

Rosspoint in top 10 on state EXPLORE scores;
Cawood Elementary and Evarts also in top 51 of 325 schools in state;
District scores exceed state average, ranks 34th in state

The Harlan County School District received excellent marks on the EXPLORE exam released this week by the Kentucky Department of Education.

The EXPLORE scores show that the Harlan County School District's results exceeded the state average and are continuing to improve.

One district school, Rosspoint Elementary, posted one of the top 10 EXPLORE scores in the entire state. Harlan County ranks 34th of the 174 districts across the state.

"This is excellent news for our schools and reaffirms the hard work and dedication of our teachers and principals," said Brent Roark, assistant superintendent of curriculum. "We are pleased with our scores which we feel reflect an ongoing effort toward academic improvement and success throughout our district."

Roark explained that five of the eight schools scored higher than the state average, with Rosspoint leading the district with one of the tops scores in the state. He also noted that Cawood Elementary ranked 35th and Evarts Elementary ranked 51st out of 325 schools tested across the state.

"We are excited to see what is taking place in our district. Our teachers are working very hard to meet all the mandates being thrown at them. These results show our school staffs are meeting the needs of our students by preparing them to be college and career ready"

EXPLORE is a high school readiness examination designed to help eighth graders explore a broad range of options for their future. The exam assesses four subjects --English, mathematics, reading and science -- and provides needs assessments and other components to help students plan for high school and beyond.

The district's average score of 15.8 exceeded the state average of 15.2 . The district average surpassed all the state averages in English, math, reading, science and the overall composite.

Rosspoint Elementary topped the scores with an 18 in Science, 17.4 in math, 16.9 in English and 16.3 in reading.

Others scores for the Harlan County District included 16.4 for Cawood Elementary, 16.2 for Evarts Elementary, 15.9 for James A. Cawood Elementary and Cumberland Elementary, 14.9 for Black Mountain Elementary, 14.8 for Green Hills Elementary and 14.3 for Wallins Elementary.

Roark noted an exceptionally bright spot for Cawood Elementary was an 18 in math. This led the district.

In addition to the EXPLORE scores, the district also showed continued improvement in the PLAN scores released this week.

While the county's PLAN score of 16.2 was just under the state average of 17, the district continued to show improvement.

The HCHS composite PLAN score improved .6 from 2010.

"The PLAN scores have been thoroughly analyzed by the 9th and 10th grade teachers at HCHS. The analysis has been very beneficial in identifying changes to the new trimester schedule which will positively impact next year's performance on the PLAN assessment" said Roark. "I am confident that HCHS will continue to show improvement. " HCHS principal, Bob Howard, has repeatedly stressed the importance of familiarizing students with timed tests such as the PLAN and ACT.

PLAN helps 10th graders build a solid foundation for future academic and career success and provides information needed to address school districts' high-priority issues. The exam assesses the four subjects -- English, mathematics, reading and science -- and is a predictor of success on the ACT.

Administration of the EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT assessments, which are provided by ACT, Inc., was mandated by Senate Bill 130 (codified in KRS 158.6453) in the 2006 session of the Kentucky General Assembly. The assessments will help schools focus on meeting academic standards across the entire secondary school program. Scores from the assessments will be helpful in measuring student achievement, gauging their readiness for transition and evaluating school programs.

Senate Bill 1, passed in the 2009 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, requires a high school readiness examination in 8th grade and a college readiness examination in 10th grade. EXPLORE and PLAN, respectively, will be used for these purposes, and data from the assessments will be included in the state's Unbridled Learning: College/Career-Ready for All accountability system.

For more information about EXPLORE and PLAN, go to this link:
<http://openhouse.education.ky.gov/>.