

District 99 test scores are down slightly, officials say

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DOWNERS GROVE – Although test scores at Community High School District 99 leveled off in 2015, the scores are still well above state averages.

Gina Ziccardi, assistant superintendent of student learning and support services, gave the board an update Oct. 5 on standardized test scores and AP Honors classes.

Ziccardi said there was a slight decrease in ACT scores. The 2015 graduating class had an average ACT composite score of 22.6, which was down from 22.8 with the 2014 graduating class.

The state average in 2015 is 20.7 and the national average was 21.0. State and national scores have been consistent the past three years, while local scores have dropped 0.3 points.

During the past three years, the percentage of students scoring a 19 or lower on the math portion of the test has gone down from 34.4 to 29.1 percent, according to board documents. In that same time, the number of students

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Gina Ziccardi

Community High School District 99
assistant superintendent of
student learning and support services

scoring a 20 or higher has increased from 65.6 percent to 70.9 percent.

On the reading portion of the ACT, 31.1 percent of students scored a 19 or lower. That number has been declining during the past nine years. Conversely, the number of students scoring a 20 or higher was 68.9 percent, which has steadily increased over nine years.

Ziccardi said the district also tracks EXPLORE scores, a test eighth-graders take and compares to the ACT test. The test can be used to measure growth between years. The difference between tests, Ziccardi said, is called a GEM score.

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The Class of 2016 saw an increase of 36.0 percent between EXPLORE and ACT. That's down from the previous year, when graduates had a 37.5 percent increase.

Increases have been fairly consistent throughout the past six years, ac-

ording to board documents. All classes have had a score increase between 35.3 and 37.5 percent.

“The growth is very similar,” Ziccardi said.

The number of students taking Advanced Placement classes has increased 7.1 percent over the past five years, and the number of students taking honors courses has increased the same amount over that time.

“More students than ever are enrolling in courses,” Ziccardi said.

Throughout the past 10 years, the number of students in the graduating class taking Advanced Placement classes has gone up from 21.6 percent of students to 34.1 percent.

Out of the 1,729 Advanced Placement tests given last year, 82.3 percent of the scores were a 3, 4 or 5.

Ziccardi said there is no state man-

date in place in terms of whether or not to require the ACT or the SAT.

“We are not exactly sure what testing will look like this year,” she said.

Superintendent Mark McDonald said he's “frustrated” by changes in state assessment. He said District 99 is administering the ACT to juniors and will be paying for it. McDonald acknowledged the state could force the district to hold the SAT, but it's unclear.