high school improvement team is pleased with grade level reading gains, however the number of students “below standard” in grades 7 and grades 8 must continue to improve.

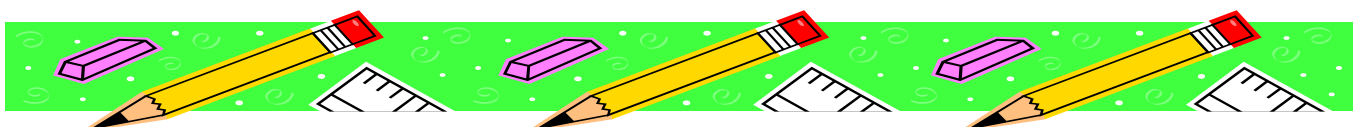
As a result of NeSA Reading and MAP test scores, the high school improvement team targeted improvements on vocabulary and reading comprehension. Greater vocabulary understanding of reading terminology by all students across the curriculum provides increased reading comprehension.

The high school staff has instituted a program called “L to J” as a school wide intervention. Every teacher is taking one class, identifying essential vocabulary, and is testing students on these vocabulary words throughout the course of study. Students are tested on a random sampling of words and scores are monitored by the entire class weekly. The team expects a positive impact from the “L to J” process as students garner the vocabulary as they proceed through the course.

The NeSA writing assessments were given by paper and pencil in 4th and 8th grades. For the first time in several years 11th graders were not required to take the assessment. NeSA science was piloted in grades 5, 8 and 11. This assessment will be administered this year as well as the revised writing assessments online in grades 8 and 11.

Wakefield parents, patrons, students and staff can feel confident that our school is a place where learning is emphasized and students are improving in both math and reading. The educational team is working with students utilizing research proven interventions that are addressing our students learning needs and insuring all students are learning. I am continually pleased with the collaborative effort parents, teachers, and patrons are utilizing to help all our students to learn.

Mark Bejot, Superintendent



Principal's Notes

Jason Heitz, Secondary Principal

The 2011-2012 school year is in full-swing. By the time you read this newsletter we will have had parent-teacher conferences (Sept. 29) and are well on our way to finishing the first quarter (Oct. 14).

Helping students succeed

After-school program underway

Our After-School Program is also in full swing. Mrs. Dorcey will be working with students, with the help of Mrs. Slama and Ms. Kai, from **3:45 until 5:00 on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays**. All students are invited to attend these sessions if they need any assistance with schoolwork, or even if they just need the time and place to finish their homework. This time can be especially beneficial for junior high students who may need help learning study skills that will be essential upon entering high school. Please feel free to call the school if you have any questions about this program. ***NOTE: If you receive a letter stating that your child is on the "ineligible" list, you will also receive a reminder about the After School Program.*** We will try to work with all students to help them stay organized, caught up on homework, study for tests, etc. All of this can happen by attending the after school program.

New dress code going well

Thank you parents for helping us enforce the new dress code.

We are off to a great start. The vast majority of students are obeying the dress code regulations.

Just a reminder that the appropriate length for shorts/skirts is arm's length or lower.



Wakefield will host vocal music contest in November

On Monday, November 7, Wakefield will host the Lewis and Clark Vocal Music Contest. **NO SCHOOL** for students that day, and teachers will be busy with in-service time.

Approximately 250 students from conference schools will be in the building that day, with a concert scheduled for the evening.

Reminders of upcoming events

- NHS Induction Ceremony is October 12 at 2:40 p.m. in the main gym
- The Wakefield Balloon Festival is October 14-16
- October 14 marks the end of the 1st quarter
- We have a 2-hour late start on October 17.
- NO SCHOOL for students on October 31.



From the Principal's Pen

Jerad Wulf, K-6 Principal

Wakefield Elementary School plans for 3rd annual Grandparent's Day

Wakefield Elementary School will host the 3rd Annual Grandparent's Day on October 14, 2011. Our special guests will take part in the daily routines as well as participate in numerous instructional blocks.

Grandparents are encouraged to arrive between 10:30 and 11:00 for registration and then will be taken to their grandchild's classroom. Lunch will be served in the main gymnasium, followed by a short assembly and more classroom time.

In addition, grandparents are encouraged to participate in presentations by the balloonists who will be in town for Balloon Days. Be sure to watch your mailbox for more information!

Annual costume parade to take place Oct. 28



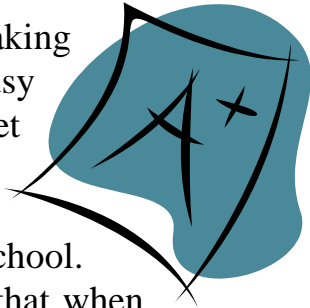
Preschool through 3rd grade students at Wakefield Elementary School will participate in the annual costume parade on Friday, Oct. 28. *Note: There is NO SCHOOL on Oct. 31.*

Students will dress in their costumes at the end of the day and will parade through the Wakefield Health Care Center around 2:30 p.m. The students should reach the Wakefield Business District around 2:50 p.m. They will return to school for regular dismissal at 3:35 p.m. If you would like your student to participate, please send a costume to school on that day.

Parent involvement vital to student success

Parent Teacher Conferences were held on September 29, 2011.

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with your child's teacher to discuss their progress in school.



Research suggests that when parents are actively involved in their child's education, they will achieve at higher levels. When children see that both school and parents are working together, children develop a positive attitude towards school, feel proud of their achievements, and enjoy school.

If you were unable to attend conferences, please contact your child's teacher to set up a meeting or to have a discussion regarding your child.

New math curriculum

During the 2010-2011 school year many teachers took the opportunity to participate in a curriculum revision cycle to look at our mathematics curriculum and resources. After numerous discussion, our staff determined there were gaps and additional areas of concern that we needed to address in order to meet the needs of all of our students. In the spring of 2011, a team of school staff members selected a new series, *enVisions*. This series focuses on process and ensures student understanding of concepts as opposed to strictly answers to a question. It encourages higher level thinking skills as well as seamlessly integrates technology. Hopefully, you will notice a difference in your child's homework or classroom activities which should focus on problem solving and critical thinking skills. If you have questions, feel free to contact your child's teacher.

Voices for Education

Voices for Education, our elementary parent organization, is excited about the upcoming year. We will be meeting before each board meeting at 6:00 in the library/media center. Interpreters will be available as well as daycare. This organization is a great communication tool to encourage parents to be active participants in their child's education. In addition, Voices for Education will be taking part in numerous activities throughout the school year.

If you are interested in becoming an active member of this organization, feel free to join us at our monthly meetings.

'Hello Hallway' designed to help students, staff, visitors feel welcome

Teach and encourage your children to properly greet each other as they enter school. Greeting someone with a smile and a friendly voice is an act of respect. Voices for Education has hung a poster in the south hallway signifying it as the "Hello Hallway." We encourage students, teachers and others entering the school to greet those you see at the door or in the hallway. Help us create and maintain an environment where each student, staff member or visitor feels welcomed, recognized and valued.

Hello-English

Good Morning-English

Hola-Spanish

Buenos Dias-Spanish

Allo-French

Bonjour-French

Guten Tag-German

Guten Morgen-German

Quick tips to motivate your child to read

By Jaime Manz, Reading Specialist

- Let your child choose their own books. Children need to be interested in what they read. Allow your child to choose books they can and want to read. If it is too hard for them to read independently, read it with them.
- Set goals for your child and reward them for their reading. One of the best ways to reward your child for their reading is with reading. Schedule a trip to the library together or even buy them their own books.
- Model reading for your child. Let them see you reading newspapers, magazines, books...anything!
- Make reading together fun and memorable. It's not what you read to your child, it's how. Make the story come alive by setting the tone and using different voices for characters.
- Talk about reading with your child. Keep up-to-date on what your child is reading and discuss it.
- Play games with your child that utilize reading. Scrabble and Boggle are a few examples. Sometimes it can be as simple as reading the directions for the game.
- Encourage writing. Your child can help with grocery lists, send emails or letters to friends, and create their own stories.
- Provide your child with a quiet place to read.



From the counselor's desk

By Branis Knezevic,
K-12 Guidance Counselor

Seniors...have you visited your top colleges?

If you haven't done so already, visit your top colleges *soon* to narrow your choices. Application deadlines will start hitting later this fall! Follow these tips for a successful visit:

Contact the admissions office at least two weeks in advance to schedule your visit. Make appointments with an admissions representative, financial aid counselor, and a faculty member in the area of study that interests you.

Check out the college website before your visit. Most college sites have a section for prospective students where you can learn about the school's admissions process, types of majors, student services, and employment opportunities. You might even be able to schedule your visit online.

Visit while school is in session. You won't get the true flavor during breaks or finals week.

Ask LOTS of questions. See this [Go.Visit.College! handout](#) by EducationQuest for good questions to ask.

Winning the scholarship game

Seniors - follow these tips to increase your chances of earning scholarships:

Don't pay for scholarship searches! Use free search sites including [ScholarshipQuest](#) at [EducationQuest.org](#) where you'll find over 2,000 state and local awards. Scholarship resources are also available at your local library and at EducationQuest offices in Kearney, Lincoln and Omaha.

Visit your guidance counselor weekly for information about local scholarships.

Get organized. Place scholarship applications in deadline order and prioritize each award. Local and college-specific scholarships deserve top priority because you're more likely to earn them.

Continually update your activities, honors and volunteer or paid jobs using the [Activities Resume](#) at [EducationQuest.org](#).

Earn the best possible ACT scores by taking the exams in the spring of your junior year and again in the fall of your senior year.

Use **quality references** such as a teacher, coach or counselor. Encourage them to write specific examples of your leadership skills. Give them advance notice and a specific deadline.

Get an early start on essays. Describe your interests, hopes for the future, and leadership abilities – but be sure to tailor your essay to the scholarship topic.

Pay close attention to grammar and spelling. Ask at least two people to proofread your application.

It's College Fair season!

The upcoming fairs are scheduled in these Nebraska cities:

Scottsbluff/Gering Area College Fair, Sunday, October 9, 1:00-3:00 pm – Gering Civic Center

Lincoln Area College Fair, Sunday, October 23, 1:00-3:00 pm – Southeast Community College

Omaha Area College Fair, Sunday, October 30 1:00-4:00 pm – University of Nebraska-Omaha

For a list of colleges registered for the fairs, visit EducationQuest.org.



Educational Planning Programs also feature college reps

If you can't make it to a college fair, attend an Educational Planning Program (EPP) at a location near you. These programs also feature college representatives. See the "[Upcoming Events](#)" section at EducationQuest.org for dates and locations.

Register for a barcode!

Before you attend a college fair or EPP, visit NebraskaCollegeFairs.org to register for a barcode. Take the barcode to the event and college reps will scan it to retrieve your demographic information so you won't have to complete their information cards.

Financial Aid Program

November 7 at 5 PM

Distance Education room in the high school.