

Students' perform

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Peninsula students continue to hold their own against their peers in the state, according to the newest results of the California Assessment Program.

The standardized, multiple choice tests, given last spring, rate the knowledge in selected areas of all public school second, third, sixth and twelfth grade students. Primary grade students are tested on their reading ability, while the students in grades six and twelve are tested in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics.

Statewide, second and third grade reading scores and all facets of the sixth grade scores improved from the 1976-77 results, according to the State Department of Education's Office of Program Evaluation.

Twelfth grade reading scores declined, said Alexander I. Law, chief of the evaluation office. Math scores across the state were the same as the year before and other scores were up slightly.

THE CALIFORNIA ASSESSMENT Program tests 1.2 million students in the four grades covered.

Law said that the results show California's second and third graders are performing above the national average in reading, and the median sixth grader also did better than the national average.

High school seniors in the state, however, ranked below the national average in all areas tested, as much as one-fourth lower in written expression and 18 percentile points lower in reading.

Each student participating in the CAP is given part of each test, and the scores are combined and averaged to determine a score for each school, and then averaged again to give a district score.

Most North Santa Clara and South San Mateo county districts ranked among the highest in the state, a position they have occupied for as long as the tests have been given.

IN SANTA CLARA County, guidance director Dale Burkland said students in most districts increased their performances over past years. Only in the area of reading did eight of the 11 high school districts display a decrease in performance, including Palo Alto, Fremont and Mountain View-Los Altos high schools. The Sequoia High School District of South San Mateo County showed the same score as last year.

District scores are given in the form of the median performance of all its students and are compared to the scores of districts with similar socio-economic characteristics.

Palo Alto district high school seniors last spring ranked among the top 3% in the state in the four tested areas, and were among the best in the areas of written expression and mathematics, even when compared to similar high-income districts.

THE SECOND GRADE students performed only slightly lower than the previous year's class in reading, and the sixth grade writing scores were also lower. But both categories were improved over the performance two years ago.

Mountain View-Los Altos High School District seniors generally performed slightly better than their preceding class, and remained among the top 10% in the state.

Seniors in the Fremont High School District of Sunnyvale and Cupertino did better this year, and only in the reading score were they below the level of the previous two years.

The Sequoia district maintained its place among the top 20% in the state this year, showing improvement in the 12th grade mathematics and writing segments. In most cases, the district outperformed districts with similar types of students.

THE RAVENSWOOD DISTRICT of East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park held on to its traditional ranking near the bottom of the state, even when compared to similar districts. Ravenswood, according to the ranking of background factors, has one of the highest proportions of students from families on welfare and its first graders perform in the bottom 10% of the state on the reading readiness test. Those factors are generally regarded as the best predictors of poor performance.

Superintendent Luther Seabrook said he would stress the statewide rankings in reporting the district scores to parents and the school board, and would not be content to report that second grade students performed "better than expected" on the reading test. Sixth grade students last spring generally per-

formed below expectations in most areas, although their scores were above those of previous years.

IN OTHER SOUTH San Mateo County areas, the scores in Portola Valley, Menlo Park and Las Lomitas districts continued to rank in the top 10% of the state, with the sole exception of sixth grade spelling in the Las Lomitas District. That score dropped the district to the 88th percentile (the top 12%) in the state for that test.

Sunnyvale School District students showed mixed results when compared to last year's statewide ranking. They performed on a par with most similar districts, but were in only the 44th percentile in third grade reading throughout the state — even though their score improved over last year. That means that other districts generally showed more improvement. The district's state rankings improved in other areas, with a high of 64th percentile in sixth grade spelling.

Neighboring Cupertino School District, outperformed similar school districts in every area, even though some of its scores, such as grade two reading and sixth grade reading and writing, dropped from last year.

IN THE LOS Altos School District, the distinction between the statewide percentile rankings and the actual scores are exemplified. Second graders this year performed better than the previous class, but they dropped two percentile points to the 96th percentile. In the third grade, the class did not do as well as the 1976-77 class, but retained the ranking in the 96th percentile, being outperformed by only 4% of the districts in the state. Sixth graders maintained or improved their high statewide ranking and outperformed the previous year's class.

Mountain View School District sixth graders improved their statewide ranking, most dramatically in reading and mathematics, and outperformed the previous class. Second graders were rated 10 percentile points lower than their predecessors at the 69th percentile, yet outperformed most districts with similar characteristics.

THE NEIGHBORING WHISMAN School District made great strides in the second grade reading scores, moving from the 38th to the 59th percentile and matching the scores of two years previously. But the third grade class, which brought last year's second grade scores down, did the same this year, although still performing better than students in similar districts. The sixth grade scores, however, declined from the previous year in every area except writing.

Individual district scores will be reported to school board in the next two weeks. The districts also have scores for each school, which are used to judge the general strengths and weaknesses in the instructional program.

Workmen escape blaze

Two workmen narrowly escaped injury about 5 p.m. Wednesday when a flash fire erupted in an Atherton house where they were refinishing water-damaged floors.

The men, Gary Bennett and Lorenzo Madrid, had just walked out the door of the house at 1505 Selby Lane when fumes from newly-applied lacquer sealer were ignited by the pilot light of a wall heater and burst into flames, according to Battalion Chief Winn Baker of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District.

Bennett is the owner of Bennett Floors of Fremont, a company hired to renovate the floors, damaged when a water pipe broke a week ago.

Baker estimated fire and smoke caused \$5,000 damage to the two-story residence.

performance compared

Santa Clara County Elementary School Districts

	Palo Alto		Los Altos		Mtn. View		Whisman	
	District Mean Score	Comparison Band	District Mean Score	Comparison Band	District Mean Score	Comparison Band	District Mean Score	Comparison Band
Grade 2 Reading	85.5	81.9-85.3	90.2	84.6-88.1	77.5	71.9-76.4	75.1	67.2-72.5
Grade 3 Reading	92.7	91.2-93.2	94.2	92.6-94.7	88.6	84.6-87.4	87.2	81.1-84.9
Grade 6 Reading	82.3	73.5-75.9	82.0	74.6-77.6	72.3	66.5-70.1	65.9	68.6-72.6
Written Express.	77.3	70.9-73.7	80.9	71.8-75.0	66.8	64.4-68.2	64.4	66.4-70.4
Spelling	72.4	67.7-69.9	74.9	68.1-70.9	68.8	64.1-67.3	64.7	64.8-68.4
Mathematics	75.7	63.1-67.7	76.5	63.8-68.6	61.7	58.1-63.1	59.3	59.6-64.6

	Sunnyvale		Cupertino	
	District Mean Score	Comparison Band	District Mean Score	Comparison Band
Grade 2 Reading	74.4	71.3-75.1	84.3	80.9-84.0
Grade 3 Reading	85.3	84.6-87.0	93.3	90.8-92.7
Grade 6 Reading	69.4	67.2-69.6	77.9	74.2-76.0
Written Express.	67.0	64.8-67.6	75.2	71.4-73.8
Spelling	66.2	64.0-66.4	71.9	68.2-70.0
Mathematics	59.7	57.7-62.3	70.2	63.3-67.7

Santa Clara County High Schools

	Palo Alto		Mtn. Vw.-Los Alts.		Fremont	
	District Mean Score	Comparison Band	District Mean Score	Comparison Band	District Mean Score	Comparison Band
Grade 12 Reading	72.2	69.4-72.2	69.5	67.5-70.3	69.7	67.7-70.3
Written Express.	73.0	68.5-71.1	69.2	66.5-69.1	69.2	66.7-69.1
Spelling	75.0	71.3-73.5	72.0	70.2-72.4	73.2	70.4-72.4
Mathematics	79.8	73.8-77.0	74.8	71.5-74.5	75.2	71.6-74.6

San Mateo County Elementary School Districts

	Menlo Park		Las Lomitas		Portola Valley		Ravenswood	
	District Mean Score	Comparison Band	District Mean Score	Comparison Band	District Mean Score	Comparison Band	District Mean Score	Comparison Band
Grade 2 Reading	92.2	85.2-89.5	88.2	84.0-89.1	91.2	82.1-88.8	64.2	55.5-61.5
Grade 3 Reading	94.2	92.8-95.2	92.9	92.5-95.2	96.1	91.8-95.5	74.8	71.7-76.5
Grade 6 Reading	85.9	73.9-78.5	81.3	73.1-77.9	83.3	74.7-80.9	51.1	53.9-57.3
Written Express.	83.3	71.4-75.8	81.3	70.5-75.1	80.6	72.2-78.0	50.3	52.2-55.8
Spelling	76.6	67.6-71.6	71.6	66.9-71.1	72.5	67.9-73.3	58.0	56.6-59.6
Mathematics	78.8	63.8-69.0	71.2	62.8-68.2	72.5	64.7-70.7	46.7	46.8-51.6

	Sequoia High School District	
	District Mean Score	Comparison Band
Grade 12 Reading	66.7	63.7-66.3
Written Express.	65.9	62.6-65.2
Spelling	70.1	68.3-70.3
Mathematics	70.2	66.7-69.7

This chart shows average performance for each school district as reported in the California Assessment Program. The first column in each case is the district mean score. The second column shows the performance of districts with similar socio-economic characteristics, and is the range of scores garnered by the middle 50% of those districts. If a district's score falls below that of the comparison band, it falls in the bottom 25% of those districts. If the score is above those in the band, it is in the top 25% of districts similar to it. A district's performance in comparison to all districts in the state is reported in the accompanying story.