Local schools exceed state test scores

BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

COLUMBIA — The school districts of Oconee and Pickens counties "passed" the inaugural PASS test conducted last spring by exceeding the state average in nearly all categories.

Students in Pickens County elementary and middle schools scored above the state average in the "Met" and "Exemplary" levels for all grades and subject areas while Oconee County students in those grades exceeded state performance in 24 of 30 areas.

Brenda Turner, assistant superintendent of instructional services for Pickens, said teachers and students work throughout the year to achieve mastery of the grade-level standards.

"We use Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to help facilitate content mastery with students in grades 2-9," Turner said. "The results of MAP assessments also help identify areas where students need remediation or acceleration in preparation for the statewide assessment."

South Carolina and federal laws require end-of-the-year accountability tests for Grades 3-8 that are based on state academic standards. PASS results include scores in five subject areas — writing, English language arts (reading and research), mathematics, science and social studies. Each PASS assessment has three scoring levels: exemplary, met and not met.

PASS (Palmetto Assessment of State Standards) replaced the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test last year and is used for federal accountability purposes for No Child Left Behind.

.Oconee County District Superintendent Mike Lucas said 2008-09 is the baseline data for the new test and added that students in the Golden Corner exceeded the state performance level for being proficient (i.e. passing the test) in writing for grades 4, 6, 7 and 8; English/Language Arts in grades 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8; and Mathematics in all grades.

Lucas added that all students were not tested in science and social studies, with only students in grades 4 and 7 completing both assessments. In other grade levels, students either took science or social studies and students in grades 3,4,5,6 and 8 exceeded the state performance in science while grades 3,4,5 and 8 did likewise in social studies.

"I'm pleased that our students exceeded the state performance level for proficient in most grades and subject levels," Lucas said. "We have an instructional staff that works hard to prepare our students for success in school."

The Oconee County superintendent said the district will use PASS information in conjunction with its diagnostic test of MAP to plan instructional activities based on standards established by the state.

Turner said 82.1 percent of Pickens County fifth-graders met the standard or showed exemplary performance in writing and had th

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THE DETAILS

For complete test scores for all area schools go to www.upstatetoday.com. For more on state test scores see page A2.



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