

Chippewa Valley, L'Anse Creuse show gains in MME testing

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Students in the L'Anse Creuse district scored at or above the Macomb County averages in several subjects on the 2014 Michigan Merit Exam, according to L'Anse Creuse Public Schools Superintendent Jacqueline Johnston. The exam is taken by 11th-graders in the spring, such as those at L'Anse Creuse High School North. (Photos by NICOLE TUTTLE)

Recently released scores on the 2014 Michigan Merit Exam illustrate that both Chippewa Valley and L'Anse Creuse students generally met or exceeded state or county averages.

Chippewa Valley Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education Ed Skiba said that scores in the Chippewa Valley district have also improved over last year's scores.

"They are trending upwards. We are happy about that for what that is worth. In my mind, they are never good enough," Skiba said.

The Michigan Merit Exam (MME) is taken by high school juniors in Michigan each spring to assess their proficiency in the subject areas of math, reading, science, social studies and writing. The MME is based on Michigan High School Content Expectations established by the Michigan Department of Education.

Skiba said that the scores were released to school districts about three weeks ago, but were embargoed to the public for a few weeks after that. A total of 1,223 students in the Chippewa Valley district took the test, according to Skiba. Although not technically a Chippewa Valley school, the International Baccalaureate school the International Academy of Macomb has its scores included with Chippewa Valley's totals. The IAM accepts students from across the county and is housed in the same Clinton Township location as Chippewa Valley High School's Ninth Grade Center. Although the Chippewa Valley district as a whole has the IAM scores included in its total, the individual schools from which the IAM students came do not get the MME scores included in their totals according to Skiba.

"The district gets the IAM (International Academy of Macomb) score but individual schools do not," Skiba said.

L'Anse Creuse Public Schools Superintendent Jacqueline Johnston said that overall the L'Anse Creuse district is pleased with its scores this year.

“L’Anse Creuse students scored at or above the Macomb County averages in science, social studies, reading and math on the 2014 Michigan Merit Exam (MME). The district showed gains in the areas of science, social studies, reading and writing. Math scores were equal to last year’s scores. We are very proud of our MME scores as they demonstrate the effort and hard work put forth by our students and staff. We recognize there is room for improvement and will continue to work diligently to prepare our students for the rigors of a global economy,” Johnston said.

In the Chippewa Valley Schools district, 37 percent of students were proficient in mathematics. In the L’Anse Creuse Public Schools district, students were 29 percent proficient in mathematics. The statewide average was 29 percent proficient and the Macomb ISD average 26 percent proficient. The scores were made available to the public on mischooldata.org.

Chippewa Valley Schools students were 64 percent proficient in reading. L’Anse Creuse Public Schools students were 56 percent proficient in reading. The statewide average in reading was 59 percent proficient. The Macomb ISD average was 56 percent proficient. The scores were made available to the public on mischooldata.org.

Chippewa Valley Schools students were 31 percent proficient in science. L’Anse Creuse Public Schools students were 27 percent proficient in science. The statewide average in science was 28 percent proficient. The Macomb ISD average in science was 24 percent proficient. The scores were made available to the public on mischooldata.org.

Chippewa Valley Schools students were 52 percent proficient in social studies. L’Anse Creuse Public Schools students were 41 percent proficient in social studies. The statewide average in social studies was 44 percent proficient. The Macomb ISD average was 41 percent proficient. The scores were made available to the public on mischooldata.org.

Chippewa Valley Schools students were 58 percent proficient in writing. L’Anse Creuse Public Schools students were 46 percent proficient in writing. The statewide average in writing was 51 percent proficient. The Macomb ISD average was 50 percent. The scores were made available to the public on mischooldata.org.

Skiba said that although this year’s scores have improved over last year’s, constant improvement is always the goal of educators. This can be difficult when the state changes expectations, according to Skiba.

“In some areas, like in reading, we have done well ... Writing went up a little bit. Writing has been pretty good. Social studies went up a fair amount. Math went up at Chippewa, the same at Dakota. Science went up quite a bit from Chippewa. ... It varies year to year, because we cannot compare the same kids to the same kids ... We are trending in the right direction,” Skiba said. “We are dealing with moving targets. Years ago ... we had curricular maps in place for both high schools. We knew it was going to change, to go to common core. That was the right thing to do, and even with the assessments, that is going to change. You never know what you are shooting for.”

Skiba said that one area that teachers and administrators want to work on is motivating students to do their best on the MME.

“The one part of the MME that means something to kids is the ACT test. It has bearing on if they go to the college of their choice. Once the state took away the Promise Scholarship, they were not as motivated,” Skiba said.

Although the Chippewa Valley district does pay attention to scores such as the MME, Skiba said that kids should be the top priority.

“If you have good instruction and people who care about kids, it takes care of itself, including the scores ... I am not going to live and die for scores,” Skiba said.

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