

Humboldt County Accountability Analysis

The Humboldt County School District report was informative and generally complete. There were minor discrepancies in data and there was no information on high school proficiency exam success rate. A caution is noted in the McDermitt 4th and 8th grade TerraNova scores where very low number of student tested can make year to year comparisons almost meaningless.

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to the evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted to the State Board of Education and LeBEAPE in Part I school reports and Part II district-wide reports.*

Number of Pupils

The Humboldt County School District served 4,288 students in 1998-1999, an increase of 30 students (0.7%) over the previous year. Students attended eight school units with a variety of configurations, including four K-4 schools, a middle school for grades 5-6, a junior high school (7-8), a high school (9-12), a K-12 combined school, and a "rural remote" school which was actually six tiny one- to three-teacher schools.

Student Attendance Rate

The student attendance rate for the 1998-99 school year was 94.3%, up almost 1% from 93.6% in the previous year. The lowest attendance rate was at Humboldt County High School, where the attendance rate of 93% was a 2% improvement from the previous year.

Teacher Attendance Rate

The teacher attendance rate for 1998-99 was 96%, a slight increase over the 94.8% reported for the previous year.

Dropout and Non-Promotion Rates

The overall dropout rate for the district was reported at 2.9% for the 1998-1999 school year. This continued a trend of lowering rates in this category; two years previously it was 6.2%, and in the last reported year it was 4%.

The highest rates of non-promotion in the district were at the seventh and eighth grade levels, where 2.2% of students were retained in grade level. Except for first grade, where 2.1% were retained, non-promotion rates at all other levels were below 1%.

Truancy Rate

The district-wide truancy rate of 2.9% was essentially the same as in the previous year. Lowery High School, with a truancy rate of 11%, was the only school unit with any truancy reported.

Transiency Rate

The district-wide transiency rate in 1998-99 was reported as 30%, an increase from 22.9% in the previous year. French Ford Middle School had the lowest rate (18%), and the highest rates were at Winnemucca Grammar School (35%) and Lowery High School (32%).

Student / Teacher Ratios

Given the presence of a variety of school configurations and locations in the district, it was not surprising to find a number of instances where there were significant variations in teacher/student ratios. Second grade, for example, showed a range from 1:13 to 1:19; fifth and sixth grades ranged from 1:14 to 1:25. Similarly diverse data were found for high school core courses; science classes ranged from 9:1 to 1:27, and math classes from 1:7 to 1:21. Compared to the previous year, the elementary grade ratios were similar while most second areas were lower in 1999.

Student / Counselor Ratio

The student/counselor ratio for 1998-99 was 1:428, only slightly higher than the 1:426 ratio from the previous year. This ratio was considerably better than the state average of 495:1 while the range was 1:147 to 1:639.

Suspension / Expulsion Rate

The district reported 80 instances of students being suspended or expelled. The majority of these actions (72.5%) were for student-to-student violence. The rates were roughly comparable to those from the previous year.

State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova: Fourth Grade

Terra Nova Results 4th Grade

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
Reading	23	20	17.0	20	21	25.0	49	50	56
Language	20	28	14.9	21	17	31.9	48	46	61
Math	29	21	13.0	15	24	36.5	43	52	67
Science	22	13	14.7	23	26	32.6	52	58	62

The district showed considerable growth on fourth grade scores in the three-year period from October of 1997 to October of 1999. Percentages of students in the bottom quarter declined; percentages in the upper quarter increased; and average percentile ranks in each of the academic areas increased by at least 13 points. Average math scores rose from the 43rd percentile to the 67th percentile. McDermitt Elementary School scored consistency lowest in all categories but made major gains in all areas. There was a very small number of students tested in McDermitt. Over 99% of all eligible students were tested.

State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova: Eighth Grade

**Terra Nova Results
8th Grade**

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
Reading	20	20	23.2	24	22	25.4	55	50	52
Language	17	25	23.3	19	22	20.8	53	48	50
Math	22	27	32.9	21	18	18.9	49	45	43
Science	20	13	25.4	26	22	23.0	54	55	52

District scores on the eighth grade TerraNova exam remained generally stable during in the three years covered by this report. There was, however a slight downward trend in each academic area. For example, average math scores fell from the 49th percentile in October 1997 to the 43rd percentile in October 1999; during the same period, average language scores dropped from the 53rd to the 50th percentile. McDermitt students scored considerably lower than their counterparts in Winnemucca with at least 40% scoring in the bottom quarter in every area. There was a very small number of students tested in McDermitt. More than 95% of all eligible students were tested.

State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova:

**Tenth Grade
Terra Nova Results**

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
Reading	26	28	19.3	25	22	31.6	52	47	60
Language	32	22	18.9	21	18	23.9	44	48	54
Math	28	31	20.1	25	15	27.4	51	42	55
Science	19	9	14.0	30	22	37.5	55	56	64

For the most part, the district showed consistent progress in tenth grade achievement over the three-year period. The percentage of students in the bottom quarter was reduced, and the percentage in the upper quarter was increased. All average percentile ranks were higher than they were in the two previous years, reversing the slight downward trends shown in 1998. Achievement in all four areas tested was above the 50th percentile. Forty percent of

the students at McDermitt scored in the bottom quarter in Math and science. Again, the small number of student tested caveat applies. Over 97% of all eligible students were tested.

State Mandated Test Results: Writing Exam

Writing Examination						
MEASURED TRAIT	PERCENT PROFICIENT					
	4 TH GRADE			8 TH GRADE		
	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
Ideas	NA	71.0	64.0	75.9	81.7	81.0
Organization	NA	62.0	64.0	71.9	74.9	81.0
Voice	NA	65.0	65.0	77.0	74.6	74.0
Conventions	NA	63.0	67.0	73.0	67.0	76.0

Over 60% of the **fourth grade** students in Humboldt County demonstrated proficiency in the areas assessed by the writing exam, and 71% were proficient in expressing ideas. At the **eighth grade** level, proficiency rates ranged from 74% to 81%. The district report indicated that these scores were comparable to those in previous years.

State Mandated Test Results: High School Proficiency Exam

High School Proficiency Examination									% DENIED DIPLOMA		
PERCENT PASSING											
READING			MATH			WRITING					
96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99
95.6	99.3	97.0	97.6	99.0	96.0	97.1	99.5	99.0	NA	NA	NR

Results on all areas of the high school proficiency examination showed a slight downward trend, though the 100% rate in 1997 would be difficult to maintain. The district did not report the number or percentage of students denied diplomas because of test failure in the 1998-99 school year.

ACT / SAT Results

ACT Results

% SENIORS TAKING ACT			ACT COMPOSITE SCORE		
1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
84	46	55	20.4	18.0	21.5

SAT Result

% SENIORS TAKING ACT			SAT VERBAL AVERAGE			SAT MATH AVERAGE		
96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99
61	36	29	499	427	505	487	405	502

The data provided by the district showed percentages of students tested and the composite scores for students taking the ACT and SAT examinations for the most recent year only. Since state data tables do not combine the scores from Lowery High School and the McDermitt Combined School, district-wide comparisons were not clear. From the state tables it appeared that scores on the SAT remained stable at Lowery and increased at McDermitt; however, the declining percentages tested at the latter school may have created this apparent contrast. A similar phenomenon may also have impacted the increased SAT scores at McDermitt. Participation and results at Lowery High School were more stable during the three-year period.

Special Programs

District-wide, in Humboldt County, 9.3% of students participated in special education, and 27% participate in free- and reduced-price meal programs; these figures were comparable with those from the previous years. At the elementary level, 100% of students had instruction in art, music, physical education, and computers. The percentage participating in occupational education at the secondary level ranged from 30% at McDermitt to 80% at Winnemucca Junior High. Most data in the area of special programs were similar to those reported in previous years.

Teachers

Data on teacher educational levels show that 96.9% of teachers were working within their license fields, a slight decrease from the previous year. However, most teachers (82%) continued to be at only the bachelor's degree level. Nearly half of the teaching staff (48%) had ten or more years of experience.

Technology / Computers

The district has made a major investment in improving computer availability. The number of computers in district libraries increased from 4 to 18. The numbers of computers with Internet access in labs rose from 6 to 70 and in classrooms grew from 16 to 212. The overall student/computer ratio in the district in 1998-99 was 7:1.

Remedial College Courses (UCCSN Class Enrollments)

The Humboldt County School District did not report this number.

Expenditures

For the 1998-99 school year, the Humboldt County Schools showed a per-pupil expenditure for instruction of \$3,975, an increase over \$3,699 expended in the previous year. Similar increases were shown in other areas. Administration costs of \$602 and expenditures for staff support and student support were lower than the state averages for those categories.

Parent Involvement

The district reported the percentage of parents attending the first conference as 79%. At the elementary level attendance ranged from 57% at French Ford to 100% at the rural schools. At the secondary level, the range was from 45% at Lowery High school to 75% at McDermitt.

2. *Areas the School Districts' Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year and evidence that the areas were exemplary or improved.*

The district showed continued growth in fourth grade achievement as measured by TerraNova exams. Curriculum mapping efforts were established; programs such as Success For All, Reading Recovery, and Accelerated Reader were implemented; and a more stringent attendance policy was adopted. Extensive staff development in technology was teamed with capital investment in that area, and significant progress was documented. The district's parental involvement data were impressive, and school reports indicated considerable outreach efforts, especially to minority parents. The district established clear, measurable goals to be accomplished by June, 2001, and by June, 2003.

3. *Areas the School Districts' Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site(s) and evidence for any deficiencies addressed.*

The district identified a need to continue with curriculum development and alignment, including the establishment of criterion-referenced testing in the key areas of reading and mathematics. The district also explored the possibility of re-establishing a professional development center to increase training opportunities for staff.

4. *Summary of the School Districts' plan for improvement at the school site.*

The Humboldt County School District developed both short-range and long-range goals for district improvement. Most of them are specific and measurable, such as, "increase the percentage of students enrolling in post-secondary education." Other goals, such as "Establish a culture of achievement," are worthy but more difficult to assess. Individual schools prepared detailed plans for improvement based on local data, including disaggregated test scores; plans were keyed appropriately to clearly specified activities.

5. *Sources of information to be used in determining effectiveness of the plan for improvement.*

The district reports were based on scores on state-mandated examinations, attendance rates, fiscal data, etc. This material was presented accurately and in clear, accessible formats.

6. *Missing or incomplete data.*

There were some inconsistencies between state data and district data on the high school proficiency exam. The percentage of non-passing students on the high school proficiency

exam was not reported. There was no information regarding the percent of recent high school graduate who were enrolled in remedial college classes.

7. *Recommendations of Panel members for improving analysis and use of accountability findings at the school level and, if applicable, at the district level.*

1. Some schools did an excellent job with disaggregated data, which both suggested areas in need of improvement and documented progress made in these areas. It would be commendable if this were the standard for all schools.
2. Parent involvement at Numa Elementary and at Lowery High School declined in the year of this report. Other district schools, which had quite high rates, may provide concrete suggestions for bringing these units into line with district norms.
3. The district should focus efforts to improve TerraNova achievement scores in the McDermitt eighth grade.