

Woodland educators pleased with latest test scores

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Woodland school officials say higher-than-state-average test scores are the result of hard work by teachers and students and overall strong community support for education.

The Woodland 2011-12 school year state standardized exam results show the district above the state average in nearly every category. Two highlights are sixth grade math scores, which improved 26 percentage points this year, and seventh-grade reading scores, which jumped 16 percentage points.

Overall, the district is at or ahead of the state average in every category except fourth-grade math and fifth-grade reading.

"We're very pleased with the results," said Asha Riley, the district's director of learning. She added the scores stem from an "intentional" and "strategic" focus on improving student learning in core areas.

The district in recent years partnered with the Evergreen School District and used new assessment tools to give teachers a better handle on how their students were learning, she said. Teachers also meet regularly to go over the ongoing assessments and brainstorm new approaches.

"They're not just looking at assessments. They're looking at student understanding and how do we adjust the curriculum to increase their learning," Riley said.

Teachers also participate in "learning walks," in which they drop in on each other's classrooms to observe different instructional styles, Riley said. And in seventh- and eighth-grade math an intervention class helps prepare struggling students for subject matter they'll see in their regular math class and then reinforces the lessons again to help students retain the knowledge and skills.

All the work has paid off in recent years, including the most recent test scores, she said.

"We've seen consistent gains throughout all of the grade levels," Riley said.