

Humboldt County School District 2001 Accountability Report

The Humboldt County School District report was informative and complete. There were minor discrepancies in data. A caution is noted in the McDermitt 4th and 8th grade 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 4,034 students in 1999-2000, a decrease of 5.9% from the previous year. Students attended eight school units with a variety of configurations – 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 is actually six tiny one- to three-teacher schools.

Student Attendance Rate

The school attendance rate for the 1990-2000 was 94.6%, a .3% increase from the previous year. The lowest rates (93%) were at Lowery High School and the McDermitt School.

Teacher Attendance Rate

The teacher attendance rate in 1999-2000 was 95%, a decrease from 96% the previous year.

Dropout and Non-Promotion Rates

The district reported elementary non-promotion rates ranging from 0% (grades 3 and 4) to 2% (kindergarten). The highest rate of non-promotion was at Winnemucca Elementary School, where 8% were retained in kindergarten. Grass Valley Elementary retained 4% in grade 1, but all other rates were 3% or lower throughout the district. At the ninth grade level, 10% of students were credit deficient and not eligible for classification as tenth graders. The dropout rate at the high school level was 2.6%, lower than the state rate of 6.1%

Student Completion Indices

The district had 255 students who completed their senior year. Of these, 255 (91%) earned a standard diploma, 19 (8%) earned an adjusted diploma, and 6 (2%) were awarded a certificate of attendance.

Transiency Rate

The district reported a transiency rate of 24%, a decrease from 30% the previous year. French Ford Middle School and Winnemucca Junior High had the lowest rates (18%), while the rural schools combined for the highest rate (39%).

Student/Teacher Ratios

District student/teacher ratios at the elementary level ranged from 14:1 to 20:1. Rates in high school core courses exhibited the variability to be expected in a district with such diverse schools. English courses at McDermitt, for example, had a ratio of 10:1, while at Lowry High School it was 24:1; the ratios for social studies were 16:1 at McDermitt and 25:1 at Lowry.

Student/Counselor Ratios

The student/counselor ratio for 1999-2000 was 363:1. This was an improvement over the previous year's ratio of 428:1 and considerably lower than the average state ratio of 534:1.

Suspension/Expulsion Rate

The district reported 14 incidents for which elementary students were suspended or expelled, half of these because of student-to-student violence. At the secondary level, there were 82 incidents of such suspensions or expulsions for disciplinary infractions, of which 58 incidents involved student-to-student violence, threats or extortion. The numbers of these incidents were similar to those of the previous year.

Numbers of habitual disciplinary problem students

The district reported two students at the elementary level as habitual disciplinary problems. At the high school level, 34 were expelled, all at Lowry High School.

State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova, Fourth Grade

**TerraNova Results
4th Grade**

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01
Reading	20	17.0	19.6	21	25.0	19.9	50	56	51
Language	28	14.9	20.4	17	31.9	28.1	46	61	55
Math	21	13.0	17.8	24	36.5	27.0	52	67	56
Science	13	14.7	19.6	26	32.6	21.8	58	62	52

The district test scores showed some variation from those of the previous year. The percentages of students in the bottom quarter increased and those in the top quarter declined in each of the four test areas. In addition, the average percentile rank declined for all four tests. District average percentile scores were above the state average in reading and science, but below the state average in language and math. The district reported 99% of eligible students were tested.

State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova, Eighth Grade

**TerraNova Results
8th Grade**

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01
Reading	20	23.2	20.0	22	25.4	30.4	50	52	58
Language	25	23.3	17.6	22	20.8	22.8	48	50	54
Math	27	32.9	22.1	18	18.9	26.5	45	43	53
Science	13	25.4	15.3	22	23.0	35.3	55	52	61

District scores for the eighth grade improved considerably from those of the previous year. The percentage of students in the bottom quarter decreased in all four test areas from those of the previous year, and those in the top quarter all increased. Some of these improvements were quite noticeable. For example, the percentage of students in the bottom quarter in math and in science dropped by over 10% each, while in science the percentage in the top quarter grew 12.3%. The district's average percentile rank also increased in each of the four test areas. The district reported 100% of eligible students were tested.

State Mandated Test Results: TerraNova, Tenth Grade

**TerraNova Results
10th Grade**

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01
Reading	28	19.3	22.2	22	31.6	27.4	47	60	55
Language	22	18.9	20.7	18	23.9	27.8	48	54	54
Math	31	20.1	17.2	15	27.4	32.4	42	55	58
Science	9	14.0	15.4	22	37.5	35.0	56	64	63

The district's results on tenth grade tests were essentially similar to those of the previous year. The percentages in the bottom quarter were slightly higher in three areas and slightly lower in math; percentages in the top quarter were up in language and math but down in reading and science. The average percentile rank in science exceeded the state average, while the percentages in the other three areas were slightly lower. The district reported 98% of eligible students were tested.

State Mandated Test Results: Writing Exams

**Writing Examination
4th and 8th Grade**

MEASURED TRAIT	PERCENT PROFICIENT					
	4 TH GRADE			8 TH GRADE		
	98-99	99-00	00-01	98-99	99-00	00-01
Ideas	71.0	64.0	55.0	81.7	81.0	88.0
Organization	62.0	64.0	54.0	74.9	81.0	85.0
Voice	65.0	65.0	51.0	74.6	74.0	82.0
Conventions	63.0	67.0	59.0	67.0	76.0	77.0

The district's results on the writing examinations were consistent with results from the TerraNova testing. Percentages of fourth grade students demonstrating proficiency showed a downward trend. This was most evident in the traits of Ideas and in Organization. On the other hand, the percentages of eighth graders demonstrating proficiency increased in all four traits.

State Mandated Test Results: High School Proficiency Exam

High School Proficiency Examination

PERCENT PASSING									% DID NOT EARN DIPLOMA		
READING			MATH			WRITING					
97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
99.3	97.0	93.0	99.0	96.0	88.0	99.5	99.0	93.0	NA	NR	3.0

District results on the high school proficiency examination showed a consistent decline from the previous year. Percentages decreased 4% in reading, 8% in math, and 6% in writing. Three percent of the district's students were denied diplomas because of the exam; last year's percentage was not reported, so no comparison can be made.

ACT/SAT Results

ACT Results

% SENIORS TAKING ACT			ACT COMPOSITE SCORE		
97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
46	55	25	18.0	21.5	21.2

The district reported a 30% decrease in the percentage of students taking the ACT. The district composite score remained stable and only slightly below the state average (21.5).

SAT Results

% SENIORS TAKING SAT			SAT VERBAL AVERAGE			SAT MATH AVERAGE		
97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
36	29	27	427	505	509	405	502	511

The percentage of students taking the SAT decreased by 2%. Student scores increased by four points on the verbal tests and nine points on the math tests. Student scores have tended to be higher at Lowry than at McDermitt, but the small numbers at the district's rural sites encourage caution with year-to-year comparisons.

Special Programs

District-wide in Humboldt County 11% of students participated in special education services and 23.3% participated in free and reduced lunch programs. Each of these figures was slightly higher than those reported in the previous year. Occupational education and athletics appeared to have been eliminated at Winnemucca Junior High School between 1998-1999 and 1999-2000. While in 1998-1999, 80% of students participated in occupational education, none did so in 1999-2000. The rate of participation in athletics fell from 31% in 1998-1999 to none in 1999-2000. Other participation data were similar to those reported in previous years.

Teachers

The percentage of teachers with only a bachelor's degree decreased from 81.6% to 75%; this was still significantly above the state average of 51.3%, probably a consequence of the district's remote location. As reported the previous year, 48% of teachers have ten or more years of experience. The only area reported with teachers teaching out of their licensure area was social studies at Winnemucca Junior High School; however, the percentage of out-of-field instruction at that site decreased from 18.2% to 14%.

Technology/Computers

The district reported a total of 714 instructional computers in use; the computer/student ratio improved from 7:1 the previous year to 6:1 in the current report. Internet access was reported for all school sites.

University and Community College System of Nevada (UCCSN) Remedial Class Enrollments

UCCSN data showed that 37.2 % of the district's recent graduates who were enrolled in Nevada universities and community colleges were receiving remedial services. The state average was 30.6%

Expenditures

For 1999-2000, the district reported a per-pupil expenditure of \$6,100, a 4.3% increase over the previous year. This expenditure level was 12.7% higher than the state average, primarily a consequence of operating rural remote schools. The district received \$57,081 in state remediation funds for low-performing schools; these funds were spent at McDermitt and other rural sites.

Parent Involvement

District-wide the level of parental involvement, based on attendance at the first parent-teacher conference of the school year, was reported in the state data tables as

moderate. Grass Valley Elementary School was the only site assessed as low, while Sonoma Heights and Winnemucca were judged to be high.

2. *Areas the School District's 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 cited improvement in reading as a priority for the past two years. The district used this test (TerraNova) in all grades 2-8 as well as in grade 10 as part of the state testing program. Increases in the average percentile ranks on the TerraNova in reading were evident at grades 2, 3, 5, and 6. The district reported use of the Northern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (RPDP) to assist teachers in developing lesson plans that incorporate state standards. Additional training from the RPDP was received in the teaching of writing skills. Staff development activities appeared to be consistently linked directly to student achievement measures.

McDermitt Combined School was recognized as a National Title One School, as well as the recipient of a \$10,000 award for excellence in technology in a rural community. Another example of increasing access to technology was the purchase by Sonoma Heights Elementary School of 26 new computers and the upgrading of 35 used computers received from another district.

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

Math was identified as an area that the district is concentrating on, while continuing to concentrate on reading. TerraNova results for a three-year period were provided as evidence. Test summaries showed that students' average math achievement was lower than their reading achievement in only three of the eight grades tested. Humboldt students' scores were consistently above the national averages and, with the exceptions of fourth grade language and math and tenth grade math, were above state averages.

The district identified the need to improve parental participation, particularly at the secondary level. Passing rates on the high school proficiency exam were another concern identified.

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

Humboldt County continued to use accountability data effectively to implement, support, and monitor state academic standards. The district has generated fairly extensive plans for continued improvement. Often, but not always, the plans are linked with specific quantifiable measures, usually from standardized tests.

Examples of specific plans for improvement at school sites included continuing Reading Recovery programs, an Accelerated Reading Program, curriculum mapping and

alignment activities, in-service sessions to improve teachers' skills for working with ESL students, participation in a summer remediation program (J.O.I.N.) for seniors who were credit deficient or who did not pass proficiency examinations.

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

The district focused very heavily on data generated by standardized testing which exceeded in scope those examinations required by the state.

6. *Missing or incomplete data.*

There were a few instances where district data were slightly different from those reported in the State Data Tables. For example, the district reported its enrollment change as 6.3%, while state tables showed it as 5.9%. Also, the district reported gains on Normal Curve Equivalent measures but these were not provided among its data.

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

While accountability reports for the sites have adopted a common format, there is considerable variability among the individual site documents for Part III. Greater consistency would be desirable.

Consideration should be given to district-wide disaggregation of data, such as that done at McDermitt.

In addition, the district should consider addressing issues such as the high remedial class enrollment in the UCCSN, low ACT/SAT participation, and high habitual disciplinary student numbers.